

2020-2021 SCHOOL YEAR GUIDANCE

*The heart of man plans his way,
but the LORD establishes his steps.
Proverbs 16:9*

What follows is the school's plan for operation during the period of heightened concern for and governmental mandates surrounding the COVID-19 pandemic. This plan is subject to adjustment as the health, social, and governmental conditions of the situation change.

Is it safe enough to send my child to school?

From what has been gleaned from the medical professionals consulted by the board, we feel that returning to school *does not* constitute an inordinate risk to our children and families. Not only have recent studies demonstrated the social and mental health risks of keeping students out of school, but many schools worldwide have restarted school with very low rates of COVID-19 transmission. We ourselves are not medical professionals, but the board members and teachers of the school would not agree to a school restart if we felt we would be putting a child or family inappropriately in harm's way.

At the same time, when we say in our mission statement that we intend to "partner with parents", we are stating that decisions relating to your child's well-being are in *your* hands. As with many areas regarding safety, from the security procedures and drills to the mulch on the playground, The Christian School of Grace Baptist Church will take reasonable precautions to protect the students of our school. However, as with all such things, we simply cannot *guarantee* that these measures will unequivocally protect your child from any danger while at school - COVID-19 included. Just as with previous school years, parents who decide to enroll their students in school are agreeing to accept these risks, and regard the benefits of in-school education greater than the risks.

Any family which is not comfortable accepting the risks of school participation should not send their child to school. We understand that there are heightened risks for some members of Grace families and we hold no ill will against those who decided not to enroll because of extenuating health concerns.

When is the first day of school?

Lord willing, the first day of school will remain Wednesday, August 26th. We plan to hold school five full days a week at our normal time. Pre-K and Kindergarten will follow their normal partial day/week schedules as well.

Will kids have to wear face coverings?

****Updated 8/20/2020* The governor's current face covering order (click [here](#) to view) that applies to our school **requires face coverings *even if a distance of 6 feet between people can be maintained.***

There are a limited number of exceptions to the face covering mandate:

- When eating or drinking where physically distanced.
- When participating in physical activity (P.E., recess, sports, etc.) while physically distanced.
- When wearing a face covering is unsafe in executing a task
- When a mental health condition or disability precludes the wearing of a face covering in school
- When taking a "face covering break" (no longer than 10 minutes at a time) in a physically distanced setting.

We are also aware of the potential for quarantine because of potential contact tracing for both teachers and students. Therefore we hope to continue our plan of keeping physically distanced so that should a positive case of COVID-19 be reported in our school, the number of those who would be considered in “close contact” (which is defined by the CDC as being “within 6 feet of an infected person for at least 15 minutes”) would be minimized or eliminated.

To keep physical distanced, teachers are working to put in place measures such as these:

- Classes will be moving in the hallways at specifically scheduled times to maintain physical distancing.
- Hallway movement will be “one way” around the block in the elementary section of the building.
- Only a limited number of students will be allowed to enter the bathrooms at a time.
- Rooms like the library and fellowship hall will have designated “in” and “out” doors.

Will transportation by public school districts be affected?

So far, local school districts have been very accommodating in working out situations to get our students to school, even if their transporting school district is not transporting its own students. As of now, no transportation issues are outstanding. Please contact Allison Stine to make the school aware of any transportation-related difficulties you encounter in getting your child to school.

Some schools are planning for a hybrid instruction plan with kids in attendance only part of the week. Is Grace considering this?

No. Many schools are considering this hybrid option in order to lower the number of students in each class. Because our class sizes are small, this is not necessary.

Is virtual or remote learning an option?

Remote learning will be considered if a student or students must be at home for an extended period of time. This may occur if there is a positive COVID-19 test (see below), if the school is physically closed by a governmental order, or if a multiplicity of positive cases arises in the school and greater precaution is deemed appropriate.

What is the school doing to help deter the spread of COVID-19?

