



Gulf Shores City Schools Safe Return to School 2020-2021

Dear Parents and Students,

We are excited about the start of the 2020-21 school year. Although we face many challenges, the opportunities for our students continue to grow. We have continued to expand our curriculum by offering Spanish in grades K-5, robotics and STEAM classes at the middle school, and aviation classes at the high school. We also have continued to improve our facilities by adding outdoor classrooms, STEAM labs, robotics labs, a sensory room, and improved athletic facilities for female and male athletes.

School will start on August 12, and students will have the choice to learn in a traditional setting or a virtual format. Both options will provide a rigorous and engaging learning experience. We understand that this may be a difficult decision for some families to make; therefore, we have provided you with as much information as possible in our Safe Return to School plan to help you make your decision. Please note that this plan is subject to change as the circumstances surrounding Covid-19 evolve and guidance from the Alabama Department of Public Health and Alabama State Department of Education is updated. We will keep you apprised of any changes. If you have any questions or concerns, please do not hesitate to reach out to me directly by calling my office (251) 968-9873 or sending me an email at makin@gsboe.org.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Matt Akin".

Dr. Matt Akin
Superintendent

Instructional Delivery Option I: Traditional School

- Students in grades preK-12 have the option to attend classes in a traditional, on-campus setting.
- Each school will continue to offer a rigorous and diverse selection of courses including Spanish in grades K-12, Gulf Coast Ecology, aviation, robotics, engineering, Rising Tide, fine arts, and more. Additionally, students will have access to new learning spaces such as STEAM labs, outdoor classrooms, and a sensory room.
- Teachers will deliver face-to-face instruction but also maintain content and assignments online for possible short-term absences by students due to COVID-19 exposure or infection. Middle school and high school teachers will use Canvas as the online platform for maintaining assignments, while elementary school teachers will use Google Classroom. For students who must be out of school for short periods of time, our goal is to provide a seamless transition from the traditional classroom to a temporary online environment.

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Instructional Delivery Option II: Virtual Education

Students in grades K-12 have the option to remain at home and attend classes online. Gulf Shores Virtual Academy admission requirements for Gulf Shores residents have been waived for the 2020-2021 school year. Students who select the virtual education option will be required to participate in this program for a minimum of one quarter. At that time, students may transition to traditional school or continue virtual education. Please note that it is extremely important that students who participate in virtual education are motivated learners who have access to regular adult support at home to ensure a successful learning experience. Students with an Individualized Education Plan, Gifted Education Plan, 504 Plan, and/or English Language Learner Plan will receive approved accommodations.

Gulf Shores Elementary Virtual Program Grades K-5

- Instruction in core courses will be provided by dedicated virtual education teachers using a combination of digital and traditional curricula combined with teacher led instruction that is delivered through videoconferencing technology. All course components will be organized in an online learning management system.
- While students are permitted to work ahead in their online courses, they are expected, at a minimum, to complete all assignments on time and to participate in scheduled, small group videoconferencing sessions 1-5 days per week.
- Participation in online courses including required videoconferencing sessions will be monitored, and attendance will be taken. Students who fall behind in their coursework and/or do not maintain adequate attendance may be required to attend traditional school for the remainder of the year.
- Students may take tests associated with their courses at home but are required to participate in annual, on-campus state mandated standardized testing.
- Elementary students have the option of participating in weekly face-to-face (following ADPH guidance) or virtual enrichment activities such as art, music, physical education, and Spanish at Gulf Shores Virtual Academy located at the City of Gulf Shores Cultural Center.
- Eligible K-5 students can participate in after-school clubs at Gulf Shores Elementary School.
- Tutoring will be available via videoconferencing and by appointment in a face-to-face format (following ADPH guidance) at Gulf Shores Virtual Academy.

