

Green Acres School Community Handbook Addendum

Related to COVID-19 Policies and Procedures

Health Screenings, Attendance & Travel

Health screenings

Parents will complete a temperature check and health screening questions for their student(s) on the Magnus app prior to arriving at school. Parents will not bring their child to school until this screening is completed. If the app prompts them to stay home, they will follow the instructions and notify the school nurse within 24 hours. Parents will also notify the school of the student's absence in accordance with normal attendance procedures via the parent portal. The school retains the discretion to screen any student upon arrival. Screenings may be done based on staff's observations, perceived symptoms, or randomly.

Attendance

In the event that students must engage in a period of remote learning, attendance records will be maintained as usual.

Family travel

Families are expected to follow all, if any, travel restrictions mandated by the state of Maryland. At its discretion, the school may require testing following periods when families are most likely to travel, such as winter and spring breaks.

Emergency Communication

In the event of a required early dismissal due to a suspected or confirmed case of COVID-19 at the school, parents/guardians will be notified, and then dismissal procedures will be implemented.

PM Care

Students staying after school for PM Care are placed into units and navigate their afternoons within their assigned units. The following groupings make up the units for PM Care: ECU (Pre-K & Kindergarten), 1st & 2nd grades, 3rd & 4th grades, and Middle School. Drop-ins are available on an available-space basis, determined by the number of PM Care participants in each cohort

on a given day. Inquiries regarding drop-in availability should be sent to pmcare@greenacres.org by 10 AM on the day in which you are interested in sending your child(ren) to PM Care.

Illness and School Attendance

A student who becomes ill in school is evaluated by the school nurse or their designee. The school nurse evaluates the student's complaints by observation (skin color, eyes, speech, and orientation) and by checking temperature, pulse, and respiratory status. Any student with an emerging primary COVID-19 symptom (cough, fever, new loss of taste or smell, vomiting, or diarrhea) or two secondary COVID-19 symptoms (chills, shortness of breath or difficulty breathing, fatigue, headache, sore throat, congestion or runny nose, or muscle aches) will be administered, with permission, a rapid antigen test and sent home. We also encourage parents to keep children home for minor symptoms (e.g., runny nose, congestion, sneezing, etc.) to monitor them for worsening symptoms. We ask you to contact the school nurse (nurse@greenacres.org), who will make a clinical judgement to see if your child should come to campus.

A fever is defined as a temperature of 100 degrees Fahrenheit or higher. Parents are asked to keep children home until fever-free for at least 24 hours without the use of any antipyretics (fever-reducing medications, such as Tylenol or Ibuprofen) or until other symptoms are gone for at least 24 hours. If a student is prescribed a new medication, the student must stay home for the first 24 hours after starting the medication. If a student is sent home for COVID-19 symptoms, return may be permitted once student has received a negative COVID-19 PCR test and is fever free without fever-reducing medication for 24 hours, symptoms show signs of improvement per their doctor, have been on antibiotics, if prescribed, for 24 hours, and/or have not vomited or experienced diarrhea for 24 hours.

The school may require a note from a doctor before the return of students with persistent mild symptoms. We also require that families keep unvaccinated children home who have been exposed to family members, caregivers, or others who have been diagnosed with COVID-19.

Self-Reporting

Parents/staff will self-report to the school if they or their students have symptoms of COVID-19, a positive test for COVID-19, or were exposed to someone with COVID-19 within the last 14 days in accordance with health information-sharing regulations for COVID-19. If a student or staff member is tested for COVID-19 due to symptoms or direction from a healthcare provider, a copy of their results will be emailed to the school nurse as soon as they are received.

Quarantine and School Closures and Return

The school will monitor state and county rates of community transmission of COVID-19 and follow their guidelines and regulations related to isolation, quarantine, and return to school. If a person who has been on campus is diagnosed with COVID-19, the school will notify and follow the direction of the local health department.

In the event that more than half of a class is required to quarantine, virtual learning will be available for that class for the duration of the quarantine, excepting of the first two days, which are reserved for teachers to pivot to online platforms, prepare materials for distribution, etc.

In the event that one or a couple of students in a grade must quarantine, teachers will prepare asynchronous work, activities, and materials for students who fall in this category so that they remain engaged in the coursework until they are permitted to return to campus. Teachers will check in with those students to ensure they are clear in the work given and see if any support is needed. We do not offer dual-platform instruction.

COVID-19 Safety protocols

A Community Agreement must be completed, signed, and turned in to Green Acres prior to the first day of returning to on-campus learning.

