



School Reopening Plan 2020-2021

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Foundations

With the stated goal of returning to in-person classes in September 2020 in the midst of the active COVID-19 pandemic, GCA leadership and Health Advisory Committee members have been working diligently and prayerfully to develop a comprehensive plan for reopening. It is our goal to work together as a school community to create a learning environment that is as safe as possible, where our students and families will thrive this fall! We have developed and adapted a variety of new policies to advance toward this goal safely and wisely, using most current CDC and AAP guidelines as well as current scientific literature reviewed by our committee members according to their areas of expertise. The success of this plan depends heavily upon the cooperation of our entire school community. We recognize that each family is dealing with its own unique set of challenges and concerns when it comes to issues of health, education, childcare, finances, and family dynamics. This plan was developed with a variety of opinions, perspectives and interests in mind, while prioritizing safety and effective education.

It is important to recognize that there is no “zero-risk” scenario for reopening. No set of infection-control measures can reduce the risk of COVID-19 spread to zero, but we can find ways to create as low-risk an environment as possible. We believe that our school, with its generous physical spaces and relatively small population, is well-positioned to accommodate the necessary modifications to distancing, logistics and personal health measures. These changes and adaptations, though somewhat uncomfortable, represent what we believe to be an acceptable cost for the benefit of classroom-based learning for our students. Lord-willing, many of these changes will be temporary!

We ask all members of our school community to remain open-minded and flexible as the school year begins. As students and staff re-enter their familiar classrooms, they will encounter unfamiliar routines and may struggle to adapt. Teachers, students, and parents will undoubtedly need to work together and communicate regularly regarding issues and concerns as they arise. Some of these new procedures will work well, some will not, and some will require a little “tweaking”. Individual teachers will be searching for creative ways to adapt lessons and activities to fit these new policies, and families may encounter some degree of variability in the ways that these measures are implemented in certain scenarios. Regular constructive feedback will be vital to optimizing our strategies for maintaining synchronous learning. We welcome frequent communication from all members of our community, and look forward to another wonderful year of learning!

Health Advisory Committee

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Grace Classical Academy Community Partnership Agreement

The success of this school reopening plan depends upon the cooperation of our entire school community. Home health screening will help to ensure that potentially ill students/staff are not entering the building. Compliance with distancing and mask-wearing will help to mitigate the risk that any asymptomatic carriers are spreading illness to others. Adherence to attendance and return policies will ensure that those who were ill are no longer contagious upon return to school. If we wish to keep our school open and continue face-to-face learning we must commit, as a community, to following these procedures and policies as meticulously as possible.

To protect our students and staff, I agree to monitor my child(ren) daily for development of any of the following symptoms, and agree to keep my child at home if he/she develops:

- Fever (a temperature of 100.4 or higher)
- Cough (New, persistent; can be dry or productive)
- Shortness of breath
- Significant fatigue
- Muscle or body aches
- Sore throat
- New loss of taste or smell

If my child develops any of these signs or symptoms of COVID-19, I will not send him/her back to school until one of the following applies:

- Negative COVID-19 test, **and** fever-free for 24 hours without medication, **and** any respiratory symptoms are improving.
- No COVID-19 test, but a healthcare provider has evaluated my child and provided a written note with alternate diagnosis to explain symptoms (ie. strep throat, ear infection, etc), **and** child has been fever-free for 24 hours without medications, **and** any respiratory symptoms are improving.
- Positive COVID-19 test, **and** at least 10 days have passed since onset of symptoms, **and** child has been fever-free for 24 hours without medications, **and** any respiratory symptoms are improving.
- No COVID-19 test or note from a healthcare provider, but 10 days have passed since onset of symptoms, **and** child has been fever-free for 24 hours without medications, **and** any respiratory symptoms are improving.

If someone in my household is diagnosed with COVID-19 disease, I will keep my child(ren) home for 14 days. If the child develops any symptoms during the 14-day period, follow the guidelines above to determine when the child may return to school.

*For unique circumstances that do not fall into these common categories, we will consult the local health department for guidance on quarantine precautions and safe return to school.

