

Golden Rule Charter School

Return to In-Person Instruction and Continuity of Services Plan 2023-2024

Updated 8-23-2023



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Provide Notice: Parental and Public Notice

Golden Rule Operational Guidelines

General

This guidance document is being provided based on the public health situation as we understand it today and takes effect immediately to help support school systems in planning for the 2022-2023 school year. Changes to the public health situation over the course of the summer may necessitate changes to this guidance.

Health Taskforce Coordinators

- Ayrial Vanmeter, Science Curr Coordinator
- Mr. Ernie Amaton, Deputy Superintendent
- Mrs. Diana Lara, Assistant Superintendent of Curriculum and Instruction

These individuals have been designated as the team responsible for responding to COVID-19 concerns and will clearly communicate for all schools. Any concerns regarding COVID-19 can be sent to Info@goldencharter.org.

Community and Stakeholder Input

A summary of public comment from our community and stakeholder survey will be shared at the Golden Rule Charter School Board of Directors meeting*. Public comment and input from our various stakeholders will be an important aspect in our regular reviews of Golden Rule's Safe Return to In-Person Instruction and Continuity of Services Plan.

Each round of reviews, public input will be collected through a survey—in English and Spanish—that will be posted on the Golden Rule Charter School website along with the most up-to-date plans and revisions.

Attendance and Enrollment

1. Per Texas Education Code (TEC), §25.092, students must attend 90% of the days a course is offered (with some exceptions) in order to be awarded credit for the course and/or to be promoted to the next grade. This requirement remains in force during the 2023-24 school year.
2. In order to facilitate a safe, effective back-to-school transition process, Golden Rule may temporarily limit access to on-campus instruction only.

3. Parents may request their public education enrollment and attendance rights and responsibilities during the COVID-19 pandemic by contacting the campus administrator.

On-Campus Instruction

In 2021-2022, Golden Rule Charter Schools discontinued the virtual learning option. All instruction will be delivered on-campus, face-to-face. Google Classroom platform will continue to be used to support teaching and learning in the new school year. For specific questions about on-campus instruction at specific campuses, please contact the school's Principal.

Long-term virtual instruction is not available as of the 2021-2022 school year. However, on August 31, 2021, the State of Texas passed Senate Bill 15 which will allow up to 10% of our student population to access a virtual learning environment. Surveys were sent at the end of September 2021 so the charter can make adjustments to our internal planning based on the number of students wanting the virtual learning setting.

When a student is out due to a documented medical reason from a US Physician the student may attend Remote Conferencing where they engage in synchronous instruction with a teacher for 4 hours a day. This option is only available when:

- A positive test for a communicable disease as established by the Texas Department of State Health Services is provided to the school nurse.
- During this time, the student will be considered present if they attend 4 hours of synchronous instruction, each day of the approved absence. Synchronous instruction opportunities will be limited based on staffing. Please contact your campus principal for specific times and availability.
- Students attending through Remote Conferencing must have the camera on and be in view of the instructor at all times.
- Students must be appropriately dressed and actively participating in canvas/seesaw or with the instructor.
- When Remote Conferencing is not available, students who are absent, may access materials online (Google Classroom) in an effort to stay up-to-date on instruction.
- This does not constitute time in class for students. Students (or parents of our youngest students) are encouraged to communicate absences with their teacher(s).
- Students will have the opportunity to make up work once they return to school.

Prevent: Practices to prevent the Virus from Entering the School

Protocols for Screening and Isolation

General

All Golden Rule students and staff will self-screen for COVID-19 symptoms and any individuals who are present with symptoms will be separated and sent home.

Screening Protocols

Employees

- Teachers and staff will be required to self-screen¹ for COVID-19 symptoms prior to reporting to school each day.
- Teachers and staff must report to their immediate supervisor if they themselves are lab-confirmed with COVID-19, and, if so, they must remain off campus until they meet the criteria for re-entry².
- Additionally, employees must report to their immediate supervisor if they have COVID-19 symptoms. Individuals that are vaccinated or masked properly may continue to report to school and need only to monitor for symptoms. COVID Rapid tests are readily available for all staff.
- Teachers will monitor students and refer to the nurse if symptoms are present.

