



Greene County Public Schools

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GCPS COVID-19 FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS 2021-2021

STUDENT & STAFF SAFETY

QUESTION: Will students and/or staff be required to wear face masks?

ANSWER: In accordance with the requirements of [Senate Bill 1303](#) as passed by the Virginia General Assembly, GCPS will be following recommendations put forth by the CDC.

Accordingly, all GCPS students and staff -- regardless of vaccination status -- are required to wear face masks while inside school buildings. GCPS will provide mask breaks throughout the day. Students and staff will not have to wear masks while outside.

QUESTION: Is there a timeline for when vaccinated students and staff will not have to wear face masks throughout the school day?

ANSWER: At this time, all students and staff -- regardless of vaccination status -- are required to wear face masks, per CDC guidelines. Our hope is that case numbers throughout Virginia will decrease and face mask guidelines will be loosened. However, at this time, the CDC has not indicated a timeline for when vaccinated students and staff will not have to wear masks in the K-12 setting.

QUESTION: Will GCPS staff or students be asked if they have received the COVID-19 VACCINE?

ANSWER: GCPS respects the privacy of GCPS staff members and will not be broadly requiring staff members to indicate their vaccination status at this time. However, all GCPS staff are strictly required to follow all health and safety procedures that correlate to their vaccination status.

Additionally, per current privacy laws, GCPS is not allowed to mandate families to provide the vaccination status of their child at this time.

QUESTION: Will thorough/deep cleanings occur within GCPS buildings and facilities?

ANSWER: Yes. Thorough cleanings of GCPS buildings and facilities will continue.

QUESTION: How long does a student or staff member with a fever need to stay home?

ANSWER: Students and staff must be fever-free for 24 hours without the use of fever-reducing medications before returning to school.

QUESTION: When is someone considered to be a “close contact?”



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ANSWER: Per CDC guidelines, someone is considered to be a “close contact” if they have been within 6 feet of a person who has COVID-19 for a total of 15 minutes or more over a 24-hour period. However, in the K–12 indoor classroom setting, the close contact definition *excludes* students who were within 3 to 6 feet of an infected student where:

- both students were engaged in consistent and correct use of well-fitting face masks; *and*
- other K–12 school prevention strategies (such as universal and correct mask use, physical distancing, increased ventilation) were in place in the K–12 school setting.

This exception does not apply to teachers, staff, or other adults in the indoor classroom setting.

QUESTION: If a vaccinated student/staff member is in close contact with someone that has tested positive for COVID-19, will he/she have to quarantine for a given amount of time?

ANSWER: No. Under CDC guidelines, a fully vaccinated staff member or student will not have to quarantine, even if exposed and considered to be a close contact to a positive individual, unless the close contact starts to show symptoms..

QUESTION: Will GCPS still require individuals that are unvaccinated and a close contact to quarantine?

ANSWER: Per VDH guidelines, GCPS will require these individuals to quarantine for 14 days from their last exposure.

QUESTION: What are the quarantine requirements for students and staff? ([What Does Quarantine Mean?](#))

ANSWER: Close contact means:

- Being within 6 feet of a person who has COVID-19 for a total of 15 minutes or more over a 24-hour period, or
- having direct exposure to respiratory secretions (e.g., being coughed or sneezed on, sharing a drinking glass or utensils, kissing), or
- Caring for a person who has COVID-19, or
- Living with a person who has COVID-19.

Exception: In indoor and outdoor K-12 settings, a student who was within 3 to 6 feet of an infected student is not considered a close contact as long as both students wore well-fitting masks the entire time

Students who were less than 3 feet apart for a total of 15 minutes or more are considered close contacts, even if both students wore masks. The K-12 exception does not apply to teachers, staff, or other adults. This means that the standard close contact definition is applied when assessing



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exposure in a K-12 setting that involves a student with an infected adult or an exposed adult. VDH will continue to monitor the science regarding the effectiveness of this close contact definition and the associated K-12 exception, and will update guidance as necessary.

Quarantine Length It can take up to 14 days after an exposure for you to develop COVID-19. This is why VDH and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) recommend people stay home (quarantine) for 14 days after their last contact with someone with COVID-19. It is safest to stay home for 14 days. If you live with someone with COVID-19, you should stay home (quarantine) for 14 days after the last sick member of your household can end isolation and safely be around others again. If household members are able to be completely separate from the sick person, then they should stay home for 14 days after their last contact with the person. Complete separation means having no contact, spending no time together in shared spaces, staying in a separate bedroom, and using a separate bathroom.

