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# 2021-2022 GTCHS SCHOOL OPERATIONAL PLAN

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This document was created with guidance provided by the Center for Disease Control (CDC), SC Department of Health and Environmental Control (DHEC), SC State Department of Education (SDE), Governor's Office, the South Carolina Public Charter School District, and input from parent and faculty surveys, a student focus group, and teacher review.

Our priorities for opening schools are as follows:

- Maintaining the health and safety of our students, employees, and GTCHS families.
- Returning to face-to-face instruction as quickly and safely as possible.
- Remaining flexible and altering procedures if health issues dictate.
- Providing options (when possible) for parents, students, and employees when returning to school is not possible because of health concerns.

Any scenario in which many people gather together poses a potential risk for COVID-19 transmission. No policy or procedure created can provide a 100% guarantee that the virus will not be transmitted in our schools. GTCHS's goal will be to limit the transmission as much as possible. While children generally experience mild symptoms with COVID-19, and transmission from even those with mild or non-apparent symptoms remain a risk to others. All of our plans are predicated on the fact that everyone in the school is responsible to work together as a community to make it possible for face-to-face instruction to take place.

Operational Model Options	
Normal Schedule	Utilize face-to-face instruction for all students with safety protocols in place.
Remote Learning	Utilize distance learning for all students

As always, it is our desire to have students back in school, and we continue to believe it is the most beneficial way for our students to make gains academically, full time distance learning has many challenges that include limited or lack of daycare options for teachers, families with students at multiple schools not being on the same schedule, accurate assessment of student learning, and ensuring students maintain a high level of engagement. **With that said, decisions of which operational model will be in place will be primarily based on the rate of spread within the GTCHS school community; the ability to fully staff every classroom to provide appropriate teaching and supervision of students; and recommendations from the CDC and DHEC as well as local and state government agencies. School administration will continue to monitor local activity and rate of spread.**

- Administration will review the reports weekly and apprise the board monthly of the current level of COVID-19 spread in the local and school community.
- If the school is operating on normal schedule and 20% or more of cases are within the school community (**students and faculty who have been on campus within the past 48 hours**), an immediate shift to remote learning will take place for at least one week.
- If the school is unable to be fully staffed, the principal may notify parents of an immediate return to remote learning until the school can be fully staffed.
- All eligible school community members will be encouraged to be vaccinated to mitigate community spread.
- The board will review the rate of spread at each monthly board meeting; the operational plan will be officially reviewed every 6 months in addition to that.

## REMOTE LEARNING MODEL

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During Remote Learning, the following will take place:

Required synchronous class meetings the first 45 minutes of every class period

“Live” office hours every Friday

Additions and clarifications of assessment guidelines

Training videos and lessons provided for both students and parents on virtual technology usage and the Google Classroom platform/calendar

Teachers will be expected to be on campus daily and to hold “Live” office hours every Friday

This model will be clearly outlined for all stakeholders on our school website. All updates will be made available on our current eLearning website page.

## NORMAL SCHEDULE

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Full-time, five days a week, face-to-face instruction is considered to be the most effective. It is understood that social distancing options are more limited due to our school layout (to the point where it is almost impossible during some points of the day) with as little as one foot between students at times. Social distancing of 6 feet is not guaranteed; a minimum of 3 feet is encouraged. There is space for students who wish to social distance during lunch if they choose to do so. Students who are unable or who choose not to be vaccinated will have to quarantine if they are exposed and considered in close contact to COVID19 while at school.

## SAFETY AND LOGISTICAL PROTOCOLS & PROCEDURES

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### General Safeguard Guidelines

