



GSD Fall 2021 COVID Protocols

Last year, with the support of our community, our district did an outstanding job remaining flexible while balancing all of the additional external pressures via state and local mandates (masks, quarantines, social distancing, etc.) while keeping the most important goal in mind, providing a safe, in person learning environment as much as possible. It is our goal once again to provide in-person learning on a consistent basis and know that the best way to achieve this is through a balanced approach that allows us to accomplish our two main goals: promoting the health and safety of our students and providing all students a high quality learning experience.

While we know that our GSD students have had access to more in person learning than most school districts during the pandemic, we also know that it's time that all our students return to a **full, five day a week schedule** of in person learning. We know that education is the key to increased opportunity in our students' lives, that our community has consistently communicated the importance of in person learning, and that our dedicated and talented staff can provide a safe learning environment even in the midst of a pandemic. We also recognize that many of our parents work and need their children at school everyday. GSD will make all decisions about COVID protocols using this balanced approach to both maximize student health and safety and student learning.

We worked throughout the 2020-2021 school year to ensure that we kept learning and safety at the forefront of our decision-making and know that the decisions that we made regardless if made by choice or mandate were not always in alignment with every family's stance. We recognize that this school year will bring much of the same and while there are many differing views on the importance of COVID and the impact it should have on the school setting, we are absolutely committed to providing an even better experience for our students this year regardless of whether families choose in person learning or our outstanding virtual program through Lakeshore Virtual.

As of the date of this letter, the federal government has mandated masks on all school buses, however, the State of Michigan has lifted all COVID-related mandates and restrictions for all other school buildings and facilities. MDHHS and WCHD have only produced recommendations for the 21-22 school year. As we have done throughout this pandemic, GSD has followed all mandates and does support the importance of masking during these uncertain times. Therefore, at this time, masks are **strongly recommended** for the 2021-2022 school year in all GSD buildings and **required** for all students who ride the bus (see below for more bus masking details). This recommendation may change at any time especially if it allows us to maintain in person learning. Please be advised that we **strongly recommend** the wearing of masks by all staff and students, regardless of vaccination status. Moving forward, we will address COVID protocols such as masks through a layered approach that is responsive to school and local data. Such measures are designed to add additional mitigation strategies as needed to continue in person learning at our schools. All students, staff, and families should prepare for these responsive changes this year. We appreciate any steps that families can take to prepare their children for this potential reality.

Below are a few of the current COVID protocols that will be in place and [FAQ](#) for further guidance and protocols. Please be aware that we **strongly recommend** the wearing of masks by all staff and students, regardless of vaccination status. Having in person learning is only going to work if we have the majority of parents and students that share the exact same goal. We did a great job last year and know that together we can keep that momentum going into the 2021-2022 school year!

Experiencing Symptoms/Daily Screener

All students (to be completed by parent or guardian), will use the daily self-screening checklist everyday before attending school, camp, or any other activity on District property. Please do not send your child to school if they are not feeling well. The self-screening checklists can be viewed here:

- o [COVID-19 Screening Tool for Families](#)
- o [COVID 19 Family Screener and Transportation Videos](#)

If your student is experiencing one of the symptoms below that is unrelated to a known pre-existing condition, they will need to stay home. They can return to school with a Doctor's note stating that their symptoms are not COVID-related or with a negative PCR COVID test, or they will follow the current quarantining protocols outlined below.

Box A

- Fever? (100.4° F or greater)
- Cough?
- Shortness of breath?
- Difficulty breathing?
- Loss of smell or taste?

Does your child have at least **1** of these symptoms?

YES NO

If your child is experiencing one of the symptoms listed below and has not been exposed to COVID, your child must stay home for 24 hours and be symptom-free without the use of medication to reduce or minimize the symptom before returning to school. If your child is experiencing two of the symptoms listed below, they can return to school with a Doctor's note stating that their symptoms are not COVID-related or with a negative PCR COVID test, or they will follow the current quarantining protocols outlined below.

Box B

- Vomiting or diarrhea?
- Headache?
- Sore throat?
- Runny nose and/or congestion?
- Body aches and/or tiredness?

Does your child have at least **2** of these symptoms?

YES NO

Quarantine Protocols:

***Please note that quarantine protocols are subject to change at any time and for certain circumstances, based on consultation with the Wayne County Health Department (WCHD). Generally, the standard quarantine length is 10-14 days with no early return option. In certain circumstances, quarantine protocol 2 or 3 may be offered by the district.**

***No rapid (antigen or otherwise) tests will be accepted, only PCR tests are accepted as evidence of COVID-19 positive or COVID-19 negative results.**

Vaccinated Individuals:

Generally, if a student or staff member is vaccinated, no quarantine is required if they are a close contact to a positive case. If a vaccinated student or staff member tests positive, the below protocol will be implemented for quarantine.

Protocol 1: 10-14 day quarantine from symptom onset date or positive PCR test date if asymptomatic

Unvaccinated Individuals:

Protocol 1: 10-14 day quarantine (depending on exposure circumstance)

Protocol 2: On day 7 of quarantine, may get a PCR test, if PCR is negative, then can return before day 10, with no symptoms

Protocol 3: If a unvaccinated student, chooses to properly wear a mask **at all times** (except when eating or outside for recess/activity) and they are deemed a close contact **within the classroom** setting, they may continue to attend school, while continuing to properly wear a mask as long as they are symptom-free. The continuous wearing of a mask must be verified by each teacher they see on a daily basis for this protocol to remain a possibility.

Masks may be mandated at any time for three reasons:

1) It is **Mandated** by the WCHD or is an order from the MDHHS/State of Michigan

2) **In School Outbreaks/Undetermined or Uncontrolled School Spread:**

During the 2020-2021 school year, there was very little evidence of virus transmission within a school setting. This was true of school districts across the state and nation who had layered mitigation measures in place (social distancing, hand washing, mask wearing, etc.). In the event that we begin to see evidence of significant spread within the school setting, masks may then be required. This will be especially true if the source of the spread cannot be determined and/or if corrective measures cannot be taken to mitigate future spread. Just like last year, it is extremely important that parents do not send sick children to school for any reason.

3) Attendance Rates:

During the 2020-2021 school year, amidst the pandemic, schools in Michigan were given flexibility around meeting the normal attendance for students. The State of Michigan legislature adjusted the Michigan School Code to relax these attendance requirements anticipating student and staff quarantines, as well as periods of remote/virtual learning.

In a typical school year, however, state law requires that students attend school for a minimum of 180 school days AND a total of 1098 hours. Additionally, in order for an individual school day to actually count as one of the 180 school days, at least 75% of students must be in attendance. On any given day, if fewer than 75% of students are in attendance, that school day will need to be made up. For the 2021-2022 school year, these laws are back in place with zero option for flexibility regardless of whether attendance at school is pandemic-related.

To avoid adding additional days to the school calendar, all students and staff will be required to wear a mask if attendance rates are trending downward and the district is in danger of not meeting the attendance requirements of the Michigan School Code outlined above. Should attendance rates improve and no longer be considered a concern, masks will no longer be required.

Masks are Mandated for all Bus Riders, Drivers and Bus Aides

Currently, **all** bus drivers, bus aides, and riders are required to wear a mask while riding the school bus. This is mandated through an [executive order](#) issued by the Federal Government/CDC. In accordance with this order, masks are **required** for all staff and students while on school buses, until further notice. Additional information on this order can be found [here](#). If a student enters a bus without a mask, a mask will be provided to them. If a student refuses to wear a mask, they may have their privileges to ride the bus removed.

- [COVID 19 Family Screener and Transportation Videos](#)