Parents/Students

- Parents/guardians are expected to screen their students for COVID-19 symptoms each day prior to sending their student to school.
- Parents must ensure they do not send a child to school on campus if the child is lab-confirmed with COVID-19.
- Additionally, Individuals that are vaccinated or masked properly may continue to report to school and need only to monitor for symptoms.
- The screening questions should also be asked of a student's parent who is visiting the campus for any campus conference/meeting.

¹ Self-Screen Assessment will be attached at the end of the guidelines.

² Re-entry criteria can be found on page 5.

- COVID Rapid tests are readily available for all students with parent permission.

Isolation Protocols

Student or Staff Displaying COVID-19 Symptoms

- When a student has displayed symptoms of COVID-19, the school nurse will provide a screening assessment³ to determine if and when a student needs to be tested or sent home.
- Students who are ill will be separated from their peers and should be picked up within 30 minutes and no later than 1 hour from the time the campus contacted the student's parent/guardian.
- Other students will be removed from the classroom and taken to an alternate location on campus (e.g. go on a walk outside, move to a different classroom, etc.) so that the classroom can be disinfected.

Student or Staff confirmed or suspected with COVID-19 Re-entry

- Any individuals who themselves either are lab-confirmed to have COVID-19 must stay at home throughout the infection period, and cannot return to campus until the school system screens the individual to determine any of the below conditions for campus re-entry have been met:
 - In the case of an individual who was diagnosed with COVID-19, the individual may return to school when all three of the following criteria are met:
 - Five days have passed since the positive test. Positive test serves as Day 0.
 - last one day (24 hours) have passed fever-free (and without the use of fever-reducing medications);
 - the individual has improvement in symptoms (e.g., cough, shortness of breath);
- In the case of an individual who has symptoms that could be COVID-19 and who is not evaluated by a medical professional or tested for COVID-19, such individual is assumed to have COVID-19, and the individual may not return to the campus until the individual has completed the same three-step set of criteria listed above or have a negative test.
- If the individual has symptoms that could be COVID-19 and wants to return to school before completing the above stay at home period, the individual must either (a) obtain a medical professional's note clearing the individual for return based on an alternative diagnosis or (b) receive a current confirmation that they are free of COVID via acute infection tests at an approved COVID-19 testing location.

³ Self-Screen Assessment and CDC Protocols will be attached at the end of the guidelines.

Protocols for Campus Visitors

General

All visitors who enter the building will be recommended, but not required to wear a face covering. Individuals who proceed beyond the reception area will follow specific guidelines for visitors.

Visitor Screening/PPE Requirements

All individuals entering the building are recommended, but not required to wear face coverings.

Individuals proceeding beyond the reception area will be subject to the following guidelines:

- Parents and other adults can visit schools, as permitted by local school system policies. During these visits, parents and other visitors must follow virus prevention and mitigation requirements of the school.
- Visitors and staff will maintain feasible physical distancing for conferences/meetings that are held in-person.
- Golden Rule reserves the right to restrict visits in schools to only those essential to school operations.

Protocols for Face Coverings

General

The use of face coverings can be determined by the rate of community transmission of COVID-19 and the health recommendations associated with each level. The charter will rely on guidance from the Department of State Health Services (DSHS) and Dallas County Public Health, as well as any executive orders or directives from Governor Greg Abbott, to determine the community transmission level and use of face coverings. The charter will alert students, parents and staff of the community transmission level and when face coverings must be worn.

Staff Expectations

- Staff are recommended to wear face coverings.

- Full face shields that protect the eyes, nose, and mouth can be substituted for a cloth mask.
- Face shields may be superior to cloth face coverings in many circumstances given improved ability to see mouth movements and improved air circulation.

Student Expectations

- Students are recommended to wear face coverings in hallways, common areas and during arrival/dismissal during the school day.
- Students' individual needs will be addressed on a case-by-case basis.
- Requests for accommodations should be submitted to campus administration.
- Golden Rule always recommends the use of masks or face shields for staff or students for whom it is developmentally appropriate.

RESPOND: Practices to Respond to a lab-confirmed case in the school

Protocols for Lab-confirmed Case Have Been in a School

General

The following are required actions that Golden Rule Schools will implement and adhere for situations involving a confirmed case of COVID-19.

