



SAFE RETURN TO IN-PERSON INSTRUCTION & CONTINUITY OF SERVICES PLAN

BACK TO SCHOOL 2021

TABLE OF CONTENTS

MAINTAINING HEALTH AND SAFETY

Policies or practices regarding CDC recommendations	1
Modifying facilities to allow for physical distancing	2
Handwashing and respiratory etiquette	2
Cleaning and maintaining healthy facilities, including improved ventilation	2-3
Contact tracing in combination with isolation and quarantine	3-4
Diagnostic screening testing	5
Efforts to provide vaccinations to educators, other staff, and students, if eligible	5
Appropriate accommodations for children with disabilities with respect to health and safety policies and practices	5
Coordination with state and local health officials	5

CONTINUITY OF SERVICES 6

PUBLIC INPUT 7

PROVISOS PASSED BY THE SC LEGISLATURE 8

MAINTAINING HEALTH AND SAFETY

The 2021-22 School Year kicks off August 17 on a regular, full-time, in-person schedule, as mandated by the General Assembly (*Act 102 – Joint Resolution*). Families have the option of enrolling in the GCS Virtual Program prior to the start of school.

POLICIES OR PRACTICES REGARDING CDC RECOMMENDATIONS

Per action of the General Assembly, masks will not be required for students or staff in school buildings, but may be worn by choice (*2021-22 State Budget Proviso 1.108*)

Masks will not be required on buses.

Exception: Masks will be required for symptomatic individuals within the health/isolations rooms and for nurses administering care under these circumstances.

Students, employees, and visitors may choose to wear masks within GCS facilities.

Visitors, volunteers, and mentors will be allowed into buildings this year. Principals may place some limitations on visitors (*ex. parents may eat with students at the principal's discretion*).

There will be a return to normal procedures for outside groups such as PTAs and Good News Clubs.

Schools may host events and activities. Indoor assemblies/events during the school days should be socially distanced or set up for contact tracing.

Indoor large group assemblies should only take place when necessary.

Schools will not be allowed to group students based on vaccination status or personal masking preference. Since masks cannot be required under a State Budget Proviso, schools would have no recourse for a student who removes his or her mask while sitting with masked students. Additionally, depending on classroom populations and seating, it may be physically impossible to provide a boundary area between masked and un-masked students in some classrooms.

MODIFYING FACILITIES TO ALLOW FOR PHYSICAL DISTANCING

We will maintain student social distance at 3 feet whenever possible. In some circumstances (*buses, cafeteria, guided reading, etc.*), it will not be possible to maintain a full 3-feet of distance.

Where possible, students will be seated facing in the same direction.

Per action of the General Assembly, eLearning days for schools/districts are now capped, restricting any likely use to inclement weather or other short-term condition ([2021-22 State Budget Proviso 1A.69](#)). This action forbids school districts from developing alternative attendance plans like the Roadmap used in 2020-21.

GCS has removed the plexiglass that was used in the 2020-21 school year. With the return of most students to in-person instruction, there is not enough classroom space to use the pod and plexiglass configurations.

HANDWASHING AND RESPIRATORY ETIQUETTE

Per action of the General Assembly, masks will not be required for students or staff in school buildings, but may be worn by choice ([2021-22 State Budget Proviso 1.108](#)).

There are visual cues throughout the building and in bathrooms reminding students and staff of the importance of hand hygiene. These include a description of appropriate hand washing.

Hand sanitizer is provided in all cafeterias and classrooms, as well as the common areas of every school.

Posters and videos in English and Spanish have been used to help children remember to cover coughs and sneezes with a tissue or their elbow.

CLEANING AND MAINTAINING HEALTHY FACILITIES, INCLUDING IMPROVING VENTILATION

We will continue enhanced air quality practices, including extended HVAC hours in “occupied” status. While on this status fresh air is exchanged three times per hour in all facilities. The district’s HVAC systems include an ionization process that works to combine impurities, making them large enough to be captured by filters.

Employees and students may bring their own breakfast, lunch, or snacks, but any outside food for distribution (*such as student birthdays*) must be commercially prepared and individually wrapped.

Water fountains will be turned on this year. Additionally, water bottle filling stations have been installed in every school.

Meals will be served in the cafeteria. Meals may be consumed in other locations such as classrooms or outside, but meal service will occur in the cafeteria due to staffing limitations.

CLEANING AND MAINTAINING HEALTHY FACILITIES, INCLUDING IMPROVING VENTILATION CONTINUED

We will continue to disinfect schools each night; high touch surfaces in common areas will be cleaned throughout the day.

Plexiglass will not be employed for student seating areas; employees may request a plexiglass barrier at their desk or workspace.

