



Panther Press

A publication of the Georgia Academy for the Blind

Monday, August 17th, 2020

This institution is an equal opportunity provider

Dr. Cindy Gibson, Superintendent

2895 Vineville Avenue

Macon, GA 31204

478-751-6083



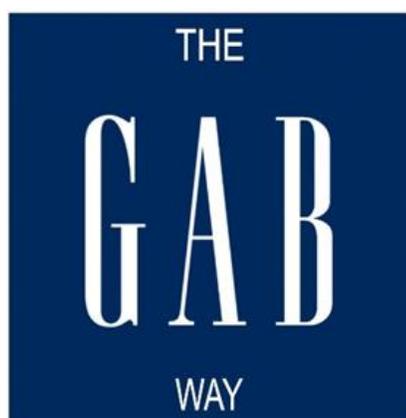
Georgia Academy for the Blind - GAB



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Mission Statement: The Georgia Academy for the Blind provides quality education services to Georgia's students with visual impairments and/or visual impairments in conjunction with other disabilities to prepare them to achieve their highest level of independence in transition to college and career readiness. *Check out this student produced video featuring this Mission Statement:* <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IRrbhkGSe98>



Give it your best
Achieve your goals
Be respectful

August:



Mark your Calendar :

8/23 - Residential students move into Cottages by appointment

8/24 - First Day of School

9/7 - Labor Day Holiday : residential students return on Monday

This newsletter is published by our Parent Mentor/Family Engagement Specialist, Jennifer Minter. Please send your ideas, news and resources in your community to her: JMinter@doe.k12.ga.us or call **478-262-3303**. ***Please remember to contact her if you've had a change in address, phone number and/or email!***

A message from our Superintendent

Dear GAB Families,

Standing Together. Standing Tall. As planned, the Georgia Academy for the Blind will reopen on Sunday, August 23, 2020, for residential students and Monday, August 24, 2020, for day students and distance learning students. Staff returned on July 27, and case managers have been contacting you regularly to implement the best plan for your student. At this point you should be informed of what on-site and distance learning will “look like,” but additional tweaks and communication will be forthcoming this week.

Your patience and understanding are so much appreciated, and without question we can only imagine the hardships you have weathered without having the structure of GAB services. Trust me when I say, “We are ready for you”!

Attached you will find important documents for your knowledge and reference. They are posted to the website www.gabmacon.org also. This year, open house and registration are online. Move-in times for students in the Living and Learning Centers are scheduled individually (Frank Reynolds frreynol@doe.k12.ga.us; Tyrene Neil tneil@doe.k12.ga.us). The 2020-2021 calendar is attached, and as we are getting a late start, there will be no fall break. Other holidays and breaks are in place and indicated.

Students and staff will have a Wellness Check upon arrival each day and within the day consisting of a temperature check and wellness questions. Anyone who exhibits fever (100 degrees) or COVID-19 symptoms listed in the attached document COVID-19 School Safety Guidelines will not be allowed to remain on campus. Please check your students well before sending/bringing them to school. Please know that any student who becomes ill during the school day must be picked up immediately. We apologize to the inconvenience and know that we all support a Safety First approach. Please notify Assistant Principal, Alicia Jackson, or Superintendent, Dr. Cindy Gibson if your student is diagnosed or exposed to anyone with a COVID-19 diagnosis. (ajackson@doe.k12.ga.us ; cgibson@doe.k12.ga.us) Visitors to the campus will be limited, but if you need to come on campus, please schedule your visit by telephone or email to your case manager or an administrator, wear a mask, and report to the Hendricks Building for a Wellness Check.

PPE will be provided, but students may wear their own masks brought from home. Bottled water will be provided as water fountains cannot be used until further notice. Students are encouraged to bring water thermoses from home if they prefer. The facilities are cleaned, traffic patterns are marked and adequate PPE are in stock! The GAB staff have prepared a video entitled “We Are Ready for YOU” which will air shortly. It’s clever and informative, but YOU are the real STARS of the show!

