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Safety Measures

Teach and reinforce hand washing and respiratory etiquette

Hand washing and respiratory hygiene is a proven strategy used to minimize the spread of infectious illnesses. Accordingly, GCPS will prioritize teaching appropriate hand washing and respiratory etiquette as well as providing adequate time for all parties to engage in this practice. Hand sanitizer will be provided throughout the building as well for staff, student, and visitor use. Hand washing or the use of hand sanitizer should occur:

- After using the restroom
- After blowing your nose, sneezing or coughing
- Before and after eating
- After contact with frequently touched items or after playing outside
- After touching your eyes, nose, or mouth

It is important to follow healthy hygiene practices. Thus, students and staff are asked to follow the protocols below:

- Wash hands often with soap and water for 20 seconds. Use hand sanitizer if soap and water are not available.
- Cover one's mouth and nose with a tissue when sneezing or coughing when possible, discard tissue appropriately, and wash hands.
- Sneeze or cough into the elbow rather than one's hands. Wash hands afterwards with soap and water.
- Stay home when feeling ill.

Social distancing will be implemented to the greatest extent possible

STUDENTS

For schools, the CDC guidance recommends maintaining at least 3 feet of physical distance between students in classrooms. GCPS intends to adopt social distancing of 3 feet between students to the greatest extent possible in all settings along with other layered prevention strategies such as handwashing/respiratory etiquette, encouraging students/staff to stay home when sick, improved ventilation, regular cleaning/disinfecting, screening, cohorting when appropriate, etc.
Safety Measures

Social distancing will be implemented to the greatest extent possible (cont.)

STAFF to STUDENT
A distance of at least 6 feet is recommended between adults and students to the greatest extent possible regardless of the staff members vaccination status because most students are unvaccinated.

STAFF to STAFF
A distance of at least 6 feet is recommended between teachers/staff who are not fully vaccinated. Unvaccinated staff are responsible for maintaining the 6 feet of distance between themselves and other staff.

Universal masking indoors for all staff and students regardless of vaccination status

Universal Masking State-Wide Law (COMAR 13.A.01.06)
Garrett County Public Schools will adhere to the state-wide emergency regulation (COMAR 13.A.01.06, Face Coverings in School Facilities), that was approved by the Maryland State Board of Education on August 26, 2021 and subsequently approved on September 14, 2021 by the Administrative, Executive, and Legislative Review (AELR) Committee. This regulation requires any person inside a school facility as defined as a building, enclosed structure, or school bus/vehicle to wear a face covering. Appropriate accommodations will be made for students and staff who meet exemption requirements as defined in the law. Mask guidance aligned to CDC guidance can be found by "CLICKING HERE".

Extra-curricular activities and mask requirements:
The indoor universal masking will apply to indoor extra-curricular activities as follows:
- Students actively participating in game play or practice indoors will not be required to wear a mask. Otherwise, students are required to mask.
- Coaches, directors, volunteers, and spectators are required to wear a mask while indoors.
- Spectators are encouraged to socially distance to the greatest extent possible indoors and sit in family pods.

Federal Mask Order for Transportation

In accordance with the Maryland Department of Health (MDH) and Center for Disease Control federal order as well as the Maryland State Emergency Regulation (COMAR 13.A.01.06) all individuals (students, bus drivers, attendants, etc.) on a school bus must wear a face mask. Appropriate accommodations will be implemented for those who meet mask exemption requirements as defined by the Maryland State Emergency Regulation. GCPS will provide masks to those students who need them including on buses (i.e: students who forget to bring their masks or students whose families are unable to provide a mask).
Safety Measures

Ensure daily cleaning and disinfecting of spaces

- High-touch surfaces will be prioritized to be cleaned frequently throughout the day using a product containing soap, detergent, or other type of cleaner appropriate for the type of surface.
  - Examples of high-touch surfaces include: desks, tables, chairs, doorknobs, light switches, stair rails, keyboards, toilets, sinks, and faucets. High traffic areas such as health rooms, offices, restrooms, hallways, and cafeterias will be priority areas.

- Disinfecting using a U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA)’s approved product, will be prioritized to take place daily on high-touch surfaces and in high traffic areas.

Provide hand sanitizer and disinfectant wipes throughout buildings

GCPS will teach appropriate hand washing. However, when soap and water are not readily available an alcohol-based hand sanitizer that contains at least 60 percent alcohol (also referred to as ethanol or ethyl alcohol) will be provided.