- Students and staff who are vaccinated may choose to not wear a mask while inside the building. Staff and students who are not vaccinated are encouraged to wear a mask; there will be an opt-out form available for those who choose not to do so. Extra disposable masks will be on hand for students to purchase as needed.
- Require social distancing (to include not touching others – i.e. hugs, hand shakes, or any other personal touch between people - unless it is necessary due to medical or safety needs).
- Continue regular cleaning through the day of “high touch” areas (railings, bathrooms, and door handles will be sanitized each class period)
- Signage will encourage hand sanitizing and hand washing.
- The school will provide sanitizing spray and paper towels to teachers, who will use it as they deem appropriate, while also offering all students the opportunity to sanitize their desk if the teacher does not initiate this between classes.
- Reduce the sharing of materials and provide essential materials when possible.
- Minimize materials moving from school to home and returning.
- Establish mobile library safety check-out/in procedures.
- Busses will be cleaned using an electrostatic sprayer after each use.
- Evaluate school activities and services and ensure they meet all precautions taken during the regular school day.
- Evaluate flexible seating; students should be assigned a desk/space that is facing forward where possible. Students will have access to a portable/removable barrier in each classroom if they would like one.
- Provide parents the option of video conferencing when applicable.
- Keep each students’ belongings separated from other student belongings.
- A portion of the lunch tables will have plexiglass barriers for students.
- Ensure communication to parents, students, and staff members is regularly shared regarding the expectation of daily self-assessment using screening questions to determine if a student or employee can enter the school building:
  - Have you or anyone in your household had any of the following symptoms in the last 14 days - cough, fever of 100.4 or higher, difficulty breathing, chills, aches, loss of taste or smell, nausea, and/or sore throat?
  - Have you or anyone in your household been tested for COVID-19 in the last 14 days?
  - Have you or anyone in your household been in “close contact” as defined by DHEC with anyone suspected to have COVID-19 or who has tested positive for COVID-19 in the past 14 days?

### Cleaning and Hygiene

- Ensure adequate supplies to support healthy hygiene behaviors (e.g., soap, hand sanitizer with at least 60 percent alcohol for safe use by staff and students, paper towels, and tissues).
- Reinforce handwashing with soap and water for at least 20 seconds and/or the safe use of hand sanitizer that contains at least 60% alcohol by staff and students.
- Reinforce handwashing protocols during key times - Before, during and after preparing food; Before eating food; After using the toilet; After blowing your nose, coughing or sneezing; After touching objects with bare hands which have been handled by other individuals.
- Provide hand sanitizer (with at least 60% alcohol) at every building entrance and exit, in the MPR, and in every classroom for safe use by staff and students.
- Systematically and frequently check and refill hand sanitizers.
- Encourage staff and students to cough and sneeze into their elbows, or to cover with a tissue. Used tissues should be thrown in the trash and hands washed immediately with soap and water for at least 20 seconds.
- Establish a schedule for and perform ongoing and routine [cleaning and disinfection](#) of high-touch areas (e.g., door handles, stair rails, faucet handles, toilet handles, drinking fountains, light switches, kitchen countertops, cafeteria and service tables, carts, and trays) with an [EPA approved disinfectant for SARS-CoV-2](#). Increasing frequency of disinfection during high-density times and disinfecting all shared objects (e.g., gym or physical education equipment, art supplies, games) between classes.
- Ensure [safe and correct use](#) and storage of cleaning and disinfecting products, including securely storing and using products away from children, and allowing for adequate ventilation when staff use such products.
- Eliminate sharing of personal items and supplies such as writing utensils and paper.
- Keep students' personal items separate and (as appropriate) individually labeled cubbies, containers or lockers.
- Avoid shared use of soft or other items that cannot be easily cleaned and disinfected, (e.g. clay in art class).
- Begin the school year teaching the essential hygiene practices and new COVID-19 school policies.
- Supplies for each classroom: Hand sanitizer; Disinfecting cleaner; Paper towels; Tissues; Gloves

### **Communication and Review of the Plan**

- Provide the draft plan to key stakeholders in order to provide review and feedback.
- Establish two-way ongoing communication with the school community in order to provide opportunities for meaningful dialogue and clarity. Offer a "town hall" with the principal at least once per semester throughout the school year.
- Clearly communicate all new safety protocols and procedures.
- Publish the final plan on the school website.
- The operational plan will be officially reviewed by the board every October and April.

## Transportation

- Ensure the number of students on the bus to not exceed 67% of the maximum of the standard capacity appropriate for the students' age per DHEC guidelines. Students may not ride 3 to a seat.
- Assign students to seats and load from the back to the front of the bus.
- Establish a cleaning and disinfecting schedule between each cohort of students riding the bus.
- Encourage fresh air ventilation when the bus is in service.
- Encourage non-vaccinated students to wear face coverings.
- Provide hand sanitizer to students upon entering the school bus.