We have missed you so much and look forward to another rewarding year.

Reach out if you need anything at all.

Always,
Cindy



Georgia Academy for Blind

Reopening Plan

1st Nine (9) Weeks of School

August 24, 2020 – October 23, 2020

2895 Vineville Avenue n Macon, Georgia 31204

Hendricks Building n 478-751-6083 (School) n 478-752-1745 (Fax)

Administration Building n 478-751-6083 (Office) n 478-751-6659 (Fax)

www.gabmacon.org

Dr. Cindy Gibson, Superintendent

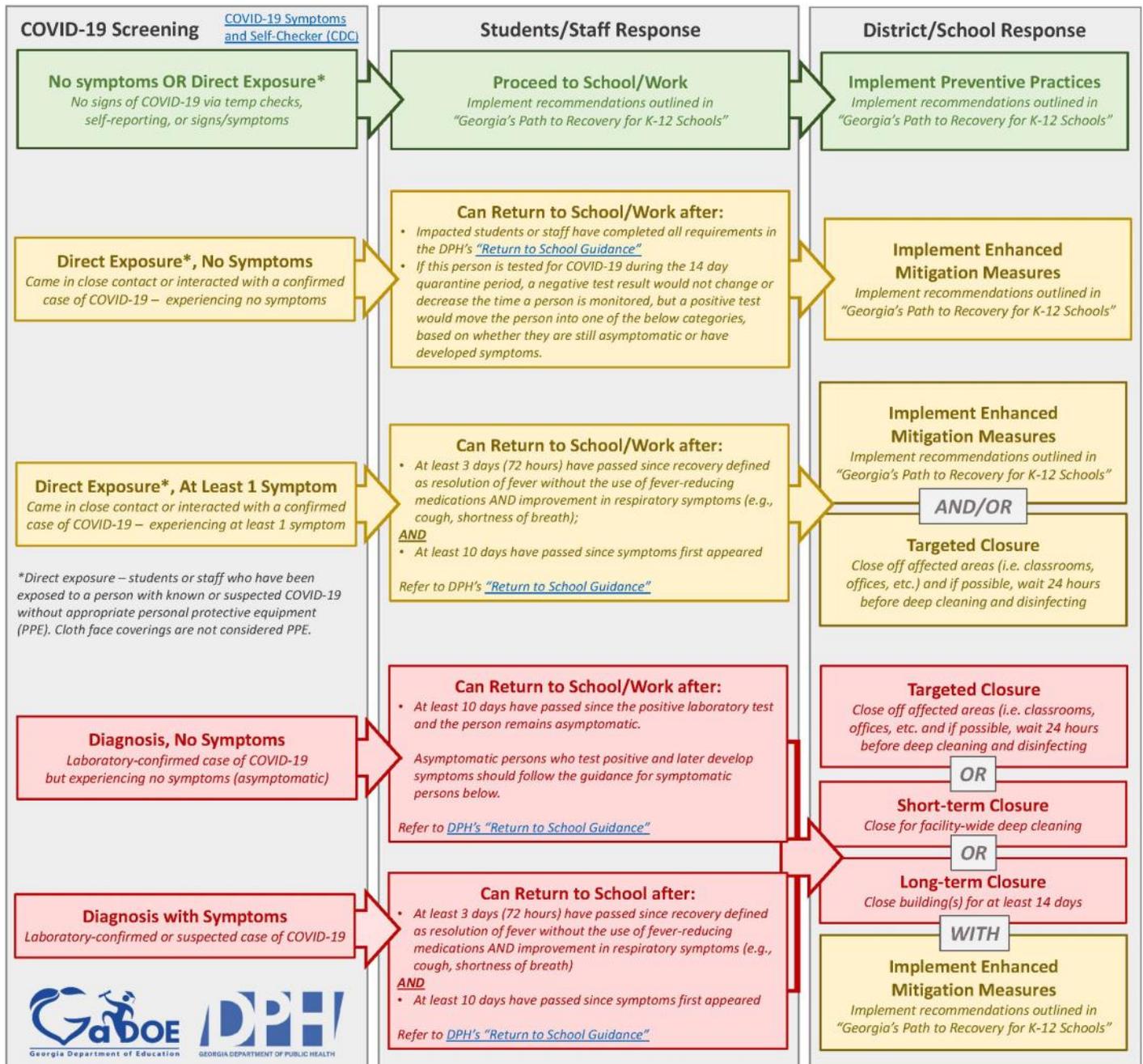
A cross-functional team of central office staff and school leaders, utilizing survey responses from staff and parent/guardians, was organized to address when and how to reopen the Georgia Academy for the Blind for the 2020-2021 school year. The cross-functional team's focus was to base the reopening of school on recommendations from the Center for Disease Control (CDC), Department of Public Health, and Department of Education. The recommendations include cleaning/disinfecting school buildings and implementing social distancing protocols to limit the spread of the COVID-19. The following plan outlines the two (2) instructional learning models (in-person and remote) to be used for the opening of the 2020-2021 school year on August 24, 2020 for the first nine (9) weeks of school for students. The pandemic will be monitored closely during that time, and parents/guardians will be informed with as much notice as possible regarding instructional learning models that will be implemented after the first nine (9) weeks of school.