Required Actions:

1. If an individual who has been in a school is lab-confirmed to have COVID-19, Golden Rule must notify its local health department, in accordance with applicable federal, state and local laws and regulations, including confidentiality requirements of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA).
2. Golden Rule Schools will close off areas that are heavily used by the individual with the lab-confirmed case (student, teacher, or staff) until the non-porous surfaces in those areas can be disinfected, unless more than 3 days have already passed since that person was on campus.

Mitigate: Practices to Mitigate the Spread of COVID-19 Inside the School

Protocols for Disinfecting and Hand Sanitizing

General

Frequent disinfection and hand sanitization will ensure health and wellness of students and staff.

Hand Washing/Sanitizing Expectations

Alcohol-based hand sanitizer will be available at the main entry to the campus, in classrooms, in the cafeteria and in common areas throughout the campus. Students, staff, and visitors are encouraged to regularly wash or sanitize their hands frequently.

- Early Childhood students should engage in supervised handwashing for at least 20 seconds a minimum of two times a day, in addition to after using the restroom and before eating.
- Older students should be taught good handwashing techniques.
- Students, staff, and visitors should cover coughs and sneezes with a tissue, if not available, covered in their elbows. Used tissues should be thrown away in the trash, hands washed immediately for 20 seconds or hand sanitizer may be used.

Disinfecting Expectations

- Staff will have access to disinfectant wipes to sanitize high-touch and working surfaces and shared objects regularly.
- Staff will limit the use of shared supplies when possible.
- When possible, students can clean their own spaces before and after use, in ways that are safe and developmentally appropriate.

Protocols for Campus Cleaning and Disinfecting

General

Frequent cleaning and disinfecting will promote a healthy learning and work environment for students and staff.

Daily Campus Cleaning

- Each classroom and restroom will be disinfected daily.
- All high touch areas will be disinfected daily.
- Cleaning wipes will be changed for each classroom and common area to maximize room to room cleanliness.
- Custodians are recommended to wear masks and gloves during work hours.
- The cafeteria will be disinfected between lunch periods.
- Staff will have access to disinfectant wipes to sanitize working surfaces and shared objects after each use and during breaks in instruction.

Additional Cleaning Measure for Covid-19 Positive Cases on Campus

- If a classroom or facility is closed due to COVID-19 spread, quaternary disinfectant, which is recommended for use on the virus that causes COVID-19, may be used to defog and disinfect.
- Custodial staff may defog and disinfect classrooms, restrooms, gym and any additional areas in the entire building.

Continuity of Services: Work and Learning Environments

Protocols for On-Campus Instruction

General

Where feasible and without disrupting the educational experience, Golden Rule will continue to practice social distancing.

Classroom Configurations and Procedures

- Desks or tables will be socially distanced as much as instructionally possible.
- Classrooms that are regularly within 3 feet of one another, should consider more frequent handwashing and/or increased supply of hand sanitizer.
- Group or pair work can be implemented while maintaining physical distancing. Facial coverings will be worn if group gatherings occur during substantial and moderate transmission levels.
- When possible, technology can be utilized when the use of manipulatives is needed. Teachers will consider assigning cohorts of students specific manipulatives in order to reduce the possibility of exposure or consider creating individual bags of supplementary aids and/or manipulatives for student use.
- The use of outdoor space for learning will be considered when possible. Classroom groups working outside should try to maintain at least 6 feet of social distance from other classroom groups.
- Whenever possible, students and staff will maintain consistent groupings of people to minimize the spread of the virus. Additionally, supplemental services will be grouped by grade level when possible.
- The recommended procedures will be applied to all classroom settings, including special education services locations when possible and appropriate. Students' individual needs will be addressed on a case-by-case basis.

Common Areas

- Common areas include spaces that are used for meetings and collaboration. This includes computer labs, flexible spaces, campus libraries, conference rooms and/or other meeting rooms.
- Campuses will develop schedules and protocols for the use of common areas, including how to sanitize space between use. When needed, students will bring personal supplies from the classroom. All students and staff are recommended to use hand sanitizer when entering and exiting common areas.
- In-person meetings should try to maintain social distancing. Facial coverings will be recommended during substantial and moderate transmission levels when social distancing is not feasible.