CONTACT TRACING IN COMBINATION WITH ISOLATION AND QUARANTINE

GCS will continue to contact trace whenever an individual tests positive for COVID and is present in a school or district facility during the contagious period. DHEC still requires schools to quarantine, isolate, and contact trace per statutory authority. This is not optional.

“Students/attendees or staff members who have been identified as close contacts of a person infectious with COVID-19 and recommended for quarantine must be excluded from school/childcare until completing the recommended quarantine period.”

OFFICIAL SCHOOL AND CHILD CARE EXCLUSION LIST OF CONTAGIOUS OR COMMUNICABLE DISEASES

Statutory authority: SC Code of Laws Sections 44-1-140, 44-29-200; 63-13-180 SC Code of Regulations Chapter 61-20 and Chapter 114, Article 5

<https://scdhec.gov/sites/default/files/media/document/School-Childcare%20Exclusion%20List%202021-Final-6.10.2021.pdf>

<https://scdhec.gov/sites/default/files/media/document/Interim-COVID-19-Guidance-for-K-12-School-Operations-2021-07-29.pdf>

Schools do not have to contact trace for spectators at public after-school events or activities.

ISOLATIONS

Individuals who test positive for COVID-19 must follow isolation guidance whether vaccinated or unvaccinated.

Isolation generally last 10 days unless symptoms have not improved.

Schools will maintain their isolation rooms for symptomatic students and require masks while those students await pick-up.

QUARANTINES

GCS will follow DHEC directives related to isolation and quarantine.

DHEC has revised the definition of close contacts for **students** at school: Those within **3 feet** of a COVID-positive person at school for a cumulative total of 15 minutes or more over a 24-hour period with or without a mask are considered close contacts and will be required to quarantine *(unless they are vaccinated)*.

Employees/adults within **6 feet** of a COVID-positive person for a cumulative total of 15 minutes or more over a 24-hour period with or without a mask are considered close contacts and will be required to quarantine *(unless they are vaccinated)*.

Individuals who have tested positive for COVID and recovered within in the past 90 days will not have to quarantine if they provide a copy of their positive test, dated within the appropriate time period.

Students who are in isolation or quarantine, like any student who misses school due to illness, will be provided with makeup work and a timeline for completing missed instruction and assignments. Students will be counted absent so there is an accurate record of who is physically present in schools, but absences due to isolation/quarantine will be marked excused/lawful.

10-DAY QUARANTINE FOR STUDENTS

Students identified as close contacts to COVID-19-positive individuals must quarantine for 10 days.

- on days 11-14, they must monitor symptoms and follow all preventive measures in place in our schools.

7-DAY QUARANTINE FOR EMPLOYEES

GCS will allow employees to quarantine for only 7 days **IF:**

- they receive a negative PCR COVID test between days 5-7 and appropriate documentation and verification.
- on days 8-14 they they must monitor symptoms and follow all preventive measures in place in our schools.

Without testing between days 5-7, employees must quarantine for 10 days.

- on days 11-14, they must monitor symptoms and follow all preventive measures in place in our schools.

DIAGNOSTIC SCREENING TESTING

Employees and students who are symptomatic should not attend work or school.

Medication should not be used to mask symptoms for the purpose of attending work or school.

GCS will not be conducting diagnostic screening testing.

EFFORTS TO PROVIDE VACCINATIONS TO EDUCATORS, OTHER STAFF, AND STUDENTS, IF ELIGIBLE

COVID-19 vaccinations are not required for students or staff. However, per DHEC regulations, vaccinated individuals are not required to quarantine due to a COVID-19 exposure unless they develop COVID-19 symptoms.

In the spring of 2021, GCS launched a vaccination program for employees, resulting in more than 3,000 staff members receiving two rounds of the Pfizer vaccine.

Over the summer of 2021, vaccination clinics were held at GCS high schools for eligible students and community members.

APPROPRIATE ACCOMMODATIONS FOR CHILDREN WITH DISABILITIES WITH RESPECT TO HEALTH AND SAFETY POLICIES AND PRACTICE

IEP and 504 meetings can be held virtually or in person. Every effort will be made to ensure 6 feet of social distancing.

IEP and 504 teams determine services, supports, and accommodations that are appropriate for each student.

When identified by the IEP or 504 team, special education services will be offered through the Virtual Program.

COORDINATION WITH STATE AND LOCAL HEALTH OFFICIALS

GCS will continue to seek guidance from [DHEC](#) and the [CDC](#) on best practices.

When possible, mitigation strategies will be utilized.

GCS has partnered with [MUSC and their Back2Business](#) enterprise to provide evidence-based practice guidelines and ongoing recommendations for maintaining a safe environment for students, staff, and visitors.