## Facilities

- Remind students and staff that they are encouraged to stay at least 3 feet apart in lines and at other times when they may congregate where it is practical and can be enforced. Arrows and lines will be designated where practical.
- Use two air purifiers in every classroom and one in office areas.
- Provide arrows and signage for one-way traffic in hallways where it is practical.
- Provide clear barriers (Plexiglass) in classrooms for students who would like to use them and in key areas such as MPR, at counselor desks, in the Charter Café, etc.
- Stagger entrance and exit times as necessary.
- Provide frequent reminders, including signage and verbal reminders, for students and staff to stay apart from one another when feasible.
- Provide marks on the floors of restrooms to indicate proper social distancing. Limit the number in the restroom at one time (number is based on the size of restroom and number of stalls).
- Arrange seating/desks to allow for maximum physical distancing in all classrooms and in MPR. Remove (where possible) any unnecessary furniture and instructional materials to maximize distance between students. Assign seats in classroom to help track virus spread if a student/staff tests positive for COVID-19 and those around him/her are not vaccinated.
- Disable all water fountains except for the no-touch water bottle refill. Students may bring a water bottle with them daily. The front office will have small disposable cups for students who forget their water bottle.
- Eliminate shared food being brought in for classroom parties and/or birthday celebrations.
- Food will be served in individual packaging with no options of open areas of food.
- Surfaces should be cleaned after meals using an approved cleaning solution.

## *Classroom Cleaning Protocol*

The following General Safety Precautions are recommended guidelines for teachers to follow when cleaning various objects and areas within their classrooms throughout the instructional day. This is not replacing the role of custodians but practices to keep in place as transitions take place during and in between classes:

- Maintain safe practices based on CDC Guidelines to include frequent handwashing, covering coughs, etc.
- Implement classroom practices that reduce the potential for exposure.
- Maintain social distancing based on CDC Guidelines.
- All vaccinated employees do not have to wear a mask. Non-Vaccinated employees are encouraged to wear a mask when inside. An opt-out form is available through the principal's office.
- Reduce the sharing of common spaces and the handling of objects within the classroom.
- Custodians will clean and disinfect classrooms, MPR, the Charter Café, etc. at the end of each day.
- Custodians will clean and disinfect all hand rails and bathrooms following each class change each day.
- Hard or non-porous materials are easier to clean; therefore, it is expected that soft and porous items are only used and present in the classroom if necessary and required.
- Students will be provided the option to clean and disinfect their own desk if they choose. Teachers will be provided supplies if they choose to clean desks between classes. Surface-to-Surface contact has not been shown to be extremely high risk. Students should be provided an assigned seat each class period.

## **Health Room and Response to Illness within our Community**

- Educate staff, students, and their families about the signs and symptoms of COVID-19, when they should stay home and when they can return to school (self-assessment protocols).
- Create an isolation space for anyone exhibiting Covid-19 symptoms.
- Determine a dedicated path to exit the building from the isolation room. This should be as close as possible to a dedicated exit or with a defined exit path that minimizes contact with others in the building.
- Ensure areas of infection are immediately *closed* off for a minimum of 24 hours with a robust *cleaning* and disinfecting plan per CDC guidelines when an exposure to COVID-19 occurs.
- Increase signage related to safety awareness and safety precautions, symptoms, hygiene, hand washing, use of gloves (putting on and taking off) and proper face mask wearing.
- Clearly communicate the procedure for when a student or employee has a fever over 100.4 (as detected with a non-contact thermometer)
  - If the student does have a fever they will be escorted to the isolation room and a parent will be called to come and pick the student up; if the student is able to drive safely and has the permission of the parent, he/she would be allowed to drive

home. The student should be escorted out at a time that will have the least interaction with other students and adults when leaving.

- If faculty/staff has a fever they will be sent home immediately.