Gulf Shores Virtual Academy Grades 6-12

- Instruction in core courses, electives, and Advanced Placement courses will be provided by virtual education teachers and delivered in an online format utilizing ACCESS Virtual Learning and locally developed curricula. Click [here](#) for *online* course offerings.
- Eligible high school students will have the opportunity to take 18 hours of tuition free dual enrollment classes at the Gulf Shores campus of Coastal Alabama Community College. Online dual enrollment classes with reduced tuition fees are available through Auburn University, the University of Alabama, and the University of South Alabama (*pending Board approval*).
- While students are permitted to work ahead in their virtual academy courses, they are expected, at a minimum, to complete all assignments on time. Based on student performance, some students in grades 6-12 will be required to participate in scheduled, small group videoconferencing sessions 1-5 days per week.
- Participation in online courses including required videoconferencing sessions will be monitored, and attendance will be taken. Students who fall behind in their coursework and/or do not maintain adequate attendance may be required to attend traditional school for the remainder of the year.
- Students may take tests associated with their courses at home but are required to participate in annual on-campus state mandated standardized testing.
- Eligible 6-12 students can participate in clubs and athletics (if applicable) at their base school. Please note that most, but not all of the online high school courses have been approved by the National Collegiate Athletic Association.
- Tutoring will be available via videoconferencing and by appointment in a face-to-face format (following ADPH guidance) at Gulf Shores Virtual Academy.



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| Arrival/Dismissal & After School Care | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Upon arrival and during dismissal, social distancing guidelines will be followed as much as possible by utilizing gyms, cafeterias, hallways, and outside areas. • After school care will continue to be provided at the elementary and middle schools. |
| Assemblies, Club Activities, Athletics, & Field Trips | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • At this point field trips, pep rallies, assemblies, and award ceremonies are not allowed. This decision will be re-evaluated as the school year progresses. • Club activities may be limited according with guidance from the Alabama Department of Public Health (ADPH). • Athletic events will be scheduled and regulated in accordance to guidance provided by the Alabama High School Athletic Association. |
| Child Nutrition Program | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A rotation of cafeteria, classrooms, and outside dining areas will be used to promote social distancing during lunch. • All meals will be served in pre-packaged disposable containers. • A contactless payment system will be used for breakfast and lunch. • Cafeteria tables will be sanitized between each lunch period. • In lieu of water fountains, students will have access to water bottle filling stations and are encouraged to bring reusable water bottles. |
| Classrooms and Transitioning between Classes | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Students will sit facing the same direction, and desks will be separated as much as possible. • Personal instructional items (scissors, crayons, glue, etc.) should not be shared among students. • Hand sanitizer and disinfectant will be available in all classrooms. • Hallways will be divided into two lanes to provide greater social distancing. |
| Cleaning and Disinfecting of Buildings | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hospital grade sanitizer and disinfectant will be used for all routine cleanings. • High touch areas including desks, door handles/knobs, and water bottle fill stations will be disinfected throughout the day. |
| Face Coverings | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Students and staff are encouraged to bring their own face covering to school and wear it when social distancing is not possible. At this time, face coverings are required for students in grades 2nd through 12th and all employees. |
| Hand Hygiene | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Students and staff are encouraged to wash hands frequently with soap and water. • Hand sanitizer stations will be placed throughout each school and in each classroom. |
| Physical Education and Recess | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Students will not dress out but are encouraged to wear or change into shoes appropriate for physical activity. • Social distancing guidelines will be followed as much as possible by utilizing gyms and/or outside areas for activities. • PE lessons will primarily focus on personal fitness. Only games/sports with minimal physical contact will be played. • Playground equipment, weights, and other items used for PE/recess will be sanitized regularly. |
| School Calendar | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • At this time, there are no changes to the school calendar. School will start for all students, traditional and virtual, on August 12, 2020. • If schools are closed unexpectedly, students will take their school issued devices home, and learning will continue in an online format with instruction provided by the students' classroom teachers. |
| Technology | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All students in K-8 will be issued an iPad, and all students in 9-12 will be issued a MacBook. • District provided hotspots are available to students who do not have Wi-Fi at home and who must miss school due to COVID-19. |
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| Transportation | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • School buses will operate normal routes. To reduce the number of students on each bus, parents are encouraged to transport their child to and from school if possible. |