[Example of a Letter to Parents for Students in Quarantine](#)

QUESTION: Who is not required to quarantine after COVID-19 exposure?

https://www.vdh.virginia.gov/content/uploads/sites/182/2020/04/Home-IsolationQuarantine-Release-Graphic_FINAL.pdf

Someone who has been [fully vaccinated](#) and shows no symptoms of COVID-19 does not need to [quarantine](#). However, fully vaccinated close contacts should:

- [Wear a mask](#) indoors in public for 14 days following exposure or until a negative test result.
- Get tested 3-5 days after [close contact](#) with someone with suspected or confirmed COVID-19.
- Get tested and [isolate](#) immediately if experiencing [COVID-19 symptoms](#).

Someone who tested positive for COVID-19 with a [viral test](#) within the previous 90 days **and** has subsequently recovered **and** remains without COVID-19 symptoms does not need to [quarantine](#) but must provide proof of the COVID-19 positive test.

QUESTION: Will GCPS students be able to remove their masks when outside during the 2021-2022 school year?

ANSWER: Per VDH guidelines, GCPS students will be able to remove their masks when outside during the 2021-2022 school year.



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QUESTION: Will PE classes be able to resume activities within the gym setting?

ANSWER: PE classes will resume and mitigation strategies will continue to be implemented, such as maximizing physical distance when possible.

QUESTION: Will GCPS allow visitors inside school buildings during the 2021-2022 school year?

ANSWER: Yes. GCPS will allow visitors inside school buildings for pre-scheduled meetings and special events. Visitors will also need to wear face masks during their visit and maintain at least 3 feet of physical distance from others.

QUESTION: Will transitions between classrooms at the elementary level take place (ex: departmentalized classes and resource classes)?

ANSWER: Yes, transitions will occur. Mitigation strategies, such as maintaining 3 feet of physical distance whenever possible and the continued wearing of face masks, will be in place.

QUESTION: Will face-to-face parent meetings be permissible?

ANSWER: Yes. Pre-scheduled, face-to-face parent meetings will be allowed as long as at least 3 feet of physical distance is maintained, all participants (both parents and staff members) wear face masks, and mitigation strategies are put into practice at all times.

QUESTION: Are students and staff required to be vaccinated?

ANSWER: No. The COVID-19 vaccine is optional for all students and staff.

QUESTION: Will parents be asked to provide proof of vaccination for their child?

ANSWER: Parents may be asked if their child is vaccinated but parents are not required to answer and proof of vaccination cannot be required at this time. If identified as a close contact, unvaccinated individuals will be required to quarantine.

QUESTION: Do students or staff need to stay home while waiting for COVID-19 test results?

ANSWER: Yes. Anyone tested for COVID-19 should remain at home (quarantine) until test results are known. If the results are negative, the student or staff member may return to school if they are free of symptoms. If the test results are positive, the student or staff member will isolate for 10 days from onset of symptoms. If they are asymptomatic, they would isolate from the date of the positive test.



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QUESTION: Will schools have a quarantine/isolation room for ill students for the 2021-2022 school year?

ANSWER: Yes.

QUESTION: Will hand sanitizer be available for students?

ANSWER: Yes. Hand sanitizer stations are stationed throughout the building, including in classrooms, restrooms, and high-traffic areas.

QUESTION: When will a COVID-19 vaccine be available for students under 12?

ANSWER: Although a specific date has not been announced, feedback provided by the VDOE and VDH indicates that a vaccine for students under the age of 12 may be available mid-winter. As health experts provide us with further clarity, we will update this information.

TRANSPORTATION

QUESTION: Will GCPS Transportation be available for all students?

ANSWER: Yes. Transportation will be available for all students during the 2021-2022 school year.

QUESTION: How will students be seated on buses for the 2021-2022 school year?

ANSWER: For the 2021-2022 school year, GCPS will seat students to accommodate the route with more than one student per seat. GCPS will have students from the same family sit together as much as possible and all students will have assigned seats will riding GCPS transportation.

QUESTION: What mitigation strategies will be in place for GCPS Transportation vehicles during the 2021-2022 school year?

ANSWER: GCPS Transportation will utilize several strategies during the 2021-2022 school year, including:

- Opening windows (as available) to increase ventilation
- Requiring all drivers and students to wear face masks
- Cohorting family members as much as possible
- Assigned seats
- Disinfecting all buses and vehicles daily

QUESTION: Will students be required to wear face masks on school transportation?