Disinfectant wipes will be available to staff to assist with disinfecting high contact surfaces in the classrooms and instructional areas as needed. Staff will be expected to create routines within their classroom to frequently wipe down high touch surfaces with disinfectant wipes.

Provide and promote vaccination opportunities in collaboration with GCHD for eligible students and staff

Families looking for information about the vaccine can find educational resources by "CLICKING HERE"

Vaccination Clinics
COVID-19 vaccination clinics will be provided at central locations at both high schools prior to the start of school.
  - August 10th and 31st @ Southern High School- students, staff, parents/guardians
  - August 11th and September 1st @ Northern High School-students, staff, parents/guardians
  - August 24th @ Dennett Road for staff only

Please visit the Garrett Health Department Website for additional ongoing vaccination opportunities at: https://garretthealth.org/

Flu clinics will be provided for students and staff.
  - Dates to be determined
Safety Measures

Continue enhanced ventilation throughout the system

Improvements to building ventilation assist to reduce the spread of viruses and lower the risk of exposure. GCPS will enhance building ventilation by doing the following:

- Increasing outdoor air flow by opening outdoor air dampers beyond the minimum settings. In mild weather, this will not affect thermal comfort or humidity. However, this may be difficult to do in cold, hot, or humid weather.
- Open windows when weather conditions allow, increasing outdoor airflow. Staff will be directed to refrain from opening windows if doing so poses a safety or health risk (e.g., risk of falling, triggering asthma symptoms) to students or staff. It is important to note that even a slightly open window can introduce beneficial outdoor air.
- Ensure ventilation systems are operating properly and provide acceptable indoor air quality for the current occupancy level for each space.
- Improve central air filtration by frequently inspecting and replacing air filters.
- Ensure restroom exhaust fans are functional and operating at full capacity when the building is occupied.
- Continue utilizing phase one upgrades to the ventilation system funded through ESSER I and the unrestricted budget.
  - Provide portable high-efficiency particulate air (HEPA) fan/filtration systems to enhance air cleaning especially in higher risk areas such as a nurse's office or areas frequently inhabited by people with a higher likelihood of having COVID-19 and/or an increased risk of getting COVID-19. Areas identified include the nurses suites, main offices, kitchens, and faculty workrooms in every building and some cafeterias based on size.
- Implement the second phase of indoor air quality upgrades using ESSER II federal funding, which includes the following at various schools around the county based on specific air handling systems specifications:
  - Provide and install UV lighting systems in air handling systems
  - Provide and install ionization systems in air handling systems
  - Provide portable fan filter units with ozone free needle point bipolar ionizations, UV-C, germicidal lamps, DEEP HEPA H13 filtration and MERV 8 prefilters
  - Provide portable units and recommended quantities of prefilters, HEPA filters, and UV lamps
- Maximize time outdoors as much as possible (when appropriate).
- Avoid the use of temporary barriers, particularly desk partitions, because they reduce ventilation and have not been shown to protect the users from COVID infection.
- Purchase outdoor canopies to support outdoor learning opportunities.
Safety Measures

Provide screening and diagnostic COVID testing through our highly qualified nursing staff with parental consent

Screening testing can help promptly identify and isolate cases while also quarantining those who were exposed to COVID-19 that are not fully vaccinated.

- GCPS defines screening testing as a routine testing of asymptomatic individuals who do not have known or suspected exposure to COVID-19 in order to make individual decisions based on the test results. If this testing option is used for students it will be done only with parent/guardian consent.
- GCPS defines diagnostic testing as testing performed when a person has signs or symptoms of infection, or when a person is asymptomatic but has recent known or suspected exposure. Testing of students is conducted only with parent/guardian’s consent.
- Diagnostic testing will be provided for any student/child (with parental consent), teacher, or staff person who develops symptoms of COVID-19 as well as to any identified close contacts.

Encourage students and staff to stay home when sick and get tested

All students/children, teachers, and staff who are sick or have any COVID-19 symptoms should not attend school or their worksite and obtain healthcare provider guidance about being tested for COVID-19.

Additionally, students, teachers, and staff should stay at home if they:

- Have not completed quarantine after having been in close contact with someone diagnosed with COVID-19 or suspected of having COVID-19
- Are waiting for a COVID-19 test result
- Have been diagnosed with COVID-19 and have not completed isolation

Daily Health Screening Tools:

- Parents must complete the Student Screening Tool daily before sending students to school. This tool can be found by "CLICKING HERE"
- Staff must complete the Staff Screening Tool daily before coming to work. This tool can be found by "CLICKING HERE". This tool will also be attached to the employee’s electronic sign-in sheet.

