

# Gate City Charter School for the Arts Covid-19 Policy & Procedure Manual

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## OVERVIEW

As a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, Gate City Charter School for the Arts (GCCSA) will adopt a continuum of policies and procedures related directly to the community and school transmission and infection rates. Depending upon transmission/infection rates, GCCSA will move through the following policy and procedure risk categories: Substantial, Moderate, and Low. Shifts from category to category will be based on data collected by the school and NH agencies. NH transmission status is updated daily on the NH Covid-19 Response Site found here: <https://www.covid19.nh.gov/dashboard/map>. To reduce our mode of operation to a lower transmission risk level (ie Moderate to Low) transmission rates must be consistently in the lower category for a period of at least 14 days.

GCCSA will continue to closely monitor COVID-19 transmission rates and will implement changes as directed by the guidance and conditions around us. **GCCSA reserves the right to update these policies as needed and assures prompt communication with families regarding any changes.**

GCCSA remains committed to policies and procedures that support and prioritize the following values:

1. The health and safety of our students, employees, families, and volunteers/supporters must always be our top priority.
2. The best learning environment for most students will be in-person.
3. Remote education programs must be robust, rigorous, and engaging.
4. Continuity in student learning and minimization of disruption to learning are priorities.
5. In-person learning is accompanied by varying levels of risk. Gate City must adopt and communicate measures to minimize risk wherever possible.
6. Adaptations and adjustments should be expected during implementation.
7. Feedback and participation in the exchange of communication/information sharing from all stakeholders is critical to the overall success of the plan implementation, as well as the health and safety of our students.
8. Our plan must include and serve students with medical restrictions preventing a safe return to onsite learning.

## PROGRAMS OF EDUCATION

GCCSA intends to offer a primarily in-person program of education for the school year 2021-22. We will deliver instruction remotely for those formally enrolled in our **Remote Education Program**. Remote learning may also be offered to students required to stay home due to illness or quarantine, or in the case of inclement weather. In the event that a student/family desires to enroll in full-time remote learning or to move from remote education to in-person learning, formal arrangements must be made through administration. Full transitions between modes will be based on availability. **GCCSA reserves the right to change the whole-school instructional mode based on directives and guidance received from government and health agencies.**

## SCHOOL SCHEDULE

### Hours of Operation:

M, T, TH, F - Full-Day: 8:20-3:00

W - Half Day: 8:20-1:00

W- Aftercare Available - Contact School for more information.