ANSWER: Yes. Per a federal order by the CDC, all students must wear a face mask when utilizing school-provided transportation. If a student arrives at the bus stop without a face mask, transportation drivers and schools will be provided with single-use face masks that will be available for the student in this situation.



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QUESTION: Will GCPS Transportation drivers be required to wear face masks on school transportation?

ANSWER: Yes. Per a federal order by the CDC, all GCPS Transportation drivers, regardless of vaccination status, must wear face masks.

QUESTION: Will students have assigned seats?

ANSWER: Yes. Students will have assigned seats.

QUESTION: How will GCPS Transportation buses and vehicles be disinfected?

ANSWER: All GCPS buses and transportation vehicles will be disinfected on a daily basis.

NUTRITION

QUESTION: Will school meals continue to be offered free of charge in the 2021-2022 school year?

ANSWER Yes. Due to the extension of USDA waivers, meals will continue to be offered free of charge to all students through June 2022. There will be a charge for À la carte items.

QUESTION: Since meals will continue to be offered free of charge, do I need to complete a Free/Reduced meal application?

ANSWER: Your child may qualify for other benefits throughout the year, such as a P-EBT card but will not be eligible without a current application on file. Please be sure to complete a new application for this school year.

QUESTION: Since students will be receiving meals in the classroom and eating without masks, what physical distancing measures will be implemented?

ANSWER: Students will maintain physical distancing to the extent possible during meal times.

QUESTION: How will students select their meal choices for the 2021-2022 school year?

ANSWER: Elementary students will order their breakfast and lunch ahead of time, from their classroom. Menus will be posted on our website and available in each classroom.

Middle and high school students will order their lunch each morning, from their classroom. Breakfast for these students will be offered as a grab-and-go as they enter the school building each morning. Students will grab a breakfast bag from a cart on their way in and take it to the classroom to eat.

QUESTION: Are students allowed to bring a packed lunch to school?

ANSWER: Yes, students may pack lunches, but may not share any part of their lunch with peers.



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ATHLETICS

QUESTION: Will fans be able to attend athletic events at maximum capacity?

ANSWER: Yes. Fans will be required to wear a mask while attending any indoor events. At outdoor events, masks are recommended for those individuals who are not vaccinated.

QUESTION: Will there be a live stream or recorded option for WMHS Athletics for the 2021-2022 year?

Answer: Yes, a live stream/recorded option will be available for some athletic events for the 2021-2022 year.

QUESTION: What mitigation strategies will be in place on activity/athletic buses?

ANSWER: GCPS Transportation will utilize several strategies during the 2021-2022 school year, including:

- Opening windows (as available) to increase ventilation
- Requiring all drivers and students to wear face masks
- Cohorting family members as much as possible
- Disinfecting all buses and vehicles daily
- Assigned seats

QUESTION: Will students choosing the all virtual model for the 2021-2022 school year be allowed to participate in athletics, clubs, and extracurricular activities?

Answer: Yes, GCPS virtual students will be eligible to participate in all athletics, clubs, and extracurricular activities based on the criteria set forth by GCPS and the VHSL.

QUESTION: Will the VHSL seasons be condensed and what will the order of the seasons be?

Answer: The VHSL seasons will not be condensed. The order of the seasons will be as follows: fall, winter, and spring.

ACTIVITIES & EVENTS

QUESTION: Will GCPS buildings and grounds be available for rent by outside sources.



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ANSWER: Yes. GCPS buildings and grounds will be available to rent on a case-by-case basis as determined by the current COVID status at that time.

QUESTION: Will schools be able to have special events again such as awards ceremonies, dances, homecoming, prom, etc.?

ANSWER: Yes. Schools will determine the best method of hosting events depending on the current COVID status at that time.

QUESTION: Will GCPS allow visitors inside school buildings during the 2021-2022 school year?

ANSWER: Yes. GCPS will allow visitors inside school buildings for pre-scheduled meetings and special events under controlled circumstances. Visitors will also need to wear face masks during their visit and maintain at least 3 feet of physical distance from others.

QUESTION: Will parents/guardians be allowed to come to school to eat lunch with their child?

ANSWER: Due to physical distancing standards and spacing, parents/guardians will not be allowed to come to school to eat lunch with their child for the start of the 2021-2022 school year.