Health and Safety FAQ

This document outlines the health and safety policies of the school and will be updated as needed throughout the school year based upon current conditions.

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STRATEGIES FOR EVERYDAY OPERATIONS FROM THE CDC

As of May 2023, the CDC had the following recommendations:

- Schools should take a variety of actions every day to prevent the spread of infectious diseases, including the virus that causes COVID-19. The following set of strategies for everyday operations should be in place:
  - Staying Up to Date on Vaccinations
  - Staying Home When Sick
  - Testing
  - Ventilation
  - Hand Hygiene and Respiratory Etiquette
  - Cleaning

Updated as of September 1, 2023
VACCINATIONS

- Staying up to date on routine vaccinations is essential to prevent illness from many different infections. Gateway’s School Nurse can help families meet this requirement through Magnus reminders.
- Per the CDC, staying up to date with COVID-19 vaccinations is the leading public health strategy to prevent severe disease.
- COVID-19 vaccinations are required for all employees and students, unless the individual has received an approved medical exemption from the school.
- The school encourages everyone to stay up to date with COVID-19 vaccinations based on their age and health needs.
- Information on COVID-19 vaccinations can be found here and here.

DEFINITIONS:

Fully Vaccinated Against COVID-19

- Per the CDC, “Fully vaccinated” is not the same as having the best protection that staying up to date provides. You were “fully vaccinated” when you had completed only a primary series based on your age, health status, and vaccine type. Thus, you can be “fully vaccinated” and not have completed all vaccine doses recommended for you, which is called “up to date”. Currently, only Novavax has a recommendation for a primary series.

Up to Date With COVID-19 Vaccines

- Everyone aged 6 years and older are Up to Date when they get 1 updated Pfizer-BioNTech or Moderna COVID-19 vaccine.
- For more details, see the CDC’s Stay Up to Date with COVID-19 Vaccines here.

STAYING HOME WHEN SICK

- See School Wellness Policy below.

WHAT ARE THE TESTING REQUIREMENTS?

- Testing is not required to return to school after the summer or breaks.
- There is no in-school PCR surveillance testing program.
• Gateway maintains an inventory of At Home tests for students and employees.
• **Testing protocols will be updated as needed based upon school and local community conditions.**

**VENTILATION**

• 50 portable HEPA-filter air purifiers for use in all classrooms and other shared spaces as needed.
• Ventilation is improved with open windows.
• HVAC maintenance program in place to ensure optimal system functioning.

**HAND HYGIENE AND RESPIRATORY ETIQUETTE**

• Washing hands can prevent the spread of infectious diseases.
• Covering coughs and sneezes help keep individuals from getting and spreading infectious diseases.
• Reinforce these behaviors, especially during key times in the day such as before and after eating, after using the restroom and after park visits.
• If washing hands is not possible, the school provides hand sanitizer.
• 12 hand sanitizer stations placed throughout the building.
• Reminder signs are posted in key areas.

**CLEANING & DISINFECTING**

• The school has a cleaning and disinfecting program aligned with recommendations from the CDC.
• Disinfectants are EPA-registered for use against the coronavirus.
• Materials are stored according to OSHA safety practices.

**MASKING**

**Mask Optional:** The school encourages all community members to be respectful to others whether they choose to wear a mask or not.

• **Optional:**
  ○ The school has a mask optional policy.
  ○ Masks are available in the Health Office, at the Main Desk, and in each classroom.
• **Recommended:**
  ○ After exposure to someone with COVID-19, whether the exposure occurred in school or outside of school. The person should wear a high-quality mask for 10 days after their last day of exposure and get tested at least 5 full days after last exposure.
  ○ When entering the school’s Health Office.
  ○ When an individual is moderately-to-severely immunocompromised, and masking is recommended by their healthcare provider.
  ○ In crowded indoor settings.

