

Grace Christian Academy

COVID-19 Return to School Protocol and Procedures

In this document you will find the GCA's guidelines, requirements, and recommendations regarding the Fall 2020 school year. We know that it's imperative to allow our families time to prepare and we appreciate your patience as we researched many options and gained input from various groups such as TEA, CDC, TAPPS, and local health officials, to assist with these recommendations. Determining requirements during a pandemic is a little like building a house in the sand. While we all desire the strongest foundation possible, we must acknowledge that many elements are outside of our control and can change at any moment. These guidelines have been developed in good faith based on what we know at this time. Our goal is to adhere to them to the best of our abilities, but it is imperative to allow for some flexibility as unforeseen changes arise. It is also critical to keep in mind the greater good of all our students, faculty, staff, and families as we navigate this process. Finally, this is still a work in progress. We are continuing to examine details and will share additional information as soon as it is available.

Grace Christian Academy will conduct on-campus instruction with safety and COVID-19 prevention. Additionally, GCA has outlined an instructional model that provides for a continuation of instruction in the event a classroom or the school must temporarily move to At-Home instruction due to COVID-19. If a student or faculty member is confirmed or suspected to have COVID-19, TEA protocols for returning to campus will be followed. TEA Protocols and COVID-19 symptoms are listed at the end of this document. If you have any questions or concerns regarding this information, please email dsmith@gcahtx.com.

On-Campus Plan

GCA will begin classes on Thursday, August 27 for all students in grades K-12 unless otherwise determined by State orders. GCA has developed a set of health and prevention measures for all staff, students, and visitors. GCA will follow all state and federal requirements, rely on local health experts for guidance in decision-making, and adopt reasonable practices while maintaining an effective learning environment.

Cleaning and Disinfecting Protocol

- Frequent cleaning of classrooms, common areas, and bathrooms will occur throughout the day using hospital grade disinfectant
- Classrooms and bathrooms will be cleaned /disinfected at the end of each day
- All high touch areas will be disinfected throughout the day
- Cleaning supplies will be provided for each classroom
- Staff will have access to supplies to clean/disinfect working surfaces and shared objects after each use and during breaks in instructions
- Alcohol based hand sanitizing solution and statins will be located throughout the building

Classrooms

- Student temperature will be taken before entering the building
- Students will have very limited exposure to other grade levels or students in other classes throughout the day. Each class/grade level (cohort) will travel together throughout the day to limit exposure.
- Students socially distanced in the classroom will not be required to wear a mask in the classroom
- Anytime a student leaves or enters a classroom, they must sanitize their hands
- Student will be required to wear a mask anytime they leave the classroom.
- Parents will not be permitted in the classroom
- Desk will be spaced 6ft apart or at a maximum distance based on room size.
- Every teacher will have access to alcohol-based hand sanitizer in their rooms
- Every teacher will have access to disinfectant supplies to sanitize work surfaces
- Students will not share supplies. If, due to the nature of the class, supplies must be shared, they will be disinfected between uses.
- At the end of each period or anytime a class leaves a classroom, all desks, door handles, light switches, etc. will be disinfected prior to the next class entering the classroom
- Teachers will develop, teach, and implement procedures that:
 - Limit student movement within the classroom such as turning in assignments, materials being passed out, etc.
 - Establish student responsibilities to clean personal areas and materials/supplies.
 - Reinforce hand washing protocols and intermittent use of hand sanitizer.
 - Reduce the use of large table seating in classrooms and replace with desks when possible. If tables are used, limit the number of students per table to provide as much social distancing as possible.
 - Doors will be propped open to minimize contact with doors and door handles by students and staff entering or exiting classrooms.

Parents and Visitors

- Parents needing to check out a student will check in from outside the school entrance using the video surveillance equipment installed. The student will be brought to the parent by a GCA staff member. Only in emergency or essential situations will a parent be allowed in the building.
- GCA will utilize online meeting options to limit campus visitors and parents
- Parents will not be allowed to walk students inside the building. Parents will need to release their students to enter the building at the designated entrances
- Visitors will not be allowed in the building unless it is essential for school operations
 - Each visitor will be asked to self-screen before entering the building and must wear a mask
 - Anyone entering the building must sanitize hands upon entry
 - Visitors and staff will adhere to all safety protocols including social distancing protocol for any in person meetings
 - Cleaning and disinfecting will occur after each meeting
- Deliveries will be left outside the front doors and GCA staff will bring them into the building.

Personal Protection

- All faculty and staff will be required to self -screen for COVID-19 symptoms before coming to campus each day.
- Parents should screen children each morning prior to sending them to school. If a child has any symptoms. **Keep them home.**
- Any person in the building who develops COVID-19 like symptoms will be sent to the school nurse, placed in isolation, and sent home immediately.
- Students in grades 6-12 may wear masks in the classroom. While it is recommended, it will not be required. All students in grades 6-12 are required to wear masks anytime they are outside the classroom.
- Students younger than 10 may be asked to wear mask anytime they leave the classroom.
- Students will be instructed on proper hand sanitizing, washing and hygiene techniques (coughing and sneezing into elbow or in a tissue)

Hallways, Transition Times, Lockers, Lunch, Bathrooms, and more

Hallways and Transition Times

- Anytime a student leaves a classroom they will sanitize their hands and wear a mask.
- Anytime students enter a room from the hallway, they will sanitize their hands
- Only one class in the hallway at a time. All classes K-12 will implement staggered release procedures to ensure only one group of students will be in the hallway at a given time.
- Transition times will be limited. Students in grades 6-12 will be released from their classroom at the specified times and go directly to the next class. There will be no free time in the hallway between class periods. Grades K-5 will only leave their classroom for enrichment classes. Staggered dismissal for elementary grade levels will be in effect.