- Implement recommended CDC and DHEC guidelines for all students or staff who have been in “close contact” with someone suspected of having COVID-19 including, but not limited to, obtaining a list of all people the person has been in close contact with, notifying all affected individuals, and ensuring all areas the person has been are cleaned and disinfected. **Students, faculty, and staff who have been vaccinated will not have to quarantine or isolate.**
- Procedures for return to work or school after being sent home for symptoms (See DHEC Guidance).
  - Advise sick staff members and children not to return until they have met criteria for return.
  - Students or staff excluded for these symptoms should not return until they have either tested negative for COVID-19 or a medical evaluation determines that their symptoms were more likely due to another cause (e.g. sore throat due to strep throat). In this later case, the individual can return when they meet criteria for that condition.

Current isolation criteria for COVID-19:

- Students and staff who test positive for COVID-19 and persons with symptoms of COVID19 (fever or chills; cough; shortness of breath or difficulty breathing; fatigue; muscle or body aches; headache; new loss of taste or smell; sore throat; congestion or runny nose; nausea or vomiting; diarrhea) who do not get tested, should isolate until:
  - Ten (10) days have passed since symptoms started - and
  - Three (3) days (72 hours) have passed since last fever without taking medicine to reduce fever - and
  - Overall improvement in symptoms.
- Those who test positive by a PCR test but do not have symptoms will be required to stay out of school until ten (10) days after the specimen was collected.
- The criteria above should be used to determine eligibility to return to school. Negative PCR test results are not required after meeting these criteria.

### **School Safety, Mental Health, and Social Emotional Support**

- Review the Mental Health Assessment Team protocols established in the spring to ensure there is a clear referral system for students and an appropriate assessment tool to assist in identifying individuals (both staff and students) requiring interventions beyond the initial corporate “check-in.” Those needing additional support will be provided additional options (school counselor services, referrals to community-based mental health services that can be provided on campus).
- Ensure availability of a mental health counselor on campus at least once a week.
- Provide resources for staff well-care efforts and additional mindfulness training to provide ongoing support.

- Revisit bully prevention plan to account for potential new sources of bullying and harassment in schools due to COVID-19 (Students who personally contract COVID-19; students who may have been exposed; students who utilize protective measures, students who have - or have not been vaccinated - and/or threats made by students to expose someone to COVID-19).
- Review of all emergency drills (active shooter, fire, tornado, earthquake, bus evacuation) and shelter-in-place procedures in order to make modifications to encompass social distancing or a shift to scenario-based activities.

## EMPLOYEE CONSIDERATIONS AND SUPPORT

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*Ensure professional development and training opportunities on the following:*

- New safety protocols and procedures related to minimizing the transmission of COVID-19.
- Distance learning formats, procedures, instructional best practices, and ways to encourage family engagement.
- Social emotional check-in protocols, social justice, and trauma informed support.
- Multi-tiered System of Support (MTSS) with specific attention to Tier 1 intervention and support for students.
- Any changes to emergency drills (Active Intruder, Fire, Hurricane) in regards to social distancing based on appropriate agency recommendations.
- Any changes to SCDE learning standards and a review of pacing by subject area and department.

### *Protecting Vulnerable Populations*

Employees should immediately notify the Principal and Assistant Principal of Instruction if they self-identify as high risk and are requesting considerations of reasonable accommodation for condition(s) below ([CDC Guidance](#)):

- 65 years and older
- Chronic lung disease or moderate to severe asthma
- Serious heart conditions
- Immunocompromised- Many conditions can cause a person to be immunocompromised, including but not limited to cancer treatment, smoking, bone marrow or organ transplantation, immune deficiencies, poorly controlled HIV or AIDS, and prolonged use of corticosteroids and other immune weakening medications
- Severe obesity (body mass index [BMI] of 40 or higher)
- Diabetes
- Chronic kidney disease undergoing dialysis
- Liver disease



### *Instructional Support, Delivery, and Continuity of Services*

- Clarify State Department Guidelines concerning Student Learning Objectives (SLO's) and requirements for induction/ADEPT teachers
- Ensure frequent check-in with department colleagues and administration to support the instructional model implemented
- Ensure clear guidelines for teachers including (but not limited to) daily schedule, daily expectations, student requirements (including attendance, deadlines, assessments), best practices for delivery content and grading, communication plans, IEPs, Substitute plans, handling student absences, etc.
- Provide Physical Education and performance fine art classes information on current best practice and safety protocols; assist them in developing classroom practices that meet all recommended guidelines. See <https://www.scmca.net/covid19/> and <https://www.shapeamerica.org/covid19-resources.aspx>
- Opportunities for students to pick up any materials, supplies, technology, etc. will be offered. If a student is unable to pick up due to family circumstances or quarantine, school personnel will deliver the items through a porch drop-off system.

