



**The Gilbert School
2021- 2022 School Year
Reopening Plan**

August 2021

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Public Comment & Plan Revisions

In consultation with families and staff, using feedback from our successful 2020-2021 School Year, and reflecting upon the guidelines from the Connecticut State Department of Education (CSDE) and Department of Health (DPH), this plan has been developed for the Fall 2021 School Opening. As guidance from the above entities change, the plan will be revised accordingly.

Technology

All Gilbert School Students will receive a Chromebook. Classroom teachers will continue to use Google Classroom as a teaching and learning platform. All students will be required to sign an acceptable use agreement and are responsible for the care of the loaned chromebook.

State Department of Education Expectations for Opening, Fall 2021

As TGS reopens, the following principles from the Connecticut State Department of Education titled [Adapt, Advance, Achieve: Connecticut's Plan to Learn and Grow Together](#) and the addenda, conditions surrounding the pandemic and in consultation Torrington Area Health District (TAHD), Connecticut Department of Public Health, and the Connecticut Department of Education will be taken into account as well as TGS priorities:

1. Safeguarding the health and safety of students and staff;
2. Allowing all students the opportunity to return to school full time starting in the fall;
3. Monitoring the school, students, and staff and, when necessary, potentially canceling classes in the future to appropriately contain COVID-19 spread;
4. Emphasizing equity, access, and support to the students and communities that are emerging from this historic disruption;
5. Fostering strong two-way communication with partners such as families, educators, and staff; and
6. Factoring into decisions about reopening the challenges to the physical safety, social emotional well-being, and the mental health needs of our students when they are not in school.

Families, staff, and students are critical for a safe and healthy return to school. Families, staff, and students are also critical to keeping our communities safe and healthy places to live. To participate in school, students and families must comply with the risk mitigation strategies that have been determined to be the best way to slow the spread of COVID-19. Vaccinations are the primary mitigation strategy in reducing the spread of COVID-19. The CDC strongly recommends all persons eligible to be vaccinated. Strategies for fall reopening include:

****Risk Mitigation Strategies**

Mitigation Measure	Update for 2021 - 2022
Remote Learning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● June 2021 Public Act Nos. 21-46 and 21-2 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ No Remote learning for 2021-2022 ○ Grade 7 & 9 students return 8/25 ○ All Students students return 8/26
Quarantining from school and sports after exposure to COVID-positive individual	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Not required for students or faculty/staff who have been fully vaccinated AND are asymptomatic ● Not required for students seated at least 3 feet from a positive peer in classrooms if both students were properly wearing masks and the non-positive student is asymptomatic (applies only to students) ● Asynchronous learning will be provided for students that are quarantined. Completion and submission of work assignments on the assigned day will equate to a “present” marking for the day. If assignments are not turned on their due dates the student will be marked absent. ● Final determinations about quarantine periods will be made by the School COVID Liaison
Masks for students in school	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Required by the SDE, DPH, and CDC ● Masks must be worn regardless of vaccination status. This is a fluid situation and will be monitored closely. ● Not required when students are outdoors
District Transportation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Masks are required when students are riding district buses and vans ● Assigned seating on buses and vans
Hand washing & sanitizing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Students and staff will practice regular handwashing ● Hand sanitizer stations provided in classrooms and throughout school

Desk shields	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Not required
In-school COVID-19 testing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● At this time, TGS will not be offering in-school testing
Daily Health Screening for parents and staff	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Prior to leaving for school, staff and students (or parents/guardians) should perform a self-assessment to identify fever and other COVID symptoms. ● Stay home when experiencing symptoms
Water fountains	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● For bottle filling only
Social distancing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Students should, when practical and/or feasible, be seated at least 3 feet apart.
Shared classroom materials	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Students will still be encouraged to use their own materials and minimize the sharing of materials, if possible
Lunches & cafeteria	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Continue to promote spacing of students ● Single-use, disposable glasses, dishes, cutlery no longer required
Sports/Physical Education	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Outdoor activities encouraged ● Most likely full fall season for interscholastic sports especially for teams with high vaccination rates ● Per the DPH, CSDE, TAHS, and CIAC. Masks must be worn for indoor sports. ● Hand hygiene before and after activities
Visitors to buildings	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Parents/Guardians will be welcomed into the building for meetings, events, etc. ● All visitors must comply with all protocols ● Failure to comply will result in removal from the building ● Virtual meetings are a possibility for those that are unable to attend in person meetings. ● Events may have limited capacity
Cleaning & Disinfection	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Routine daily cleaning of classrooms, offices, etc. ● Cleaning and disinfection of restrooms, Health Office, and known exposure areas at least once daily ● Daily cleaning of buses
School Events and Activities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● No immediate return of large indoor assemblies or concerts ● Modified school-wide events to allow for social distancing and mitigation practices