Restrooms

- Proper handwashing technique should be taught to all students and consistently reinforced.
- Efforts will be made to limit the availability of toilets, urinals and sinks to certain times to comply with health agency recommendations and social distancing.
- The scheduling of whole class restroom breaks is recommended to eliminate co-mingling of students across various classes and to ensure teacher monitoring of social distancing guidelines.
- A system will be implemented to identify the number of occupants utilizing each restroom to mitigate the chance of exceeding maximum occupants per social distancing.
- After a restroom break, students should use hand sanitizer before reentering the classroom.

Transitions

- Where possible, one-way traffic throughout campus corridors will be established.
- Walking pathways throughout the building will be designated “stay to the right.” This includes the entrance and exit doors.
- When possible, it is recommended that students make transitions outside of the building.
- For grade levels that implement departmentalization of subject areas, campuses may consider teachers moving to students for transitions in instruction and students will remain in their homeroom class.

For Secondary students:

- Staggered releases from each class will be organized to limit the number of students in the hallway during transitions.

- Classroom doors will be propped open to reduce high touch areas when possible.
- Traffic patterns will be established throughout the campus that separates individuals to the greatest extent possible.
- Staff and signage will be posted to reinforce physical distance expectations.
- When transitioning between classes, students shall travel corridors as far to the right as possible.
- Where possible, one-way traffic throughout campus corridors will be established.

Arrival

- Early bird arrivals are strongly discouraged. Any students dropped off before the building is open will not be allowed inside the building. Any exceptions would need to be specifically arranged with campus administration.
- All staff will be utilized for duty to maintain a line of sight in hallways and distancing of hallway cohorts.
- Students may wait in a centralized holding area.
- There will be bus procedures, based on campus specific needs.

Dismissal

- Sibling connections will be done outside the building.
- Campus will designate staggered dismissal groups. Staggering the groups of walkers and car riders will help manage student movement in the building and decrease the risk of potential crowding outside at dismissal time.
- There will be bus procedures, based on campus specific needs.

Transportation Recommendations

- Golden Rule Schools will recommend students and staff to use hand sanitizer upon boarding the bus.
- When possible, schools should allow windows to remain open so outside air can circulate in the bus.
- Golden Rule Schools may encourage families to drop students off, carpool, or walk with their students to school to reduce possible virus exposure on buses.
- Buses should be thoroughly cleaned after each bus trip, focusing on high-touch surfaces such as bus seats, steering wheels, knobs, and door handles. During cleaning, open windows to allow for additional ventilation and air flow.

Breakfast

- Monitors will be stationed in the cafeteria and hallways to ensure social distancing as much as possible.
- Depending on the number of students enrolled in grades K-12, plans for breakfast to be eaten in the cafeteria will be developed accordingly.

Lunch

- Parent/Visitor lunches are permitted as long as these guidelines have been followed and the campus is at a Code Green.
- Depending on the number of students enrolled in grades K-12, plans for lunches to be eaten in the cafeteria will be developed accordingly.
- Social distance around all occupiable assigned seats where feasible while maintaining the student's consistent cohort for "in person" lunches.
- Lunch times may be staggered by class with sanitation blocks between hallway cohorts.
- Assigned seating will occur in the cafeteria for contact tracing purposes during Code Orange.

Recess

- Campuses will consider limiting the number of students per recess group. Staggered schedules can be utilized when needed.
- All students and staff are recommended to use alcohol-based hand sanitizer before entering the playground and upon exiting the playground.
- Brain breaks will be implemented as needed, at the discretion of the campus/teacher.

Specials

- PE classes will be conducted outdoors whenever possible. Appropriate social distancing measures will be followed based on activities.
- Students will use their own supplies.
- Music and PE equipment will be sanitized and wiped down after each use.
- Having specials in the classroom or outdoors is recommended.
- Seating charts may be created for contact tracing purposes.

On and Off-Campus Student Activities

- Off-campus field trips will be scheduled as appropriate to meet curricular needs while maintaining proper social distancing requirements.
- After school club information will resume normally following all league protocols.

Campus Events

- Meet the teacher, open house, parent conferences, etc. will be held in-person.
- Parents will be allowed to attend class parties and performances in-person with administrator permission.