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| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All buses will have hand sanitizer and masks available for students. Each driver will be provided with a face shield, mask, and gloves. • Students will have assigned seats; family members will be seated together. • All buses will unload from front to back to minimize student contact. • Drivers will open roof hatches and/or windows to keep fresh air circulating during the bus route. • All buses will be disinfected after each trip. |
| Visitors | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Visitors will be limited. Any visitor who goes beyond the front office will be required to complete a health survey including a temperature check and to wear a face covering when working with students. • When possible, parent/teacher meetings should be conducted using video conferencing technology. • In an effort to promote social distancing, lunch areas will be limited to students and staff. |
| Wellness Monitoring and Attendance | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Parents should check their child's temperature every morning and keep their child at home if the child has a temperature of 100.4 or higher. • Parents should monitor their child for symptoms of COVID-19, including fever, cough, congestion, shortness of breath, difficulty breathing, loss of taste or smell, chills, or gastrointestinal symptoms every morning and keep their child at home if their child has any of these symptoms. • Parents should notify the school nurse as soon as possible if their child is staying home from school due to COVID-19. The school nurse will coordinate the excuse of COVID-19 related absences, and these absences will not impact truancy. • Any student who presents with COVID-19 symptoms during the school day will be quarantined until the student leaves campus. • In the case of a positive COVID-19 test of a student or staff member, school officials will follow current guidance of ADPH and the Alabama State Department of Education (ALSDE) regarding contact tracing, notification, disinfecting of buildings, and potential school closures. |

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PROCEDURES: Suspected or Confirmed Cases of COVID-19

| | EXPOSURE, NO SYMPTOMS Employee or student shares he/she was exposed to someone with COVID-19 within the last 2 weeks but is NOT symptomatic | DIAGNOSIS, NO SYMPTOMS Employee or student shares he/she was diagnosed with COVID-19 less than 10 days ago, but is NOT symptomatic | NO EXPOSURE OR DIAGNOSIS, SYMPTOMS PRESENT Employee or student presents with at least one of the following COVID-19 symptoms: Major Symptoms: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Shortness of Breath • New Cough • New Loss of Taste or Smell Minor Symptoms: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fever of 100.4 or higher • Chills • Rigor • Myalgia • Headache • Sore Throat • Congestion or Runny Nose • Fatigue • Gastrointestinal Symptoms: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Nausea ○ Vomiting ○ Diarrhea |
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| Student | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Nurse will isolate student in designated area while wearing appropriate personal protective equipment (PPE). • If appropriate for that student, he/she should wear a mask. • Enact plan to send student home safely (school bus transportation not allowed). • Can return to school once it has been 14 days since last close contact, if he/she does not develop symptoms. If your student tests negative during this time, they must still complete the full 14 days of quarantine regardless of a negative COVID test. • Participate in temporary online learning while out. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Nurse will isolate student in designated area while wearing appropriate PPE. • If appropriate for that student, he/she should wear a cloth face covering. • Enact plan to send student home safely (school bus transportation not allowed). • Clean and disinfect isolation area with an EPA-registered product. • Return 10 days from first positive COVID-19 test if he/she did not subsequently develop symptoms since his/her positive test. • Participate in temporary online learning. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If appropriate for that student, he/she should wear a mask. • Nurse will isolate student in designated area while wearing appropriate PPE • Enact plan to send student home safely (bus transportation not allowed). • If a student has symptoms with no diagnosis or exposure, he/she can return to school when: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - at least 1 day (24 hours) have passed since recovery defined as resolution of fever without the use of fever reducing medications - improvement in respiratory symptoms (e.g., cough, shortness of breath) - at least 10 days have passed since symptoms first appeared. • If student has had a negative COVID-19 test, he/she can return to school once there is no fever without the use of fever-reducing medicines and he/she has felt well for 24 hours. • Participate in temporary online learning while absent. |
| School Employee | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Immediately go home. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Immediately go home. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If appropriate for employee, he/she should wear a cloth face covering or surgical mask. • If well enough, immediately go home. |

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| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Can return to school once it has been 14 days since last close contact and he/she does not develop symptoms. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Return after 10 days from first positive COVID-19 test if he/she did not subsequently develop symptoms since his/her positive test. • Clean and disinfect isolation area • Employees who have tested positive for COVID-19 do not need to quarantine or get tested again for up to 3 months as long as they do not develop symptoms again. People who develop symptoms again within 3 months of their first bout of COVID-19 need to be tested again if there is no other cause identified for their symptoms. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If not well enough, isolate employee in designated area and provide support to get home or to medical care. • If an employee has symptoms with no diagnosis or exposure, he/she can return to work when: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - at least 1 day (24 hours) have passed since recovery defined as resolution of fever without the use of fever reducing medications - improvement in respiratory symptoms (e.g., cough, shortness of breath) - at least 10 days have passed since symptoms first appeared. • If employee has a negative COVID-19 test, he/she can return to school once there is no fever without the use of fever-reducing medicines and he/she have felt well for 24 hours. • Clean and disinfect isolation area. |
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