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● After-school activities at all levels will be in place ● Events may have limited capacity
Ventilation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Recommendations about enhanced ventilation (i.e., maximizing fresh air intake) remain in place ● TGS has had all duct work professionally cleaned during the summer

*All mitigation practices above are subject to change given ongoing guidance from DPH in collaboration with the CSDE as well as the TAHD.

** Failure to comply with protocols will result in removal from the building.

Continuous Learning

All Gilbert School students will return to in-person learning for the 2021-2022 school year unless they are asked to isolate or quarantine by the school or the Torrington Area Health District. The plan outlines the instructional delivery that will be implemented based on infection rates and community spread. Throughout the year, TGS will be prepared to adjust plans based on health indicators and guidance from state and local health officials. The definition of each phase is listed below.

In-Person Learning

The goal and expectation of the CSDE is that all Connecticut students will return to in-person learning in the fall. Health and safety protocols can be increased or reduced as the landscape of COVID-19 fluctuates and guidance from the CSDE or DPH changes. Instruction will be provided in-person and technology support will be available. Google classroom will continue as a support to student learning.

Home Schooling Option

Home Schooling is an option for families. If this option is selected, the parent chooses all instructional materials and is solely responsible for student learning. This model is appropriate for families who do not wish to continue in-person learning at TGS. Families who choose to keep their children at home are required to choose homeschooling. For those families who opt for homeschooling, there is no support from school personnel. Parents who wish to withdraw from TGS and homeschool their student would submit the homeschooling form to withdraw their student from school. The form is available through our School Counseling Office. Please contact the office at 860-379--8521. For more information, parents/guardians should contact Mr. Greg Shugrue, Head of School at shugrueg@gilbertschool.org or at 860-379-8521. At any time in any model of learning, families can visit the [Connecticut Learning Hub](#) for additional learning activities for their students.

School Liaison and Communication Plan

School COVID Liaison

Kelly Gilbert, Director of Health Services, 860-379-8521 ext. 1431

Communications Plan:

TGS is communicating the reopening plans through the following platforms:

- TGS Website <https://www.gilbertschool.org/>
- Email
- E-News Blast
- Publications from the Health Districts.
- School Messenger

Positive COVID-19 cases will be communicated to individuals who are identified as direct contacts. The data will be updated on the school's website where families, staff, and community can track the information. Information will no longer be sent to the district through school messenger on a case basis. If there is a concern about transmissions, it will be communicated to the school and relevant community.

Operations

Facilities

TGS will comply with the state standards for cleaning and ventilation to the extent possible and per the recommendations of the CDC and local Health Departments. Scheduling of cleaning and maintenance is developed yearly with the appropriate staff and adequate materials and supplies are ordered to maintain a safe and clean facility.

Daily Operations

All operations within TGS will follow guidance from the CSDE, DPH, and CDC. Traffic within the buildings will move continually at all times. Visitors will be allowed in the buildings according to the school's visitor policy and compliance with CDC guidelines.

Nutrition

Breakfast and lunch will be available to all students free of charge. Meals are subsidized by the federal government and this program will continue as long as funds allow. Meal service will continue as it had prior to the pandemic. All areas used for eating will be

sanitized after each lunch wave. If school meal services or options change during the school year, families will be notified.

Transportation

In-district bus routes will return to standard operation.

Health Practices and Protocols

Standard Public Health Practices and Adequate Supplies

TGS believes in the health and safety of all students and staff in our community. TGS continues to implement the public health practices to mitigate the spread of COVID-19. These practices include, but are not limited to:

- Vaccination
- Social distancing, as space allows and recommended by the CDC
- Frequent hand washing and the use of hand sanitizer,
- Use of face coverings that completely cover the face and mouth, when required per CDC
- Respiratory and cough etiquette, and
- Enhanced cleaning/disinfection of surfaces.

All staff and students will be educated and engaged in these practices and expectations to keep each other safe in the upcoming school year.