Personal Health Measures

1. Masks

- a. Best available evidence supports the use of cotton fabric masks, as these have been shown to be most efficacious in containing respiratory droplets expelled by the wearer. Higher thread counts and layered construction (double- or triple-layer) have been shown to increase efficiency. Thin elastic fabrics such as those used in popular neck gaiter or scarf-style face coverings have been shown to be minimally effective, and may even worsen the spread of respiratory droplets by breaking larger particles into many smaller ones as they pass through the porous material. As such, GCA will require cotton fabric masks for all students and staff in order to maximize the benefit of masking.
- b. Cloth masks will be worn by all students and staff in common and potentially congested areas of the building (hallways, restrooms, lobby, office, gymnasium).
- c. Within the classroom, cloth masks may be removed while students are seated at their desks. When not in use, masks will be stored on a hook affixed to the student's desk. Cloth masks must be worn when students are up from their desks. Hand sanitizer use will be encouraged after removing or replacing masks.
- d. Students will supply their own cloth masks to ensure proper fit. Cloth masks must be solid-colored without any print, pattern or wording, with the exception that the school logo may be printed on the mask if desired (ie. Lands End uniform mask).
- e. Each student should bring two cloth masks to school daily, one to serve as a back-up in case the first is lost/soiled. A stock of surgical masks will be maintained in the office in case a student forgets their masks or their back-up mask is lost/soiled.
- f. Cloth masks must be worn when students/staff are singing indoors.
- g. Teachers may remove their cloth masks if desired when teaching behind the clear plexiglass shields provided in each classroom. When out from behind the shield and moving around the classroom, teachers will wear cloth masks.
- h. Parents are encouraged to speak positively to their children regarding masks and begin to help them acclimate/practice over the summer to help promote a smooth transition.

2. Hand Hygiene

- a. Students will keep a small/travel-sized bottle of hand sanitizer at their desks, provided and replenished by family as needed, for personal use. Use will be encouraged after touching masks for removing/replacing, after sneezing, after touching commonly used surfaces, etc.
- b. Sanitizer stations will be located at the front and side school entrance, as well as the gymnasium entrance.
- c. Multiple scheduled opportunities for soap-and-water hand-washing - before and after recess, PE, and lunch - will be staggered by class with 2-3 students dismissed at a time to limit crowding in the bathrooms.

Physical Distancing & Movement Logistics

1. Classrooms

- a. Desks will be arranged 6 feet apart.
- b. Classes are being assigned only to our largest classroom spaces to allow for adequate distancing (many classes will be held in different rooms this year).
- c. Teachers will be encouraged to utilize our spacious campus grounds for outdoor lessons, weather permitting.
 - i. Scheduling of outdoor educational time may become necessary to stagger use of particular equipment, such as picnic tables

2. Drop Off/Pick Up

- a. All students and staff will wear cloth masks during drop-off/pick-up.
- b. Drop-off and pick-up time-frames may need to be extended to allow students to exit from/enter 6-8 cars at a time, to limit crowding at the entrances.
- c. Sixth grade students will not be utilized for escorting younger students to classrooms, to limit entrance/lobby crowding.
- d. Younger grades will enter through the front entrance. Older students will walk around the side of the building to enter through the back entrance and use the back staircase up to the second level.

3. Building Occupants

- a. No visitors will be allowed in the building, with the exception of designated well-screened substitutes or cleaning assistants.
- b. Parents may occasionally be admitted to the building to assist in necessary supervisory roles, to be determined on an as-needed basis, and subject to the same health monitoring requirements as students/staff.
- c. Approved visitors must wear a mask at all times while inside the building.

4. Recess

- a. Recess will be configured to limit entry/exit hallway traffic and crowding in play areas, as well as maintain stable cohorting of children to limit intermingling between groups as recommended by the CDC and AAP.
 - i. AM recess times will be staggered by class
 - ii. At noon recess there will be designated play areas for each grade, rotated daily to allow children variety in their play
- b. Structured, no-contact games and activities will be encouraged, resources provided to teachers.
- c. Teachers will ensure sanitization of equipment prior to use.
- d. Students and staff will not be required to wear cloth masks outside.

5. Chapel

- a. To be held in the gymnasium, with chairs spaced 6 feet apart
- b. Masks will be worn during chapel, given large group setting and singing.

6. Physical Education

- a. To be held outside weather-permitting without masks, and in the gymnasium when necessary.
- b. Structured, no-contact games and activities .

7. Art Class

- a. To be held in the art room, a large classroom where students can be distanced 6 feet apart.
- b. Materials will not be shared between students.
- c. Time will be allotted for sanitization of surfaces between classes, to be performed by the Art teacher.

8. Music & Choir

- a. To be held in the gymnasium to allow for adequate physical distancing.

Food Policies

1. Students will continue to eat lunch in their classrooms.
2. School will continue to discourage sharing of food between students.
3. Any treat/snacks sent from home for special occasions must be commercially packaged in individual servings to be distributed by teachers, wearing gloves.
4. Prepackaged lunches may still be available for order.

Younger Populations - PreK and Kindergarten

1. Masks & Physical Distancing

- a. PreK and Kindergarten students will wear cloth masks when inside of the building regardless of age.
- b. We will allow students to remove cloth masks when adequate physical distancing can be achieved.
 - i. Utilize carpet squares to space students when seated on the floor
 - ii. Place students at ends of longer tables or at 6-foot spaced desks for distancing when doing desk-work

2. Classroom Materials

- a. School Supplies
 - i. Each student will have his or her own separate bin of school supplies that will not be shared.
- b. Craft materials
 - i. Each student will have a box of craft materials for any given project, as opposed to pulling from a common supply.
 - ii. Parents may be asked to supply some commonly used items to be kept in a student's individual "supply bin".
- c. Common toys/equipment
 - i. Larger toys and structures in the classroom will be limited in play to one student at a time. Teachers will utilize a "dirty bin" to isolate toys that have been used and require sanitization before re-use by another student.
 - ii. Smaller toys that are more difficult to clean (legos, blocks) will be limited to one child's use and sanitized at end of day with leave-on sanitizing spray.