• **Required:**
  ○ Masks are required when returning to school on the sixth day after testing positive for COVID-19 and through day 10 after symptom onset or date of positive test (whichever is earlier). Masks may be removed sooner than Day 10 with two sequential negative tests 48 hours apart.
  ○ **If the school is experiencing an outbreak, masks may be added as a prevention strategy, regardless of the COVID-19 Community Level, to help reduce the transmission of the disease.**

**WELLNESS POLICY**

**Students**

Deciding when to keep your child home can be difficult. However, if there is any doubt as to whether your child is well enough to attend school, please exercise caution and keep your child at home. Use the following list of symptoms as mandatory guidelines for an illness related absence or dismissal:

1. Fever in the past 24 hours (100°F or more; must be 24 hours fever-free without medication prior to readmission)
2. Vomiting or diarrhea in the last 24 hours
3. Pink eye (bacterial conjunctivitis; 24-hour antibiotic treatment required prior to readmission)*
4. Strep throat (24-hour antibiotic treatment required prior to readmission)*
5. Head lice (No Nit Policy; must be assessed by School Nurse for nit-free status or receive a note from an organization, such as Licenders, prior to readmission)
6. Rash (of an unknown or contagious nature such as chicken pox, scabies, impetigo, tinea) with or without fever*
7. Excessive coughing and sneezing (especially with copious respiratory secretions, unless a physician’s note has determined that they are not contagious)
8. Any illness or fatigue that could prevent comfortable participation in school activities
9. Confirmed diagnosis of flu or flu-like symptoms*
10. If the School Nurse requests an evaluation of a student by a doctor or advanced medical provider, a letter of clearance must be submitted before the student will be allowed to return and resume all activities.

*Associated symptoms with these conditions need to be ruled out by your child’s physician, and medical documentation needs to be submitted, before your child can return to school.

Please notify the School Nurse at nurse@gatewayschool.org if your child is diagnosed with any contagious illness. Any child absent for three consecutive days must be cleared by their doctor and provide the school with a note from that doctor prior to being readmitted to school.

If your child has been injured, especially when they have relied on crutches, splints, braces, or ace bandages for any period of time, a note of medical clearance from your child’s doctor will be necessary in order for the child to resume participation in physical activities. If your child needs physical accommodations, please submit a doctor’s note indicating the type of restriction and the duration of the accommodation.

Should your child develop any of the conditions listed above while in school, an early pick-up will be required. In addition, if your child sustains a significant injury, has a fecal accident, or is incontinent, an early pick-up will be required. If a second set of clothing has been provided, your child may stay in school after an instance of incontinence.

Since illness and accidents do happen during the school day, we strongly suggest you make contingency plans for your student before they are needed.

School Community

- **Stay Home if Sick**
  - Students and faculty/staff should stay home if they show any symptoms of COVID-19 or other illnesses.
  - Get tested.
  - The school will provide at-home test kits if COVID-19 is suspected.
● **Isolate if COVID-19 Positive**
  ○ Anyone who tests positive for COVID-19 **must isolate for 5 days**.
  ○ You can return to school on day 6 if fever-free for 24 hours and presenting no other symptoms or symptoms are improving.
  ○ You must wear a mask until day 10 after symptom onset or date of positive test, whichever is earlier. With two sequential negative tests 48 hours apart, you may remove your mask sooner than Day 10.
  ○ Testing is not required to determine the end of isolation following a positive test for COVID-19 infection. However, individuals may use sequential antigen testing as outlined in the [CDC's Isolation Guidance](https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/symptoms-testing/isolation.html) to potentially shorten the duration of mask use post-isolation.
  ○ Report positive cases to the school.

● **Exposure to COVID-19**
  ○ Recommendation is to wear a well-fitting mask and take two tests and get tested at least 5 full days after your last exposure. All exposed individuals should monitor for fever and other COVID-19 symptoms for 10 days after their exposure.
  ○ If symptoms begin, they should not attend school and should isolate and get tested for COVID-19 again right away.
  ○ Please refer to the [CDC's Exposure Guidance](https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/symptoms-testing/exposure.html) for more information. The guidance applies to all individuals irrespective of vaccination status or history of prior COVID-19 infection.

● **Who have one or more of the following symptoms of COVID-19 should be excluded from school, isolate, and seek testing.**
  ○ Fever (100 F)
  ○ New cough
  ○ Congestion
  ○ Sore throat
  ○ Loss of taste or smell
  ○ Vomiting or Diarrhea

● Monitor for the following symptoms. If these symptoms do not resolve within 24 hours, take a test:
  ○ Headache
  ○ Fatigue
  ○ Muscle aches
Abdominal pain/upset stomach

● Please refer to the CDC’s list of common COVID-19 symptoms here.