Notification of Illness:

- Parents must notify their school nurse of absences due to illness, testing positive for COVID or when the student has been identified as a close contact to someone who has tested positive for COVID-19.
- Staff should notify their immediate supervisor or the Office of Human Resources about absences due to illness, testing positive for COVID-19 or when the staff member has been identified as a close contact to someone who has tested positive for COVID-19. Staff need to follow the standard operating procedure for securing a substitute. GCPS will follow the negotiated agreement articles specific to teleworking should any staff member be required to isolate or quarantine during the 21-22 school year.

Information about testing will be provided on the GCPS website. School nurses will provide testing information to staff, students, and parents/guardians. GCPS and schools will communicate the importance of staying home when sick.
Safety Measures

Protocol for a student or staff member who displays COVID-19 like symptoms while at school

In circumstances where a student or staff member develops COVID-like symptoms while at school, Garrett County Public Schools will:

- Safely isolate the person in the designated isolation area with appropriate supervision.
- If safe to do so, place a face covering on the person if they are 2 years of age or above and not wearing one.
- Ensure nursing/CMT staff are wearing appropriate PPE to conduct the appropriate determination of the student’s condition based on presenting symptoms.
- Begin the process for the person to vacate the school as soon as possible. **Note: parents or their designee MUST pick up an ill child within 1 hour of notification.**
- Schools will follow the "Decision Aid: Exclusion and Return for Persons with COVID-19 Symptoms and Close Contacts in Child Care, Schools, and Youth Camp" along with guidance from the Garrett County Health Department. This document can be viewed by "[Clicking Here](#)".

Cleaning/Disinfection of Identified Areas

- The classroom will be temporarily closed and relocated to allow custodial staff to properly clean and disinfect the area using EPA approved disinfectant products.
- Measures to increase ventilation (i.e. open windows, increase air handler settings) will be implemented to the greatest extent possible.
- Custodial staff will wear appropriate levels of PPE to safely clean and disinfectant the area.
- To the greatest extent possible, a portable HEPA air purifier will be moved into the classroom as an additional measure to increase air quality for the remainder of the day.
- This process will be followed for all affected areas to the greatest extent possible including the isolation room.

Random Temperature Screenings

To help reduce the spread of the virus that causes COVID 19 and other infectious diseases, screening for elevated temperature, and symptoms of illness need to be monitored:

- Parents/guardians are to monitor their students’ health and keep students home when they are ill.
- Random temperature and symptom checks will be performed at school using no-touch thermometers and standardized questions regarding how the student is feeling.
Safety Measures

Every GCPS school has identified an isolation room as a safety protocol. Health room and quarantine protocols have been established for students who are ill versus routine health services, while maintaining discretion and confidentiality.

- GCPS will provide an isolated restroom, to the extent possible, for patients accessing the COVID-19 health room.
- Nurses will establish protocols for scheduling health room visits and times for medication administration.

Transportation COVID 19 Safety Protocols

- All riders including the bus driver must wear a mask according to the federal CDC order associated with public transportation.
- Students will be required to sit in assigned seats to support effective contact tracing.
- All busses will be disinfected each day.
- Bus drivers will increase ventilation on the bus to the greatest extent possible (i.e. open roof hatches and windows, etc.) when it is appropriate to do so.

Protocols for Meals

Breakfast
Generally, breakfast is served in the classroom. GCPS will continue this practice and provide a bagged breakfast for students. Staff will need to establish routines within the classroom for students to wash their hands and ensure desk areas are cleaned appropriately.

Lunch
Students will be eating lunch in the cafeterias at each school.
- Hot meals will be individually bagged and distributed to limit student wait time in line.
- Students will be expected to maintain social distance of at least 3 feet to the greatest extent possible.
- Staff will wear the appropriate PPE based on current guidelines.
- Schools will designate staff to clean and disinfect high touch surfaces between lunch shifts.
- Kitchen staff will disinfect the kitchen area throughout the day and at the end of the day.
- Students are expected to wear their mask until seated and eating.
Safety Measures

Protocols for visitors/volunteers will be posted at each school

- While in the substantial or high ranges of community spread according to the CDC Data Tracker, GCPS will limit visitors/volunteers within the school. When metrics reach the moderate to low levels of community spread, standard operation procedure related to school visitors/volunteers will be reinstated.
- Visitors will be asked to complete a screener questionnaire upon arrival and when possible a temperature screening will be conducted. Temperature screenings will be instituted while we are in the substantial and high ranges of community spread.
- Signs instructing visitors about the protocol for entering will be displayed at entrance points to school buildings and sports complexes.
- Protocols will include information about mask requirements, social distancing and self assessment for illness.
- Nurses will ensure all the proper signage is present in their building.