Adequate supplies, inclusive of soap, hand sanitizer, paper towels, tissues, disinfectant wipes, face coverings, and no-touch/foot pedal trash cans will be provided for the opening of the school year.

Supplies Purchased or Ordered for the School Year

Adequate supplies have been purchased. Soap, hand sanitizer, paper towels, tissues, disinfectant wipes, face coverings, and no-touch trash cans are available for student and staff use.

Immunizations and Health Assessments

TGS will continue to reinforce state guidance with respect to health assessments and immunizations. The district will implement the requirements for state-mandated physicals for new enrollees and Grade 9 students.

Reporting Illnesses

It is important for students to be in school to receive instruction, but it is more important for staff and students to be healthy. TGS is committed to the health and safety of all constituents. To provide the safest possible environment for students and staff, TGS needs straightforward communication and cooperation with expected mitigation strategies that will be put into place to mitigate the transmission of COVID-19. Several procedures will be required to maintain that health and safety standard.

Screening for Symptoms at Home

People with COVID-19 have had a wide range of symptoms reported – ranging from mild symptoms to severe illness. This list does not include all possible symptoms. Symptoms may appear 2-14 days after exposure to the virus. People with these symptoms may have COVID-19:

- Fever or chills
- Cough
- Shortness of breath or difficulty breathing
- Fatigue
- Muscle or body aches
- Headache
- New loss of taste or smell
- Sore throat
- Congestion or runny nose
- Nausea or vomiting
- Diarrhea

Daily Health Check

Prior to leaving for school, staff and students (or parents/guardians) should perform a self-assessment to identify fever and other COVID symptoms. If a parent/guardian has questions about their student's well-being on a given day, the parent/guardian is asked to please keep the student home and contact a physician for guidance. If a student or staff member falls ill with the symptoms of COVID-19 during the school day, procedures have been created to prevent the spread of the virus. Open communication with staff and students with special healthcare needs is encouraged. Staff should approach their administrator with their special healthcare needs for a confidential conversation about applicable laws and school policies. Administrators will contact the Head of School and TGS Covid Liaison if they hear of any possible Covid cases.

COVID Contact Tracing Protocol

Definition of a close contact

Someone who was within 6 feet of a COVID positive person (laboratory-confirmed or a clinically compatible illness) for a cumulative total of 15 minutes or more over a 24-hour period (for example, *three individual 5-minute exposures for a total of 15 minutes*). An infected person can spread SARS-CoV-2 starting from 2 days before they have any symptoms (or, for asymptomatic patients, 2 days before the positive specimen collection date), until they meet criteria for discontinuing home isolation.

Exceptions

- **Traditional Student Classroom Exposures:** In the 7–12 indoor classroom setting, the close contact definition excludes students who were within 3 to 6 feet of an infected student (laboratory-confirmed or a clinically compatible illness) if both the infected student and the exposed student(s) correctly and consistently wore well-fitting masks the entire time. Classrooms eligible for this exception include those with reduced student movement. Band, chorus, physical education, art, carpentry or classes with increased movement are not eligible. This exception does not apply to teachers, staff, or other adults in the indoor classroom setting.
- **Vaccinated staff and students:** Vaccinated staff and students do not need to quarantine. They must provide documentation of their COVID vaccination. Vaccination is defined as completing all necessary doses of the vaccine (brand dependent) and fourteen days have passed since the last vaccination. In the event of exposure to someone with COVID, COVID testing should be done on day 3-5 following exposure. Vaccinated individuals should monitor for symptoms for 14 days following exposure and be vigilant in wearing a mask during that time.
- **Prior history of COVID:** Staff/students who have a prior history of COVID within the past 90 days will be excluded from quarantine. Medical documentation will be required.

Release from Quarantine/Return to School

Students/Staff who have tested positive for COVID or who have been diagnosed by a physician with COVID need to be isolated at home for 10 days from the initial test/diagnosis. They may return to school when the following criteria are met: fever free without use of medication for 24 hours, symptoms are improved, completed 10 day home isolation period.

Source: CDC COVID-19

Face Coverings

Required by the SDE, DPH, and CDC. Masks are required for students and staff while inside schools regardless of vaccination status. This is a fluid situation and will be monitored closely.

Water Bottles

Students are encouraged to bring disposable/recyclable water bottles to school, if possible. However, water bottle filling stations are available.