- **Daily temperature checks:** Following the practice of many institutions and the advice of consulted medical professionals, all staff and students will have their temperatures checked upon arriving at school. Students with a fever of 100°F or higher will be sent home. If a student or teacher has a positive COVID-19 test, his/her class members will undergo an additional mid-day temperature check for the next 14 days (while at school).
- **Cleaning:** Proper cleaning practices will be reviewed with staff and students. Additional cleaning will take place in the classrooms (desks, etc.) and high-touch common areas around the school. Places with shared student use (ie. computer lab) will be cleaned before and/or after each student use.
- **Hygiene:** Teachers will review and remind students of good hygienic practices such as proper hand washing and helpful sneezing/coughing techniques. Teachers will also be scheduling designated hand washing times throughout the day.
- **Space:** Teachers will adjust seating arrangements and daily routines to mitigate close contact between students, both in their classroom and with other grades. Students desks will be spread apart and shared tables will have dividers. This includes the computer lab. Procedures for large group meetings (chapel, etc.) will be amended to allow greater space between students.

- **Common Classroom Practices:** Teachers have reworked practices like the passing out of books and the sharpening of pencils at a common sharpener. Common shared items are being replaced with individual items or sets as needed.
- **School Office:** Students coming to the school office with a fever/symptoms will be given a face covering and quarantined in a separate space until a parent or emergency contact is able to pick them up.
- **Parent Communication:** While the school will maintain the privacy of students as per state and federal law, the school will notify families of a positive COVID-19 test in their child's class.

What can parents do to help deter the spread of COVID-19 in our school community?

Parents can help by following these guidelines:

Fever:

- **NEW:** Children should not be sent to school if they are sick or have a fever of **100.0 °F** or higher.
- Children may return to school after **48 hours** of being fever free without the aid of fever reducing medication, and if other symptoms have shown signs of improvement.

Suspected Cases:

- Children should be kept at home if a member of their **household** has a **suspected** case of COVID-19 and may return upon a confirmed negative COVID-19 test result in the suspected member.
- If a child is suspected of having COVID-19 and is consequently tested, they may return to school after receiving a negative test result *and* clearance to return by a health professional.

Confirmed Cases:

- If a member of the household tests positive for COVID-19, children should be kept at home until all members of the household are symptom-free for two weeks.
- If a child tests positive for COVID-19, they may return to school on the written approval of a health professional. Families of students in that child's class will be notified of a positive case in the class, but no personal details will be given as per state and federal law.

***Please inform the school of any COVID-19 suspected or positive cases in your household. Your privacy will be maintained by the school staff and teachers.

***Note: Teachers follow the same protocol as students.

What programmatic changes can be expected this year?

- This year, in an effort to disincentivize school attendance when a child may be sick, there will be no "Perfect Attendance" award. We would like to applaud those who make healthy choices for the sake of the student body.
- Chapel will continue as planned but with distanced seating. While we encourage guests to attend, we ask that you maintain the physical distancing guidelines that are in place if you are present for chapel.
- Field trips for many schools have been cancelled outright, but we will continue to look for field experiences for our students. Many field trip destinations have closed or are running on a very limited basis. Transportation for these events may require special arrangements.

- Until further notice we are asking that parents not enter the building during student drop off unless their assistance is necessary. The first day of school will be an exception for grades 1-8 and any new students. This exception extends to the first five (5) school days for Kindergarten. Parents of Pre-K are not under any restriction since they need to enter the building each day.

What will happen with athletics (grades 5-8)?

We are planning to go ahead with our athletic seasons and specific health guidelines for practices and competitions will be discussed with each team and their families. Our school's athletic contests are officiated by PIAA officials. Recent guidelines by the governor put in question the school's future options to engage in competition with other schools. We will do our best to keep athletics a part of our school programming in our upper grades, but modifications (including restrictions on spectators) should be expected. Travel to and from any competitions may require special arrangements.

We appreciate your patience with us as we enter waters never before traversed. Please do pray for our school as we navigate the challenges of the school year. Pray that the Lord will keep our families safe and give us wisdom in our times of decision making. Pray also that the Lord will give us a spirit of grace as we live alongside fellow believers whose opinions differ from our own and whose consciences may lead them in different directions than we would go.

Praise the Lord for His faithfulness!