

Groton Public Schools (GPS) Full In-person Re-opening of Schools 2021 – 2022

Safe Return and Accelerated Learning Plan

Going Back to Better Than Normal; taking lessons learned to engage students and enhance learning

Groton Public Schools (GPS) will move to full in-person learning PK-12 at the beginning of the school year for FY22. There will be no full remote learning unless a student is quarantined with COVID-19, or in case of inclement weather or emergency school closings. GPS will continue to follow the State Health Department's guidelines on health and safety, as well as Connecticut State Department of Education recommendations. Faculty and staff will engage students in high quality instruction and accelerated learning, following GPS curriculum, instruction, and assessment plans. Some of the best practices and highest levels of engagement come when teachers and students connect with one another and synchronize teaching and learning face-to-face.

Highlights of the GPS FY 22 In-Person Learning Plan:

The major shift in the GPS FY22 Learning Plan is to teach all of our students in-person and only move to remote learning in case of quarantine due to COVID-19 or if the school needs to close due to an emergency or inclement weather. Our goal is to have real-time engagement and less screen time for all students. With our motto "*Going Back to Better than Normal*," we believe in growing relationships, taking care of social-emotional learning, reestablishing routines and expectations at school, and reviewing health protocols. We also believe in engaging students in rigorous and relevant academic lessons in-person and accelerating learning. The continued use of GPS Learning Management Systems (SeeSaw/Google Classroom PK-2, Google Classroom grades 3-8, and Schoology grades 9-12) will be for the purpose of communicating and organizing assignments and homework, while monitoring student participation and work completion.

Health and Safety Strategies

Health and Safety, both physical and emotional, are a top priority for all Groton Public Schools educators and board members. School-based health and our school nurses serve as an excellent resource for both physical and mental health, along with our school counselors, school social workers, and school psychologists. Social emotional learning is a key ingredient to schooling, whether students are in-person or remote. If parents have any concern, please reach out to the teachers, administrators or any of our health providers. With the return of full in-person learning at the start of FY22, the following protocols will be utilized:

Safe Practices for In-Person Learning Include:

- Consistent and correct wearing of masks should public health measures require such a need
- Physical Distancing where feasible, if public health measures require such a need
- Students may work in groups and share materials with safety measures
- Practice good hand hygiene
- Practice good respiratory etiquette
- Frequent cleaning of high touch areas will continue

- Monitor your symptoms and stay home when you or someone you live with is ill, has a fever of 100.4 degrees Fahrenheit or higher, sore throat, cough, difficulty breathing, or new loss of taste or smell
- Contact tracing will occur when necessary following local health guidelines specific to notification and quarantines
- If parents have any concern, please reach out to the teachers, administrators or any of our health providers.

U.S. Department of Health Services: Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) on PK-12 Education Health and Safety in Schools

Communications

- Clear, concise and timely information will be communicated from Central Office and the schools to students, staff, and families on a regular basis.
- For communication and organization purposes, teachers and school administrators may continue to use learning management systems (LMS) such as SeeSaw, Google Classroom, or Schoology, as well as GPS email, the GPS website, Remind, PowerSchool and School Messenger.

Remote learning for students due to COVID-19 quarantine or school closure (emergency/weather):

- An assigned building substitute will provide mini lessons that can be accessed by quarantined remote learners on zoom (or other live streaming technology). Students will also receive communications and assignments through the LMS, supported by their building substitute teacher, a tutor, an interventionist and/or their teacher.
- Remote learning due to school closure (emergency/weather) will be provided by the teacher(s), tutors, interventionists, and/or special educator and can be a blend of asynchronous and synchronous learning.
- The use of exemplar lessons, like those from Teachers' College Reading Writing Project, Khan Academy, Mystery Science, etc. can also be utilized for both in-person and remote learners.

Attendance

- Students will attend school for full in-person learning unless they are ill or have an excused absence.
- At the secondary level, attendance will be monitored daily and by period in accordance with the district attendance policy for in-person learners. If a student is not present at school they will be marked as absent, according to the district policy.
- At the elementary level, attendance will be monitored daily, in the morning and afternoon, in accordance with the district attendance policy for in-person learners. If a student is not present at school they will be marked absent according to the district policy.
- Quarantine students will be moved to remote learning for the period of quarantine only.
- Quarantined remote learner attendance will be monitored daily using attendance in zoom mini lessons, check-ins, and/or completion of required assignments.

- District policy for vacations will also be in effect, and students will be marked absent if they are on vacation on a scheduled school day.

Groton School District Attendance Policy:

<https://www.boardpolicyonline.com/bl/?b=groton#&&hs=220700>