Cohorting

Cohorting is one of the layered prevention strategies that schools can use to limit mixing between children and staff. A cohort is a distinct group that stays together throughout the entire day and remains consistent every day in order to minimize interaction with other groups. Cohorting will be implemented to the greatest extent possible at the elementary and middle school levels as a measure to minimize close contacts.

Water Fountains

Water fountains will be closed in all locations. Students are encouraged to bring water bottles to school. The school system will provide extra water as needed throughout the day.

Protocols for Performing Arts Classrooms

- Outdoor Rehearsals:
  - Rehearsals should take place outdoors, whenever possible.
  - Efforts should be made to social distance (6 feet) to the greatest extent possible to minimize close contacts should someone be ill.

- Indoor Rehearsals
  - Masks need to be worn when singing and speaking during rehearsals. 3-ply disposable masks will be provided for singing. Students will be permitted to unmask when actively playing wind/brass instruments.
  - Bell covers will be provided for brass and woodwind instruments.
  - Increased ventilation to the greatest extent possible will be implemented.
  - Distancing may be decreased to 3 feet, when necessary and masked (i.e. singing w/ mask). However, when possible increase distance to 6 feet especially when unmasked (i.e. actively playing a wind/brass instrument) to minimize close contacts should someone be ill.
  - Continue good hygiene practice including appropriate elimination of brass fluids.

Protocols for Physical Education Classes

Physical Education Safety Protocols can be found by CLICKING HERE.
Quarantine and Isolation

Definitions

**Isolation**- keeps someone who is infected with a virus away from others, even in their home. Persons diagnosed with COVID-19 need to isolate regardless of presence of symptoms or vaccination status.

**Quarantine**- keeps a person who is a close contact who might have been exposed to the virus away from others.

**Close contact**- The definition of a close contact is when a person is less than 6 feet for more than 15 minutes (cumulative) within a 24 hour period with or without a mask.

**CDC Exemption for Close Contacts in Schools**- In the PK–12 indoor classroom setting or a structured outdoor setting where mask use can be observed (i.e., holding class outdoors with educator supervision), the close contact definition excludes students who were between 3 to 6 feet of an infected student (laboratory-confirmed or a clinical diagnosis) if both the infected student and the exposed student(s) correctly and consistently wore well-fitting masks the entire time. This exception does not apply to teachers, staff, or other adults in the indoor classroom setting.

**Classroom/Cohort Outbreak:** At least two confirmed COVID-19 cases among students/teachers/staff within a 14-day period and who are epidemiologically linked, but not household contacts.

Quarantine and Isolation: **NOT FULLY VACCINATED**

Local public health authorities determine and establish the quarantine options for their jurisdictions. CDC currently recommends a quarantine period of 14 days. However, based on local circumstances and resources, the following options listed below to shorten quarantine are acceptable alternatives. The Garrett County Public Schools will align its isolation and quarantine schedules to the time frame established by the local Garrett County Health Department recommendations.

**Quarantine guidance for individuals who are NOT fully vaccinated:**
Close contacts who are NOT fully vaccinated should not attend school/work and will follow the guidelines below:

- Quarantine can end after day 10 without testing if the person has no symptoms and if the person is able to wear a mask at school/work from day 11-14. Otherwise, quarantine will be a 14 day period. GCHD does not support a shortened 7-day quarantine.
- Isolation can end 10 days after symptoms first appear as long as the individual has been fever free for at least 24 hours without fever-reducing medication and other symptoms of COVID-19 are improving (loss of taste and smell may persist for weeks or months after recovery and need not delay the end of isolation).