Lockers

- Lockers will not be used at this time for both Middle School and high School students. GCA has invested in a new curriculum that will limit the need for student lockers.

Lunch

- Students will be required to bring their own lunch to limit any exposure. There will be no school lunch program for the foreseeable future.
- Students will be required to bring their own water bottle. Students may refill their personal water bottle at designated time throughout the day.
- All students will eat in their classrooms. The cafeteria will not be used for the foreseeable future.
- High School: To minimize foot traffic in the building and to allow for adequate physical distancing for students during eating periods, no outside food deliveries will be accepted and there will be no visitors allowed in the building. These restrictions may loosen as the year progresses; however, it is important to allow campus staff the flexibility to space out students throughout common areas so that social distancing is possible.
 - International students will receive a grab and go lunch as part of their contracted tuition payment

Bathrooms

- Bathrooms will be cleaned and disinfected throughout the day
- GCA will employ the “one out – one in” protocol throughout the day

Nurse

- Students needing the nurse will be asked to wait outside the classroom with a mask on until the nurse arrives and escorts the student to the nurse’s office.
- Students temperature will be taken each time they enter the nurse’s office and if a student shows any COVID-19 symptoms, they will be isolated and sent home.

Physical Education, Recess

- Visual markers will be on the gym floor and bleachers as reminders of social distancing rules.
- Locker room and class size will be determining factors when it comes to dressing out for secondary physical education classes.
- Students will be placed in smaller, appropriate groups for instruction and activities for appropriate social distancing.
- Students will need to provide their own water bottles.
- Restroom use will be the practice of “one in and one out.”
- Equipment will be disinfected after each use. Any activities bringing students into close physical contact will be avoided. Activities requiring multiple students to touch or handle the same equipment will be avoided.
- Sanitizing areas and access to handwashing will be provided.
- Students will be allowed outside recess but will not be allowed to play games that require proximity. The playground equipment will be off limits to all students during school hours.

At- Home instruction

In the event a classroom or a school has 10% of the student/staff population with COVID-19 at one time, or otherwise determined by the Head of School, students will move to At-Home Learning. This **will not** be programming like that of the Spring 2020 emergency closure. The GCA At-Home learning model will allow students to temporarily learn from home while teacher(s) deliver instruction in real time (synchronous instruction) as well as self-paced work (asynchronous instruction). Classes will proceed on a similar schedule as the regular school day. GCA has invested in resources that will allow all K-12 classes to provide virtual learning in a comprehensive manner.

- Students will have a formal start and end time of the school day during School-to-Home learning.
- Daily attendance will be required.
- Students will receive direct authentic instruction from their teachers as well as participate in group and individual work.
- GCA traditional grading system is maintained including GPA and Class Rank.
- Teachers will provide instruction from within in a GCA classroom (unless given an exemption by GCA Administration), delivering instruction in real-time for a large portion of the day. Internet and computer access is necessary for K-12. Individual technology needs will be addressed.

COVID-19 Symptoms

In evaluating whether an individual has symptoms consistent with COVID-19, consider the following questions:

Have they recently begun experiencing any of the following in a way that is not normal for them? o

- Feeling feverish or a measured temperature greater than or equal to 100.0 degrees Fahrenheit o
- Loss of taste or smell
- Cough
- Difficulty breathing
- Shortness of breath
- Headache
- Chills
- Sore throat
- Shaking or exaggerated shivering
- Significant muscle pain or ache
- Diarrhea

Close Contact

This document refers to “close contact” with an individual who is lab-confirmed to have COVID-19. Close contact is determined by an appropriate public health agency. For clarity, close contact is defined as:

- a. being directly exposed to infectious secretions (e.g., being coughed on while not wearing a mask or face shield);
or
- b. being within 6 feet for a cumulative duration of 15 minutes, while not wearing a mask or face shield.

if either occurred at any time in the last 14 days at the same time the infected individual was infectious.

Individuals are presumed infectious at least two days prior to symptom onset or, in the case of asymptomatic individuals who are lab-confirmed with COVID-19, two days prior to the confirming lab test.

TEA Protocol for Confirmed or suspected cases of COVID-19

Any individuals who themselves either: (a) are lab-confirmed to have COVID-19; or (b) experience the symptoms of COVID-19 (listed above) must stay at home throughout the infection period, and cannot return to campus until the school system screens the individual to determine any of the below conditions for campus re-entry have been met: o

In the case of an individual who was diagnosed with COVID-19, the individual may return to school when all three of the following criteria are met:

- at least three days (72 hours) have passed since recovery (resolution of fever without the use of fever-reducing medications);
- the individual has improvement in symptoms (e.g., cough, shortness of breath); and
- at least ten days have passed since symptoms first appeared.

In the case of an individual who has symptoms that could be COVID-19 and who is not evaluated by a medical professional or tested for COVID-19, such individual is assumed to have COVID-19, and the individual may not return to the campus until the individual has completed the same three-step set of criteria listed above.

If the individual has symptoms that could be COVID-19 and wants to return to school before completing the above stay at home period, the individual must either (a) obtain a medical professional's note clearing the individual for return based on an alternative diagnosis or (b) receive two separate confirmations at least 24 hours apart that they are free of COVID via acute infection tests at an approved COVID-19 testing location found at <https://tdem.texas.gov/covid-19/>. Identifying

Possible COVID-19 Cases on Campus

Schools must immediately separate any student who shows COVID-19 symptoms while at school until the student can be picked up by a parent or guardian. Schools should clean the areas used by the individual who shows COVID-19 symptoms while at school (student, teacher, or staff) as soon as is feasible. Students who report feeling feverish should be given an immediate temperature check to determine if they are symptomatic for COVID-19