### SPECIAL EDUCATION CONSIDERATIONS

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- Complete initial evaluations and reevaluations regardless of school model in place.
- Conduct eligibility meetings, IEP meetings, and other meetings once all required components have been gathered.
- Assess the impact on students and learning loss supports that can be offered.
- Determine how services might safely be delivered for students that will not be able to return to school.
- Resource teachers and ML teachers are expected to collaborate with the student's general education teacher to provide access to the general education curriculum. All resource teachers will provide lessons, support, and direction regardless of which model the school is operating on.

**Students with IEPs, 504 Plans, and English Learners will receive an instructional delivery model, chosen by the parent, that includes appropriate services, related services, supports, accommodations, and/or modifications designed to provide meaningful educational benefit (FAPE) in the least restrictive environment.**

### OPERATIONAL DECISION MAKING

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Administration will utilize current CDC and DHEC guidelines when making instructional and operational decisions. Activities or actions should not be conducted if determined to be high risk based upon the current best practices.

## ATTACHMENT A: CLEANING PROTOCOL

The following are suggested guidelines for cleaning various objects and areas within classrooms throughout the instructional day. This is not replacing the role of custodians but practices to keep in place as transitions take place during and in between classes. These would allow for added safety measures.

### General Safety Precautions:

- Maintain safe practices based on CDC Guidelines to include frequent handwashing, covering coughs, etc.
- Implement classroom practices that reduce the potential for exposure.
- Maintain social distancing based on CDC Guidelines
- All employees are required to wear a face covering over their mouth and nose.
- Reduce the sharing of common spaces and the handling of objects within the classroom.
- Custodians will clean and disinfect classrooms, MPR, common areas, etc. at the end of each day. Hand rails & bathrooms will be sanitized between each class period.
- Busses and the auditorium will be clean daily utilizing the electrostatic sprayer; classrooms will be done as needed.

Type of Material	Examples	Protocol for Cleaning
<p><b>Hard or Non-Porous Materials like Glass, Metal, Wood or Plastic</b></p> <p><i>*The virus lasts for approximately 72 hours on a hard surface.</i></p>	<p>Manipulatives                      Classroom libraries / book sets                      Desks / chairs                      Small Group Tables                      Individual classroom Supplies                      Shared classroom supplies                      Pencil sharpener                      * (consider designating a single person for this role)                      Doorknobs                      Bathroom Passes                      In Classroom Sink Areas / Cabinets                      *Smart Boards                      *Devices</p>	<p>Spray bottles will be provided with cleaning disinfectant solution. Use cloth provided to wipe surfaces clean as needed (exception: Smart Boards, devices). For Smart Boards and devices (including keyboard), alcohol wipes should be used.</p> <p>Personal, single use classroom supplies that are used by one student only do not need to be cleaned daily.</p> <p>For shared supplies / resources, cleaning should take place after each use. The wait time for reuse of the materials is approximately 10 minutes. The solution needs to be dry prior to reuse.</p>
<p><b>Soft or porous materials like paper, carpet, rugs, or materials in seating areas</b></p> <p>Hard or non-porous materials are easier to clean using the solution; therefore, it is expected that soft and porous items are only used and present in the classroom if necessary and required (Rugs, bean bags, pillows, and cushion-type sitting).</p>	<p>Manipulatives                      Classroom libraries / book sets                      chairs                      Individual classroom supplies                      Shared classroom supplies</p>	<p>Classroom libraries / book sets should sit for a period of 48 hours prior to reuse.</p> <p>Bathroom passes should be non-porous.</p>

**Provided by GTCHS: Gloves, Trashbags, Alcohol wipes, Solution Spray Bottles, Paper Towels, Masks, Shields**