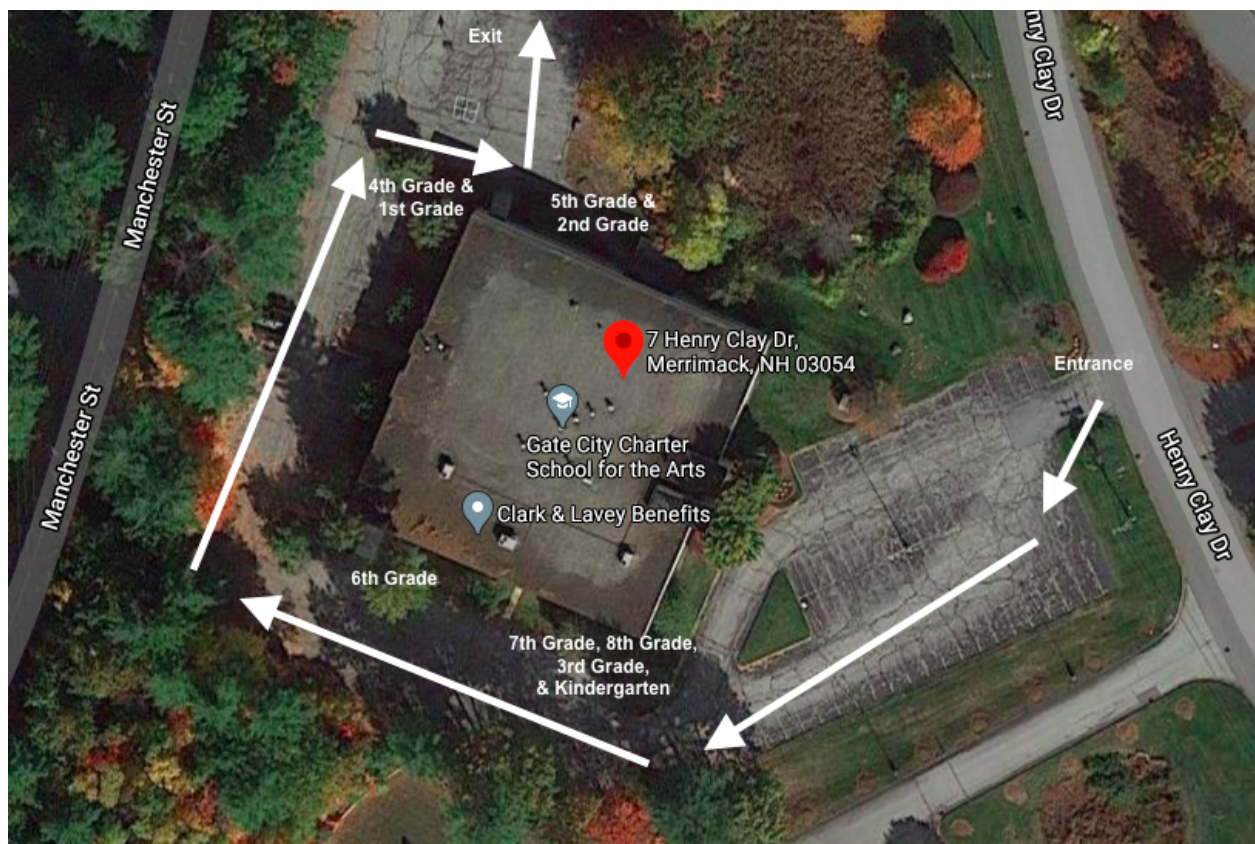
### Drop-Off:

Grades 4-8 Drop Off: 8:20am

Grades K-3 Drop Off: 8:35am

### Pick-Up

Grades K-8 Pick Up: 3:00pm



## **TRANSMISSION MODES - LOW, MODERATE, and SUBSTANTIAL**

### **Understanding Community Transmission as it Relates to Mitigation Layers**

The safety of students, staff, and community members remains our highest priority. GCCSA has developed three mitigation modes for operation that relate to the CDC's levels of community transmission. These three modes will take into account specific conditions within the school itself as well as community transmission. Based on the levels of transmission, layers of mitigation will be added or removed. Transition to a lower level of mitigation will require a 14 day consistent pattern of transmission data from the community and within GCCSA.

### **MITIGATION STRATEGIES**

**What is a mitigation strategy?** A risk mitigation strategy, by definition, is taking steps to reduce the risk, the severity of the impact and/or probability of the occurrence.

### **What risk mitigation strategies will GCCSA use/layer?**

There is no single intervention that will stop spread of COVID-19, especially because the coronavirus can infect people and be spread both from people with symptoms of COVID-19 (including people who may only show very mild symptoms), and from people without any symptoms ("asymptomatic"). Therefore, implementing multiple layers of protection (i.e., layered mitigation measures) will be most effective at stopping COVID-19 from spreading.

**GCCSA may use, but is not limited to, employing the following mitigation strategies:**

1. Promote Vaccination against Covid-19
2. Use of Facemasks
3. Physical Distancing
4. Screening/Testing (Possible)
5. Increased Ventilation - Air Purifiers
6. Promote Hand Hygiene and Respiratory Etiquette
7. Cleaning and Disinfecting
8. Partnering with Public Health
9. Requiring All Symptomatic Students/Staff to Remain Home Until Symptom Free and Recommend Testing before returning to GCCSA

### **CLEANING PROCEDURES**

#### **SUBSTANTIAL TRANSMISSION MODE:**

High touch surfaces and common areas will be wiped down and sanitized up to 2 times during the school day. Classrooms and restrooms will be cleaned at the end of each day to prepare for the following day. Wednesday and Friday will serve as deep clean days. GCCSA will implement additional cleaning procedures such as fogging in classrooms and common areas daily.