We know the importance of students learning and interacting with others in a traditional, in-person learning model; however, we need to understand that when we come back to an in-person learning model at school, it will not be the same as previous school years because of the pandemic. It is critical that we do whatever possible to limit the spread of the COVID-19. Safety precautions are being taken, and they will make school look and feel differently. Social distancing will change how school events are handled and what new behaviors are expected from students and staff so that everyone is as safe as possible. These changes may be difficult for some, and staff are ready to help students adjust to changes.

The in-person and remote learning models provide options for attending the Georgia Academy for the Blind for the first nine (9) weeks of school with school starting for students on August 24, 2020. In early July 2020, parents/guardians were surveyed to determine which instructional learning model they preferred for their child attending the Georgia Academy for the Blind. Staff made multiple attempts using various communication methods to elicit feedback from parents/guardians regarding their learning model preference for their child. If a parent/guardian did not respond to the multiple communication attempts, the student will be scheduled for the in-person learning model.

The aforementioned cross-functional team will monitor the spread of COVID-19 during the first nine (9) weeks of school to determine what instructional learning model(s) will be provided at the end of the first nine (9) weeks of school. In the event the spread of COVID-19 risks the safety of students and staff, the school will give as much notice as possible to parents/guardians if the instructional learning model chosen by parents/guardians needs to be changed. Staff will contact parents/guardians each week to update them regarding current school operations and any needed changes to the instructional learning models offered with the safety of students and staff being the highest priority. This reopening plan contains contingency plans should COVID-19 cases continue to rise and cause interruptions to the in-person learning model. See the COVID-19: Potential Exposure Protocols on page seven (7) and the COVID-19 Decision Making Matrix on page eight (8).

COVID-19 Decision Making Matrix



DPH DOES NOT recommend using a test-based strategy for returning to school for children or adults (2 negative tests at least 24 hours apart) after COVID-19 infection.* CDC has reported prolonged PCR positive test results without evidence of infectiousness. Although persons may have PCR-positive tests for up to 6 weeks, it remains unknown whether these PCR-positive results represent the presence of infectious virus. At this time, PCR positive specimens capable of producing disease have not been isolated more than 9 days after onset of illness.

More information about the science behind the symptom-based strategy for discontinuing isolation can be found [here](#).