CONTINUITY OF SERVICES

The 2021-22 School Year kicks off August 17 on a regular, full-time, in-person schedule, as mandated by the General Assembly (*Act 102 – Joint Resolution*).

GCS will provide a public dashboard on its website to identify schools where students and/or employees have developed COVID-19.

Students who are in isolation or quarantine, like any student who misses school due to illness, will be provided with work and a timeline for making up missed instruction and assignments. Teachers are able to livestream classes, but are not required to do so. Students will be counted absent so there is an accurate record of who is physically present in schools, but absences due to isolation/quarantine will be marked excused/lawful.

Bus transportation will be provided to students who sign up for transportation services.

The teasing or bullying of students or employees for their decisions regarding masks or vaccinations will not be tolerated.

GCS will offer before and after school tutoring/remediation to help students with any learning gaps.

GCS is launching a Social Emotional Learning (*SEL*) curriculum. The purpose of this curriculum is to help students build healthier relationships, better process emotions, strengthen mental health, and better cope with stress and anxiety.

Schools that include social emotional learning lessons frequently have a healthier climate and reduced rates of bullying and behavior problems. SEL can also lead to improved student mental health. Students who receive instruction in social and emotional skills typically show:

- decreased emotional stress and anxiety
- more mental health awareness
- increased confidence
- healthier relationships

PUBLIC INPUT

Stakeholders should provide input into the GCS COVID protocols by contacting the Service Center at 355-3100 or emailing the infoline at infoline@greenville.k12.sc.us.

They can also provide feedback through their children's principals, email the district administration via ombudsmen **Bryan Skipper** (gskipper@greenville.k12.sc.us) and **Raashad Fitzpatrick** (rfitzpatrick@greenville.k12.sc.us), or reach out to their elected Board Members.

Feedback is also received via focus group Zoom meetings composed of school SIC and PTA members,

PUBLIC INPUT

Stakeholders should provide input into the GCS COVID protocols by contacting the Service Center at 355-3100 or emailing the infoline at infoline@greenville.k12.sc.us.

They can also provide feedback through their children's principals, email the district administration via ombudsmen **Bryan Skipper** (gskipper@greenville.k12.sc.us) and **Raashad Fitzpatrick** (rfitzpatrick@greenville.k12.sc.us), or reach out to their elected Board Members.

Feedback is also received via focus group Zoom meetings composed of school SIC and PTA members, at Board Meetings, through monthly principal meetings, via Teacher Forum, and using surveys of employees and community members.

PROVISOS PASSED BY THE SC LEGISLATURE

1.108. (SDE: MASK MANDATE PROHIBITION)

No school district, or any of its schools, may use any funds appropriated or authorized pursuant to this act to require that its students and/or employees wear a facemask at any of its education facilities. This prohibition extends to the announcement or enforcement of any such policy.

1.103. (SDE: PUBLIC SCHOOL VIRTUAL PROGRAM FUNDING)

For Fiscal Year 2021-22, school districts shall be permitted to offer a virtual education program for up to five percent of its student population based on the most recent 135 day ADM count without impacting any state funding. The Department of Education shall establish guidelines for the virtual program and parameters students must meet in order to participate in the virtual program. School districts must submit their plans for the virtual program to the State Board of Education for approval.

School districts offering a virtual program must report their ADM counts for students participating in their virtual program and the number of students participating face to face for the 5th, 45th, 90th, and 135th day to the Department of Education.

For every student participating in the virtual program above the five percent threshold, the school district will not receive 47.22% of the State per pupil funding provided to that district as reported in the latest Revenue and Fiscal Affairs revenue per pupil report pursuant to Proviso 1.3. This amount shall be withheld from the EFA portion of the State Aid to Classroom's district allocation and, if necessary, the state minimum teacher salary schedule portion of State Aid to Classrooms.

1A.69. (SDE-EIA: DIGITAL LEARNING PLAN)

The implementation of the pilot program shall become the responsibility of the Department of Education. Those e-Learning school districts who meet the criteria for an e-Learning district as determined by the Department of Education may use up to five e-Learning days to allow for the make-up of short-term disruptions to in-person teaching and learning.

With funds appropriated, the Education Oversight Committee is responsible for evaluating the impact of alternative methods of instruction on student learning and working with other agencies to expand access to quality remote instruction which can be dispatched if necessary. Alternative methods of instruction may include, but are not limited to, online or virtual instruction, remote learning, and hybrid models. The Department of Education and school districts providing alternative methods of instruction must provide data as requested by the committee to evaluate the effectiveness of the instruction. The Education Oversight Committee shall report annually to the Governor, the General Assembly, the Department of Education, and the State Board of Education.