### **MODERATE TRANSMISSION MODE:**

High touch surfaces and common areas will be wiped down and sanitized up to 1 times during the school day. Classrooms and restrooms will be cleaned at the end of each day to prepare for the following day. Wednesday and Friday will serve as deep clean days. GCCSA will implement additional cleaning procedures such as fogging in classrooms and common areas twice a week.

### **LOW TRANSMISSION MODE:**

High touch surfaces and common areas will be wiped down and sanitized up to 1 times during the school day. Classrooms and restrooms will be cleaned at the end of each day to prepare for the following day. Wednesday and Friday will serve as deep clean days. GCCSA will implement additional cleaning procedures such as fogging in classrooms and common areas weekly.

## **HAND HYGIENE**

### **LOW-MODERATE-SUBSTANTIAL TRANSMISSION MODES:**

Students will be required to sanitize upon entry to the building. Students will also be asked to sanitize upon leaving a classroom and for re-entry. No-touch hand sanitizing stations will be located at the entrance of each classroom, outside the bathrooms, and at the entrance of each support staff office/entryway. There will be a schedule for each classroom to increase frequent hand hygiene.

## **STUDENT BEHAVIOR**

### **LOW-MODERATE-SUBSTANTIAL TRANSMISSION MODES:**

Given health, safety and staffing concerns, any student that accumulates three incident reports for behavior will be transitioned to remote schooling for whatever period of time deemed appropriate by administration. The “three strike” policy will involve the following escalations:

1st Incident Report: Email home

2nd Incident Report: Guardian/Parent Meeting

3rd Incident Report: Transition to remote learning for a period determined by administration

## **SEATING, MANIPULATIVES and SHARED SUPPLIES**

### **SUBSTANTIAL-MODERATE TRANSMISSION MODES:**

Students will be placed in assigned seating by administration with teacher input. Desks will be facing the same direction in all classrooms. Desks will be placed no less than 3 feet apart with an ideal of six.

Students will utilize individual supplies as much as possible. Students will be provided individual plastic bins at the beginning of each day that will contain the supplies and

manipulatives needed for that day's work. This may include, but is not limited to, worksheets, unifix cubes, markers, colored pencils, pencil sharpener, scissors, etc.

Students will be provided with a specific place for their backpacks and coats at the beginning of each day. Lockers and cubby areas will not be utilized.

Students are highly encouraged to bring a filled water bottle to school every day. Water bubblers/ fountains are not available for access. Bottled water may be available at the Front Office: \$1.00 purchase.

#### **LOW TRANSMISSION MODE:**

Students will be placed in assigned seating by administration with teacher input. Desks will be facing the same direction in all classrooms. Desks will be placed no less than 3 feet apart with an ideal of six. Students will have increased opportunity to work in small-groups with shared materials, especially when additional mitigation layers are in place.

#### **SPECIALS**

##### **LOW-MODERATE-SUBSTANTIAL TRANSMISSION MODES:**

All specials will continue to be held. Instructors will deliver instruction from school. Students who have elected remote learning will have the opportunity to attend specials via a live or recorded lesson on Google classroom. Remote students are expected to participate in specials.

#### **MASK**

##### **SUBSTANTIAL-MODERATE MODES:**

Masks will be required indoors for all students for the duration of their school day. Students should wear a well-fitted cloth mask that covers their mouth and nose. Students should bring two masks to school every day, if at all possible, in case a change of mask is necessary. In the event of a mask breaking, improper fit, or destruction of mask(s), students will be provided a mask to utilize for the remainder of the day.

**Masks will be optional for students while participating in outdoor activities when a distance of three feet is possible.**

##### **LOW TRANSMISSION MODE:**

During times when transmission rates are low, masks will be **primarily** optional for students and staff. However, there may be times when other mitigation measures, such as maintaining a social distance of 3 feet, are not feasible. In this case, students may be required to wear masks for periods of time during their school day (i.e., group work that requires close proximity, lab activities, utilizing shared manipulatives, etc.). In the event the transmission mode goes from low to high, notification will be sent to families, within 24 hours via email, approved text and the website.

**Masks will be optional for students while participating in outdoor activities.**

**Mask Breaks:**

Students will be permitted to remove their masks at a designated mask break time.