GEORGIA ACADEMY FOR THE BLIND

2020-2021 School Calendar

180 Student/ 200 Day Teacher and Para

<table style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <tr> <td style="width: 15px; background-color: #cccccc; border: 1px solid black;"></td> <td>Holidays</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="width: 15px; background-color: #ffcc99; border: 1px solid black;"></td> <td>Regular School Days</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="width: 15px; background-color: #99ccff; border: 1px solid black;"></td> <td>Graduation</td> </tr> </table>		Holidays		Regular School Days		Graduation	<table style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <tr> <td style="width: 15px; background-color: #ffff99; border: 1px solid black;"></td> <td>First and Last Day for Students</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="width: 15px; background-color: #ff9999; border: 1px solid black;"></td> <td>Open House</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="width: 15px; background-color: #99ff99; border: 1px solid black;"></td> <td>Required Professional Learning</td> </tr> </table>		First and Last Day for Students		Open House		Required Professional Learning
	Holidays												
	Regular School Days												
	Graduation												
	First and Last Day for Students												
	Open House												
	Required Professional Learning												

2020								2021							
Jul-20								Jan-21							
	Sun	Mon	Tues	Wed	Thur	Fri	Sat	Sun	Mon	Tues	Wed	Thur	Fri	Sat	
Work Days: 5													1	2	Work Days: 19
School Days: 0				1	2	3	4	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	School Days: 19
Special Days: Pre-planning	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	Special Days:
	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	1st Winter Holiday
	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	24	25	26	27	28	29	30	18th MLK Jr. Holiday
	26	27	28	29	30	31		31							
Aug-20								Feb-21							
	Sun	Mon	Tues	Wed	Thur	Fri	Sat	Sun	Mon	Tues	Wed	Thur	Fri	Sat	
Work Days: 21							1		1	2	3	4	5	6	Work Days: 19
School Days: 6	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	School Days: 19
Special Days:	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	Special Days:
23rd Open House	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	15th President's Day
24th First Day of School	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	28							
	30	31													
Sep-20								Mar-21							
	Sun	Mon	Tues	Wed	Thur	Fri	Sat	Sun	Mon	Tues	Wed	Thur	Fri	Sat	
Work Days: 21			1	2	3	4	5		1	2	3	4	5	6	Work Days: 20
School Days: 21	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	School Days: 20
Special Days:	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	Special Days:
7th Labor Day	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	29-31 Spring Break
	27	28	29	30				28	29	30	31				
Oct-20								Apr-21							
	Sun	Mon	Tues	Wed	Thur	Fri	Sat	Sun	Mon	Tues	Wed	Thur	Fri	Sat	
Work Days: 22					1	2	3					1	2	3	Work Days: 19
School Days: 22	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	School Days: 19
Special Days:	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	Special Days:
	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	1-2 Spring Break
	25	26	27	28	29	30	31	25	26	27	28	29	30		5th Easter Holiday
Nov-20								May-21							
	Sun	Mon	Tues	Wed	Thur	Fri	Sat	Sun	Mon	Tues	Wed	Thur	Fri	Sat	
Work Days: 16														1	Work Days: 20
School Days: 16	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	School Days: 15
Special Days:	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	Special Days:
23-27 Thanksgiving Holidays	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	19th Graduation
	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	21st Last Day of School
	29	30						30	31						24-28 Post Planning/ PL
Dec-20								Jun-21							
	Sun	Mon	Tues	Wed	Thur	Fri	Sat	Sun	Mon	Tues	Wed	Thur	Fri	Sat	
Work Days: 14			1	2	3	4	5			1	2	3	4	5	Work Days: 4
School Days: 13	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	School Days: 0
Special Days:	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	Special Days:
18th Professional Learning	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	1-4 PL at discretion of Superintendent
21-31 Winter Holidays	27	28	29	30	31			27	28	29	30				

Sem 1 Total: Work Days =99; School Days =78

Sem 2 Total: Work Days =101; School Days =92

August Birthdays

8-2	Devin W.	8-25	Josie
8-2	Kaden A.	8-29	De'Zereion
8-3	Logan A.	8-29	Rickoy
8-5	Montrez	8-30	Jesse
8-6	Marquan		