Staff Guidelines

- Employees of Golden Rule must continue to meet the work expectations set by their employers, subject to any applicable employment contract terms or legal requirements. However, Golden Rule shall work with teachers and other staff to ensure the safety of students, teachers, and staff. This may include allowing those staff, including teachers, who may fulfill their work duties remotely to do so with permission from their Principal, Health Task Force, and Human Resource.
- School teachers and staff shall be trained specifically on the practices and protocols outlined in this document. Additionally, Texas Agri-Life Extension offers a free online course on Special Considerations for Infection Control During COVID-19 (2hrs). This course is intended for frontline childcare workers, but the principles of the course apply equally to those working in school settings.
- Golden Rule will attempt in-person staff meetings or other opportunities for adults to congregate in close settings. When those meetings are necessary and cannot be done via electronic means, everyone can follow the mask protocols in this guidance, and remain socially distanced where feasible.

Social Emotional Support for Staff, Students, and Families

- Additional counselors have been hired to support the needs of our campuses. Our counselors are available to support students academically, socially, and emotionally. Counselors are prepared to provide support for families as well.
- Fall Break was scheduled for staff members to have intermittent breaks throughout the school year.

Daily Self-Screen Assessment

When conducting a self screening assessment, individuals must be able to answer questions with a yes/no response. If an individual answers “yes” to any of the following questions, then they must call their immediate supervisor for further guidance.

1. Have you recently begun experiencing any of the following symptoms in a way that is not normal?
 - Feeling feverish or a measured temperature greater than or equal to 100.0 degrees Fahrenheit
 - Loss of taste or smell
 - Cough
 - Difficulty breathing
 - Shortness of breath
 - Fatigue
 - Headache
 - Chills
 - Sore throat
 - Congestion or runny nose
 - Shaking or exaggerated shivering
 - Significant muscle pain or ache
 - Diarrhea
 - Nausea or vomiting

If You Test Positive for COVID-19 (Isolate)

Anyone, regardless of vaccination status:

- Stay home for 5 days after the initial positive test.
- If you have no symptoms or your symptoms are resolving after 5 days, you can return to work.
- Continue to wear a mask around others for 5 additional days.

If you have a fever, continue to stay home until your fever resolves.

If You Were Exposed to Someone with COVID-19 (Quarantine)

If you:

Have been boosted

OR

Completed the primary series of Pfizer or Moderna vaccine (both doses) **within** the last 6 months

OR

Completed the primary series of J&J vaccine **within** the last 2 months

- Wear a mask around others for 10 days.
- Test on day 5
- If positive or symptoms develop, please follow isolation protocols

If you:

Completed the primary series of Pfizer or Moderna vaccine (both doses) **over** 6 months ago **and** are **not** boosted

OR

Completed the primary series of J&J **over** 2 months ago **and** are **not** boosted

OR

Are unvaccinated and show symptoms:

- Get tested, If positive...
- Stay home for 5 days.
- May return to work/school if symptoms improve, continue to wear a mask around others for 5 additional days.
- If Negative, wear a mask for 5 days and get tested on day 5.
- If positive, follow isolation protocols

Periodic Review Calendar

2021-2022 School Year

- May-June 2021: Survey for input gathered for ESSER requirements
- August 2021: Posted for public comment to Golden Rule Charter School website
- August 2021: Adopted plan posted to Golden Rule Charter School website
- December 2021: Golden Rule Charter School Board of Directors meeting, public comment received and reviewed, and survey revisions adopted
- December-January 2022: Survey for input posted to Golden Rule Charter School website
- February 2022: Survey results posted, Golden Rule Charter School Board of Directors meeting, public comment

2022-2023 School Year

- May-June 2022: Survey for input will be gathered for ESSER requirements
- August 2022: Public comment to Golden Rule Charter School website
- August 2022: Adopted plan will be posted to Golden Rule Charter School website
- December 2022: Golden Rule Charter School Board of Directors meeting, public comment will be received and reviewed, and survey revisions adopted
- December-January 2023: Survey for input will be posted to Golden Rule Charter School website
- February 2023: Survey results will be posted, Golden Rule Charter School Board of Directors meeting, public comment

2023-2024 School Year

- May-June 2023: Survey for input will be gathered for ESSER requirements
- August 2023: Public comment to Golden Rule Charter School website
- August 2023: Adopted plan will be posted to Golden Rule Charter School website
- December 2023: Golden Rule Charter School Board of Directors meeting, public comment will be received and reviewed, and survey revisions adopted
- December-January 2024: Survey for input will be posted to Golden Rule Charter School website
- February 2024: Survey results will be posted, Golden Rule Charter School Board of Directors meeting, public comment