RETURN TO SCHOOL AFTER SYMPTOMS OR ILLNESS

To return to school after having symptoms, the following applies to ALL students and faculty/staff:

● They must have been fever free for 24 hours without fever-reducing medication, at least 24 hours after any episode of vomiting or diarrhea, when feeling better.
● A negative test is not required for COVID-19 positive individuals to return to school on day 6 as long as symptoms are resolved or improving. It is recommended that individuals wear a well-fitting mask around others through day 10.
● Individuals may use sequential antigen testing as outlined in the CDC's Isolation Guidance to potentially shorten the duration of mask use post-isolation.
● Negative tests are not required for other illnesses to return to school once symptoms improve.
● However, if a person who has received an isolation order from the local health department were to appear at school prior to the expiration of that order, the school is obligated to report the individual’s presence to the local health department. The school could also ask that individual to return home until the expiration of that order.

WHAT TO DO IF I TEST POSITIVE FOR COVID-19

● Families, faculty and staff are required to report a COVID-19 positive test result immediately to the School’s Nurse, Lucy Khong, RN, BSN.
● If identified as COVID-19 positive, the individual must stay home in accordance with the latest guidance from the Department of Health. Current guidance states that COVID-19 positive individuals should isolate for 5 days at home.

○ For those with symptoms, day 1 is the first full day after symptom onset (Day 0 is the day of symptom onset).
○ For those who had no symptoms, day 0 is the day they were tested (not the day you received your positive test result), and day 1 is the first full day following the day they were tested.
○ If someone develops symptoms within the 10 days of testing, the clock restarts at day 0 on the day of symptom onset.

● The individual must wear a well-fitting mask through Day 10.
● See the School Wellness Policy and follow the CDC’s Isolation Guidance.
WHAT TO DO IF I HAVE A COVID-19 EXPOSURE

- Families, faculty, and staff should report any known COVID-19 exposure immediately to the School’s Nurse, Lucy Khong, RN, BSN.
- Quarantine is no longer recommended for people exposed to COVID-19.
- The recommendation is to wear a well-fitting mask for 10 days and test on Day 6. All exposed individuals should monitor for fever and other COVID-19 symptoms for 10 days after their exposure.
- The CDC recommends that exposed individuals test sooner than what is listed above if symptoms develop before that time.
- Please refer to the CDC’s Exposure Guidance for more information. The guidance applies to all individuals irrespective of vaccination status or history of prior COVID-19 infection.
- The school will consult as necessary with the local health department to discuss whether different measures should be considered based upon current public health conditions.

WHAT HAPPENS IF SYMPTOMS DEVELOP WHILE IN SCHOOL?

If an individual experiences COVID-19 related symptoms while in school, they must report to the Nurse’s Office immediately for evaluation. Faculty receive training from the nurse in order to identify pediatric symptoms of COVID-19. Any student exhibiting those symptoms will be taken immediately to the nurse. The symptomatic student and any adult accompanying them to the Nurse’s Office must wear a well-fitting mask over their nose and mouth during this period.

Any employee who screens positive for COVID-19 symptoms at school will immediately be sent home with instructions to contact their health care provider for assessment and testing.

If your child develops any symptoms of COVID-19 at school, as defined by the CDC, they will be evaluated by the School Nurse, placed in an isolation room, and a parent/guardian will be called to pick them up. Young students and students requiring ongoing nursing care will be accompanied into isolation by a nurse or trained administrator. Older students will be visually monitored by a nurse or administrator while in isolation.

Any student, faculty or staff sent home with COVID-like-symptoms must have the following to return to school:
● At least 24 hours fever-free without fever-reducing medication
● Symptom improvement and the ability to self-manage any lingering symptoms in school

SCHOOL COMMUNICATIONS

● The school will send an email letter from the Head of School and/or School Nurse notifying the community of a COVID-19 positive case or other significant health matter.
● It is up to the individuals to monitor symptoms.
● If the school experiences an outbreak, contact tracing could be used, along with strategies to reduce transmission.

SCHOOL PASS

SchoolPass is used for updated arrival and dismissal communications between parents and the school. It is also used for Visitor Management to monitor those who are entering the school building.

ARE THERE REMOTE LEARNING OPTIONS?

For the 2023-2024 school year, there are no remote or Zoom options for classes.
● Should a student test positive for COVID-19, or need to remain home due to illness, teachers will work with families to coordinate any missed work.