Designated times will be scheduled by individual teachers and classrooms. Students may elect to take individual mask breaks hourly during school hours.

**Mask Exemptions:**

Students who would require exemptions from wearing masks will be strongly encouraged to choose a remote option. For those parents who believe that these exemptions are applicable to their children and wish them to attend in-person, the Mask Exemption Form can be accessed by clicking on the link below. The request must be completed by a licensed physician. Final determination will be made by the administration in consultation with the DHHS. Prior to approval of the exemption request, the individual in question must wear a mask when in a school building.

Those who receive an exemption may be more susceptible to both COVID-19 spread and potential quarantine as that student will not have the same level of protection as those who wear face masks. [Mask Exemption Form](#)

**SNACKS**

Students will have a designated snack time that will be incorporated into each classroom schedule. Snack time will be located in your student's classroom. Please have your student bring a healthy, nut-free snack to school. Healthy, nut free snacks may be available at the Front Office: \$.50 purchase per snack.

**STRETCH/BRAIN BREAKS**

Stretch and brain breaks are encouraged as needed. Students must remain socially distanced during **Substantial and Moderate Transmission modes**. Stretch/brain breaks can be taken outside as arranged.

**SOCIAL DISTANCING**

**SUBSTANTIAL-MODERATE TRANSMISSION MODES:**

1. Congregation/waiting outside of the school in the morning or afternoon should be avoided. Any waiting students should have clear instructions and spaces marked for appropriate physical distancing.
2. Staff will be monitoring before/after school to encourage physical distancing on school grounds.
3. Classrooms are arranged to minimize close contact. Chairs/desks are rearranged to avoid students sitting in groups. Individual chairs/desks are arranged so that, where possible, students are spaced at least three feet apart with a goal of attempting to get chairs/desks six feet apart. Six feet apart is preferred but may not be achievable given classroom size and layout. All desks face the same



direction. A recent study and analysis in the journal, **The Lancet**, found that physical distancing of at least one meter was effective and “associated with a large reduction in infection,” although the authors acknowledged that greater distances could be more effective.

4. Classroom activities will be conducted to minimize close contact and avoid groups whenever possible. Any small group activities will be conducted so that students are spaced at least three feet apart.
5. Classrooms are grouped together indoors to the extent possible so that students and teachers in one classroom/group avoid interaction (i.e. crossover) with another classroom/group. Teachers move between classrooms instead of students.
6. When students need to move between classes, the staff/teachers will monitor the hallways to encourage students to maintain physical distancing.
7. Assigned boxes/crates will be distributed to students to ensure a limited amount of carrying around or back and forth to home.
8. A larger school area will be utilized for instructional activities (Ex. gyms, auditoriums, cafeterias, or outdoor spaces) to maximize physical distancing. Larger areas can also serve as back-up educational spaces in the event a classroom needs to temporarily relocate.
9. Using appropriate PPE, staff will maintain at least three to six feet of physical distance from other staff in their work environment. This will include avoiding staff congregations in work environments, break rooms, staff rooms, and bathrooms. In-person group meetings should be limited—conduct staff meetings remotely (e.g., via web-based conferences/meetings) whenever possible. Staff will also attempt to stay at least three to six feet from students during educational/instruction time in classrooms as much as possible.

#### **LOW TRANSMISSION MODE:**

GCSSA will maintain a minimum of 3 ft of social distancing when feasible. When social distancing is not feasible, staff may implement other mitigation strategies to ensure the safety of students and staff. Some of these strategies include utilizing outdoor space and/or mask usage.

#### **SCREENING PROCEDURE FOR STUDENTS & FACULTY**

##### **LOW-MODERATE-SUBSTANTIAL TRANSMISSION MODES:**

##### **Symptoms and criteria parents/staff will be looking for:**

- o Fever/chills (measured 100.4F)
- o Cough
- o Shortness of breath or difficulty breathing
- o Sore throat
- o Runny nose or nasal congestion
- o Muscle or body aches
- o Fatigue
- o Headache
- o New loss of taste or smell



- o Nausea or vomiting
- o Diarrhea

If the answer is YES to any of the above symptoms and criteria, student(s) should **REMAIN AT HOME** and log in as a remote student (when possible). Notification must be made via phone 603-943-5273 or [attendance@gccs-nh.org](mailto:attendance@gccs-nh.org).