Testing

Weekly COVID-19 testing is required for all staff and students, regardless of vaccination status (unless the individual has tested positive for the virus within the past 90 days). The test must be dated on the Tuesday of each week. The school has arranged for on-campus testing during the school day each Tuesday that we are in session, which will meet these guidelines; alternatively, students may use their own healthcare providers. The school nurse will have access to PCR test results from the on-site testing company. Those who test with outside providers must send their test results to nurse@greenacres.org each Friday by noon.

Face coverings

Masking is optional for students and staff in grades 1–8. In Early Childhood (Pre-K and Kindergarten), masking is optional outside but required inside. Campus visitors continue to be required to mask while on campus. Those who are required to wear a mask under these policies must wear either a KN95 or surgical mask. Those for whom masking is optional must still carry a spare mask for occasional use when circumstances dictate.

Social distancing

All students, staff, and visitors will always maintain, to the best of their ability, at least 3 feet of distance from each other. Note that latest health guidelines stress that close contact comes from being within 3 feet (6 feet without masks) of another person for 15 minutes or less within a cumulative 24-hour period.

Hand washing and prevention measures

All students and staff will be trained on proper hand washing techniques, respiratory etiquette, and prevention-of-illness measures. Students and staff will also be trained to recognize signs of symptoms of COVID-19. Signs also will be posted around campus about hand washing, disease prevention, symptoms of COVID-19, etc.

Eating and drinking

Sharing food/drink/utensils/water bottles is not permitted. Students must bring a water bottle to school every day. Students will eat outside, weather permitting. Water fountains will not be used for drinking, except for the water fountain in the Big Room, which will be used to fill water bottles only. If students need to eat indoors, they will maintain social distance and have the doors to the outside open.

Early Childhood Unit (Pre-K & Kindergarten)

Our safety protocol for Pre-K and Kindergarten focuses on more effective risk mitigation strategies for this population. These include hand hygiene, infection-prevention education for staff and families, adult physical distancing from one another, adults and students wearing face coverings, and spending time outdoors.

Strategies:

- Frequent handwashing for staff and students.
- Frequent cleaning and disinfection of classrooms, common areas, and frequently touched surfaces throughout building.
- The expectation that students will always wear face coverings inside, except when eating/drinking.
- Utilize outdoor spaces when possible.
- Limit unnecessary visitors into the building.

Lower School (Grades 1-4)

Strategies:

- Frequent handwashing for staff and students.
- Frequent cleaning and disinfection of classrooms, common areas, and frequently touched surfaces throughout building.
- Desks will be placed 3 feet apart.
- Utilize outdoor spaces when possible.

Middle School (Grades 5-8)

We anticipate that Middle School students will be more effective in physical distancing to reduce the risk of spreading COVID-19 than the Early Childhood Unit. There also are different barriers to the successful implementation of many of these measures in older age groups. Green Acres School will implement the following physical distancing risk-mitigation strategies when feasible:

- Frequent handwashing for staff and students.
- Frequent cleaning and disinfection of classrooms, common areas, and frequently touched surfaces throughout building.
- Avoidance of close physical proximity in cases of increased exhalation (PE, exercise); these activities will be safest outdoors and with students spread out.
- Desks will be placed 3 feet apart.
- Utilize outdoor spaces when possible.
- Teachers will maintain 3 feet from students when possible and if not disruptive to educational process.

Enhanced cleaning and disinfecting

All cleaning and disinfection products will be used in accordance with the manufacturer's instructions and stored safely away from children. Cleaning protocols will be established per CDC and state guidance.

Considerations for Virtual Return

To set a clear decision-making process for situations that may require a return to fully virtual instruction, the following considerations will be weighed, yet are not mutually exclusive of each other:

- The number of COVID-19 cases in Montgomery County per 100,000 residents;
- Requirements for the state of Maryland; and
- The health of the Green Acres School community (including the number of community members quarantining, waiting for test results, or exhibiting symptoms).

The next steps:

- COVID Core Task Force is convened, evaluates data, and recommends to the HOS whether to move to at-home instruction or remain open.
- The Head of School meets with Leadership Team about communicating the decision.
- The Head of School communicates the decision to all staff, the Board, and families (in that order).
- A town hall parent meeting may be offered to address and clarify the next steps and timing, and reminder of metrics that will bring students back on campus.

COVID-19 School Website and Resources

The school nurse will be the person to contact for reporting anything related to COVID-19. The school will maintain a COVID-19 webpage on its website providing the community with access to community handbook provisions related to COVID-19 and other important COVID-19 resources.

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