

GREENVILLE COUNTY SCHOOLS

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS FOR PARENTS

COVID-19
QUESTIONS
& ANSWERS
BACK TO SCHOOL 2021

IMPORTANT: Our 2021-22 Virtual Program application has reopened! Greenville County Schools will accommodate as many students as staffing allows.

Q WILL STUDENTS BE REQUIRED TO WEAR MASKS IN SCHOOLS?

A In keeping with the proviso that was recently passed by the South Carolina Legislature (*see full list of provisos below*), neither students nor staff are required to wear masks. However, the CDC continues to recommend masking and parents are encouraged to review the advice of public health professionals before deciding what is best for their children.

Q WILL STUDENTS WHO CHOOSE TO WEAR MASKS RECEIVE SPECIAL SEATING OR OTHER CONSIDERATIONS?

A No.

Q ARE FACE COVERINGS STILL REQUIRED ON SCHOOL BUSES?

A No. The SC Department of Education recently removed the requirement to use face coverings on state-owned school buses. However, bus capacity has returned to 100%, which makes social distancing impossible. The CDC continues to recommend masking and parents are encouraged to review the advice of public health professionals before deciding what is best for their children.

Q WILL STUDENTS STILL BE SEATED IN PODS WITH PLEXIGLASS DIVIDERS?

A No, all plexiglass dividers have been removed from student seating.

Q WHAT TYPE OF SCHEDULE CAN STUDENTS EXPECT WHEN THE 2021-22 SCHOOL YEAR BEGINS ON AUGUST 17?

A Greenville County Schools will start the school year with full-time in-person instruction for all students (*other than those who signed up for the full-time Virtual Program*).

Q ARE SCHOOL PROTOCOLS/SCHEDULES GUARANTEED TO STAY THE SAME ALL YEAR LONG?

A No. The changing nature of COVID-19 and possible changes in the law will likely impact protocols and schedules.

Q WILL STUDENTS SWITCH TO ELEARNING IF CORONAVIRUS CASES SUDDENLY INCREASE?

A Under South Carolina law, school districts are now limited to five (5) eLearning days per year, so at this time, we do not have the option of running an alternate schedule.

GCS FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS FOR PARENTS

Q IF THERE IS A SPIKE IN COVID CASES, CAN I MOVE MY CHILD TO THE FULL-TIME VIRTUAL PROGRAM?

A Only if there is room. The South Carolina Legislature recently added a proviso to the state budget that says only 5-percent of a school district's student population can receive virtual instruction without penalty to state funding.

Q WHAT ARE THE PROTOCOLS IF MY CHILD IS EXPOSED TO COVID-19?

A Students who come in close contact with a COVID-19 contagious person must quarantine for a minimum of 10 days. However, students who provide proof they have been fully vaccinated are exempt from quarantine, unless they develop symptoms.

Q WHAT HAPPENS IF MY CHILD TESTS POSITIVE FOR COVID-19?

A Just like last year, students who test positive for the coronavirus are required to isolate for 10 days, or longer if symptoms have not improved.

Q ARE VACCINES REQUIRED FOR STUDENTS AND STAFF?

A No, but unvaccinated individuals must quarantine if they are exposed to COVID-19.

Q WHAT TYPE OF SOCIAL DISTANCING WILL OCCUR WITHIN SCHOOLS?

A Schools will enforce 3-feet of social distancing when possible.

Q HOW OFTEN WILL SCHOOLS BE DISINFECTED?

A Schools will be disinfected each night and high touch common areas will be cleaned throughout the day. Buses will be disinfected twice each day.

Q CAN PTAS, SICS, GOOD NEWS CLUBS AND MENTORS RETURN TO THE BUILDINGS?

A Yes, at the principal's discretion.

Q CAN PARENTS JOIN THEIR CHILDREN FOR LUNCH?

A It is up to the discretion of principals who may stagger or place restrictions on visits *(i.e. no visits allowed until after Labor Day.)*

GCS FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS FOR PARENTS

Q WILL PARENTS/VISITORS BE ASKED SCREENING QUESTIONS WHEN THEY FIRST ENTER SCHOOL BUILDINGS?

A Yes.

Q CAN SCHOOLS HAVE FAMILY FUN NIGHTS, SCHOOL DANCES AND SCHOOL STORES?

A Yes, but remember all protocols are subject to change.

Q CAN PARENTS SEND HOMEMADE FOOD/CUPCAKES FOR BIRTHDAYS AGAIN?

A No, only commercially-prepared food can be delivered to classrooms.

Q WILL WATER FOUNTAINS BE TURNED BACK ON OR WILL WE CONTINUE TO ONLY USE BOTTLE FILLERS?

A Water fountains will be turned back on.

Q WILL STUDENTS RETURN TO THE CAFETERIA WITH REGULAR SEATING FOR MEALS?

A Yes. Students may return to the cafeteria. Assigned seating may be used for contact tracing.

Q IS THERE ANY DIFFERENCE IN OPERATIONS/PROTOCOLS FOR GRADES PRE-K THROUGH 6 (no option to be vaccinated) AND GRADES 7-12 (*have option to be vaccinated*)?

A No.

Q WILL GREENVILLE COUNTY SCHOOLS CONTINUE TO PROVIDE A COVID-19 DASHBOARD ON ITS WEBSITE?

A Yes.

Q WHAT ABOUT STATISTICAL COMPARISONS TO STATE AND COUNTY?

A Yes.

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.