Building Sanitization & Ventilation

1. Daily School-wide Cleaning

- a. Standard daily cleaning will continue to be provided by our school housekeeper at the end of each school day, which includes:
 - i. Cleaning and sanitization of all bathroom surfaces
 - ii. Sanitization of commonly touched surfaces such as door handles, light switches, faucet handles, etc.
 - iii. Carpeted floors will be vacuumed daily, and hard flooring surfaces will be mopped daily with disinfectant cleaner.

2. Additional Classroom Sanitization

- a. Sanitization of students' desks and chairs with sanitizing wipes will be performed by students (where developmentally appropriate) or teachers at the end of each day and at lunchtime. If the supply of wipes is depleted, spray will be utilized by teachers.
- b. Teachers will wipe commonly touched surfaces at the middle and end of each day (and as the need arises during the day, if an obvious contamination has occurred), including light switches and door handles.

3. Additional Bathroom Sanitization

- a. We are exploring touchless paper towel and soap dispensers.
- b. Also exploring use of self-sanitizing stick-on coating (ie. NanoSeptic Self-Sanitizing Surfaces) for frequently touched surfaces in the bathrooms.

4. Ventilation

- a. Filters in existing heating/cooling units will be upgraded to Minimum Efficiency Reporting Values of at least 13 per EPA recommendations, to ensure best-possible air quality.
- b. Teachers will be encouraged to open windows weather-permitting to allow for increased flow of fresh air. Windows will not be opened if doing so would pose any health risk (triggering asthma, outdoor temperature too hot or cold, etc).
- c. Weather-permitting, all windows will be opened at the end of the school day to allow for cross-ventilation for several hours after the students leave; windows to be closed at final lock-up each day for security.

Distance Learning

This is an ongoing area of investigation by school leadership. We have reached out to our teachers to form an in-house committee to devise a comprehensive and cohesive plan to be implemented if needed.

Our goal is to remain in-person throughout the school year, though we recognize that government mandates and guidance from health officials may lead to temporary or extended closures. We aim to create a system that will allow for smooth transitions back and forth between in-person and distance learning, whether for school-wide closure or to accommodate individual student/family needs in the event of illness. A committee composed of teachers and administrators is developing a distance learning plan that will accommodate a stay-at-home order, as well as any quarantine contingencies. The response from the survey sent in the spring is providing helpful guidance to the committee.

Additional Considerations

Policies regarding physical distancing, personal protective equipment such as masks/face shields, and personal hygiene measures may change as our understanding of the situation evolves with emerging scientific evidence. School leadership and health advisory committee members will continue to review CDC guideline updates, state governmental recommendations and mandates, and other expert recommendations from the American Academy of Pediatrics, etc. throughout the year and adapt as needed to ensure safety. We have strived to maintain an objective, evidence-based approach to our safe re-opening plan and will continue to do so throughout the year.

In the event of changing guidelines/mandates regarding face coverings indoors, it may become necessary to employ clear face shields as well. We envision that cloth masks could be replaced with clear face shields while students are seated at their desks, in order to allow for a “mask break” while still maintaining a face covering. At this time, with 6-foot desk spacing, we feel that face shields are **NOT necessary** and will not require their use. However parents may wish to consider purchasing a face shield in the event that this policy must change in the future, as supply has been short and face shields may become difficult to find.

REFERENCES

CDC COVID-19: Considerations for Schools

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/schools-childcare/schools.html>

American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) COVID-19 Planning Considerations: Guidance for School Re-Entry

<https://services.aap.org/en/pages/2019-novel-coronavirus-covid-19-infections/clinical-guidance/covid-19-planning-considerations-return-to-in-person-education-in-schools/>

CDC Guidance on Face Coverings

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/prevent-getting-sick/cloth-face-cover-guidance.html>

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/schools-childcare/cloth-face-cover.html>

“Visualizing the Effectiveness of Face Masks in Obstructing Respiratory Jets”

Physics of Fluids **32**, 061708 (2020); <https://doi.org/10.1063/5.0016018>

“Aerosol Filtration Efficiency of Common Fabrics Used in Respiratory Cloth Masks”

ACS Nano **14**, 5, 6339–6347 (2020); <https://doi.org/10.1021/acsnano.0c03252>

Low-Cost Measurement of Face Mask Efficacy for Filtering Expelled Droplets During Speech”

Science Advances 07 Aug 2020;

<https://advances.sciencemag.org/content/early/2020/08/07/sciadv.abd3083>

Grace Classical Academy Community Partnership Agreement

(Please sign and return this copy)

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Parent Signature

Date