When a person meets the criteria and quarantine is ended early (i.e. 10 days versus 14), all the following must be implemented:

- Daily symptom monitoring continues through day 14; AND
- Persons are counseled regarding the need to adhere strictly to all recommended mitigation strategies including correct and consistent face mask use, physical distancing, and self-monitoring for symptoms of COVID 19 through day 14; AND
- Persons are advised that if any symptoms develop they should immediately self-isolate and contact their health care provider to determine if they need to be tested and how long they should be excluded from work or school.
Quarantine and Isolation

Quarantine and Isolation: FULLY VACCINATED

Quarantine guidance for individuals who ARE fully vaccinated who are asymptomatic

If the close contact is fully vaccinated and asymptomatic, the individual does not need to quarantine but should:

• Continue wearing a mask in public indoor settings for 14 days or until they receive a negative test result
• Consider being tested 3-5 days following the known exposure to someone with suspected or confirmed COVID-19
• Monitor for symptoms for 14 days

If a close contact has a documented diagnosis of COVID illness within the previous 3 months and has recovered and remains without COVID-19 symptoms (for example, cough, shortness of breath etc.) the individual does not need to quarantine as long as they are fully recovered and do not develop symptoms.

If a fully vaccinated person is symptomatic, then follow the "Decision Aid Exclusion and Return for Laboratory Confirmed COVID-19 Cases" found in the link below. Any close contact who tests positive for COVID 19 or who has symptoms should begin isolation regardless of vaccination status or prior infection.

The "Decision Aid Exclusion and Return for Laboratory Confirmed COVID-19 Cases" provided by Maryland Health Department and Maryland State Department of Education will be followed. The decision aid can be found by "CLICKING HERE"

Communication: Quarantine and Isolation

• GCPS will provide written notification to all identified close contacts. The notification will make it clear that the contact should expect a call from the Health Department contact tracers. The notification will also include:
  ○ When to seek medical care
  ○ How to monitor for symptoms
  ○ Who to contact and how to contact them if they develop symptoms of COVID 19 while under quarantine
  ○ The projected length of quarantine if they remain asymptomatic based on MDH and local quarantine guidance
  ○ Information about local COVID 19 testing sites
• GCPS will follow existing procedures for reporting communicable diseases (COMAR 10.06.01) and notify the Garrett County Health Department when a student/child or staff member has tested positive for COVID 19.
• Nurses will communicate "need to know" information with all appropriate staff as needed.
• GCPS will notify staff, parents and the community of positive COVID 19 cases using the COVID Dashboard found by "CLICKING HERE". Any close contacts will be notified personally as described above.
Contact Tracing
Contact Tracing Decision Aid for Students

Were masks being worn by the students who are close contacts and the positive student?

No Masks Worn

Identify students who were less than 6 feet

Is the close contact fully vaccinated (two weeks have passed since 2nd dose) or had a documented diagnosis of COVID-19 in the last 3 months?

Not Fully Vaccinated

Student must quarantine at minimum for 10 days and monitor for symptoms. If they remain symptom free, they can return to school on day 11 if masking is being implemented. A 14 day quarantine period will be required if unable to mask from day 11-14.

Fully Vaccinated (Asymptomatic)

Testing in 3-5 days from exposure is recommended. Student can still attend school but they must wear a mask for 14 days or until a negative test result is received.

Had documented COVID 19 in the last 3 months (Asymptomatic and fully recovered)

Student does not need to quarantine if they have fully recovered and do not develop symptoms.

Yes Masks Worn

Identify students who were less than 3 feet

NOTE: The “Decision Aid Exclusion and Return for Laboratory Confirmed COVID-19 Cases” provided by Maryland Health Department and Maryland State Department of Education will be followed in conjunction with this chart. The decision aid can be found by "CLICKING HERE"
Contact Tracing

Close Contact Scenarios: Visually Represented

MASKED:
In the scenario to the right, all parties are masked and social distancing of at least 3 feet is in place. Additional CDC mitigation strategies are in place in this classroom and throughout the school.

The blue circle represents a student who is positive with COVID 19. In this scenario, the student who is positive for COVID 19 would be required to isolate for at least 10 days. There are no close contacts due to the mitigating strategies in place and no one has to quarantine.

UNMASKED:
In the scenario below all parties are unmasked and social distancing of at least 3 feet is in place. The white "V" stands for a vaccinated student. Additional CDC mitigation strategies are in place in this classroom and throughout the school.

The blue student has been diagnosed with COVID 19 and has traveled to 3 different classes. Masking is not occurring so anyone less than 6 feet for more than 15 minutes (cumulative) within a 24 hour period will be considered a close contact (represented in red) and will have to quarantine. In this scenario 12 students would have to quarantine and the student diagnosed with COVID 19 would have to isolate. The 3 students who are vaccinated would not have to quarantine unless they became symptomatic.