Staff will self-check temperatures at home and upon entry of the school building. Thermometers and PPE will be supplied to staff at designated entrances. Staff will be required to stay at home if they answer YES to having any of the above symptoms and criteria. GCCSA will do its best to provide adequate supervision in the case of staffing absences.

## **ILLNESS & ABSENCES**

### **LOW-MODERATE-SUBSTANTIAL TRANSMISSION MODES:**

Development of any of the symptoms/criteria identified in our screening process will result in the student or faculty being dismissed for the day and the individual will be required to follow quarantine guidelines (see below). Even if development of symptoms presents as mild GCCSA will require the dismissal of the student/faculty member.

## **QUARANTINE GUIDELINES**

### **LOW-MODERATE-SUBSTANTIAL TRANSMISSION MODES:**

Students and faculty will be required to quarantine for 10 consecutive days if they answer YES to the symptom/criteria outlined in our screening procedure. Students and faculty may bypass the 10 consecutive day quarantine with a 5 day quarantine and a negative COVID-19 test result, dependent on the student and faculty continuing to be free of symptoms. Proper documentation must be provided to Gate City Charter School prior to admittance back to school. If a family opts to remain remote for the 10 day quarantine, student(s) must remain free of symptoms for a minimum of 24 hours prior to returning to school. If a student requires dismissal from school, GCCSA will allow healthy siblings and staff-parents to continue school attendance while ill students are evaluated for COVID-19 infection.

**The current recommendation from NH Department of Health and Human Services for people who may be exposed to COVID-19 in the school setting is to:**

#### **For 14 days from the last day of exposure:**

1. Monitor for COVID-19 symptoms and
2. Wear a mask in indoor public settings and
3. Consider testing 3-5 days following the last day of exposure If your child develops symptoms please isolate them at home and seek testing for COVID-19.

**Symptomatic students or staff can be allowed to return to school when one of the following two conditions is met:**

1. Person receives an FDA-approved COVID-19 test that is negative, AND the person's symptoms are improving and they are fever-free for at least 24 hours off any fever-reducing medications. Approved tests include: A PCR-based molecular test Antigen testing conducted within an appropriate number of days since symptom onset
2. Person has met CDC criteria for ending of home isolation (i.e. if person is not tested, they are managed assuming they have COVID-19).

**Travel Guidance:**

1. 10 day self-quarantine from the last day of international or cruise ship travel; if a person develops symptoms, then must test.
2. Potential to test out of quarantine with a negative PCR on day 6 or 7; release from quarantine no earlier than day 8.

**VISITORS****LOW-MODERATE-SUBSTANTIAL TRANSMISSION MODES:**

Visitors not previously prescreened/authorized will not be permitted in the facility to minimize contact.

**LATE ARRIVALS****LOW-MODERATE-SUBSTANTIAL TRANSMISSION MODES:**

If guardians are arriving late on a particular day they **must**:

1. Call the school to notify them of a late arrival from the front parking lot to let them know their student will be entering the building 603-943-5273.
2. Faculty members will meet the student at the front door to allow entrance to the building.

**EARLY DISMISSAL****LOW-MODERATE-SUBSTANTIAL TRANSMISSION MODES:**

If guardians must dismiss students early on a particular day they **must**:

1. Call the school the morning of, to notify of early dismissal.
2. Call the school once you arrive in the front parking lot.
3. Students will be seen out by a faculty member in their vehicles.

**INFORMATION AND RESOURCES**

**GCCSA school works closely with the New Hampshire (NH) Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) to monitor the newest information about COVID-19. To learn more about COVID-19, please check these trusted resources:**

**New Hampshire Department of Health and Human Services:**

<https://www.covid19.nh.gov/welcome>

**United States Centers for Disease Control and Prevention:**

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

**Children may worry about themselves, their family and friends getting sick with COVID-19. Tips for talking to children about COVID-19 can be found here:**

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/daily-lifecoping/talking-with-children.html>