Illness Response

TGS will continue to follow Addendum 5 of the [Adapt, Advance, Achieve: Connecticut's Plan to Learn and Grow Together](#) document.

- A 10-day quarantine from the date of exposure OR
- A 7-day quarantine with a documented* negative PCR COVID test result on Day 5 or later from the exposure. (*This documentation must be received by your child's school health office before returning to school.)
- Students who participate in athletics and/or extra-curricular activities may not participate for 14 days from the exposure date (This is a Department of Health requirement). This can be shortened to 10 days with a negative PCR COVID test on day 8 or later.
 - For school attendance, the student may return to school after 7 days from exposure with a negative PCR COVID test obtained on day 5 or later.
 - For athletics and/or extra-curricular activities a PCR test must be obtained on day 8 or later to reduce the quarantine time from activities to 10 days.
 - Students must remain home while waiting for COVID test results.

Students or staff that have obtained fully vaccinated status and are asymptomatic will not be quarantined.

Vaccination Information

Staff and students are considered fully vaccinated for COVID-19 two weeks after they have received the second dose in a 2-dose series (Pfizer or Moderna).

Addressing Vulnerable Populations

Special Education

As was the case for 2020-2021, many of the decisions regarding special education will be made on an individual basis. The information below will provide information for students with special needs as a whole and is more general in nature.

- TGS is currently operating with the understanding that there has been no waiver of requirements under the IDEA for the provision of a free and appropriate public education (FAPE) in the least restrictive environment (LRE).
- Students are general education students first. Guidance and policies related to school reopening plans apply to all students, including students with special needs who qualify for individual education programs under the IDEA and accommodation plans for eligible students under Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act. If students with disabilities are unable to access the reopening plan as designed, TGS will facilitate individualized and alternative means of re-entry based upon student need, present levels of functioning, developmental levels, and student/parent input.
- Special education teachers and related service providers will provide continued instruction in teaching students how to put on and wear masks.
- PPTs will resume in person, however, virtual meetings will remain an option for families.

English Language Learners

TGS will ensure that communications regarding the reopening plan and future remote will be delivered in the home language of the family. If a family requires translated materials, they should contact their child's administrator.

Equity

TGS is committed to ensuring that every student and family in our community has the opportunity to access the tools that are needed to successfully participate in our program. We have invested in technology for each student to be able to participate. If any family is in need of access to the internet, please contact their child's administrator for a confidential conversation regarding your current or anticipated needs.

Social Emotional Learning (SEL) and Mental Health

TGS is committed to focusing on building/rebuilding/continuing positive relationships to establish positive, supportive, and safe learning environments. Students and staff will continue to be supported in social emotional well-being. Opportunities for students and staff to connect and cultivate social emotional competence will be available. Multiple methods will be used to identify students who require additional and individualized support and instruction. These areas may be and are not all inclusive of: attendance, behavior, emotional needs, academic supports, and well-being.

Please note: The guidance and plans provided in this document are based on current guidelines and requirements issued by the Connecticut State Department of Education and the current input of local entities and public health officials. The COVID-19 public health emergency continues to be a rapidly evolving situation, and consequently, the guidelines, requirements and plans described herein may change as the legal and regulatory landscape and the public health trends continue to change.

Athletics/Extracurricular Activities and Vaccinations

All decisions regarding athletics will be driven by the Department of Public Health and the CIAC. Currently, vaccinations are not mandatory, but CIAC is strongly urging all athletes to be vaccinated to prevent disrupting sport seasons. We have been encouraged by the State Departments of Education and Health as well as the CIAC to communicate to families that students planning to participate in extracurricular sports consider vaccination.

The band and choral program will continue to adhere to guidelines outlined in Addendum 7 of the Adapt, Advance, Achieve: Connecticut's Plan to Learn to Grow Together document.

<https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/SDE/COVID-19/Addendum7-COVID-19-Reopening-Considerations-for-Connecticut-K-12-Music-Programs.pdf>

Additional Resources

<https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/SDE/COVID-19/CTReopeningSchools.pdf>

<https://www.211ct.org/> <https://portal.ct.gov/Coronavirus/ContaCT>

<https://portal.ct.gov/coronavirus> <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/index.html>

<https://portal.ct.gov/SDE/COVID19/COVID-19-Resources-for-Families-and-Educators>

<https://casel.org/resources-covid/>

<https://uwc.211ct.org/mental-health-crisis-intervention-services-connecticut/>