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**SAFETY PROTOCOLS & INSTRUCTIONAL MODELS**

One of the key recommendations of the Shelby County Health Department and Center for Disease Control (CDC) is to provide 3-6 feet of social distancing when possible.

Last year, school districts in TN received special permission from the Governor and the State Board of Education to operate virtually and with hybrid instruction. This year the Governor and State Board of Education have ruled that districts are not allowed to offer these forms of modified instruction.  All GMSD schools will offer in-person, full-time instruction for the 2021-2022 school year.

The only exception to virtual learning allowed must be a state-approved stand-alone virtual school. GMSD received approval for a stand-alone virtual school for grades 6-12.  The parent response for students in lower grades at the time of application did not support expansion to the lower grades.

**Social Distancing & Masking**

Classrooms will maintain at least 3 feet of physical distance between student within classrooms when possible. The wearing of masks will mirror Shelby County Health Departments Directive No. 23.

**Masks are recommended in any of the following circumstances if you are not vaccinated:**

* You are in a public setting around people who don’t live in your household, especially when indoors and when it may be difficult for you to stay six feet apart  from people who don’t live with you.
* You are around people who don’t live with you, regardless of whether you are inside your home or inside someone else’s home.
* You are inside your home with someone who is sick with symptoms of COVID-19  or has tested positive for COVID-19.
* You are engaged in outdoor activities and physical distancing of six feet or more  from persons who are not members of your household is not feasible, regardless of  crowd size.
* All students and staff are encouraged to maintain 3-6 feet social distancing when practical.  Should gatherings occur, 3-6 feet of distance from one another and appropriate face coverings are encouraged for any persons who are not fully vaccinated\*.

**Suspicion of Covid-19 Virus**

**If a child presents with any of the following issues, then the parent/guardian will be notified, and the child must be picked up by parent/ guardian/emergency contact.**

Any student who presents to the clinic/ nurse with any **one** of the **High-risk symptoms** or **with any combination of 3 or more Low risk symptoms** will be sent home and is advised to seek further evaluation by a physician.

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| **High Risk Symptoms** | **Low Risk Symptoms** |
| Fever | Congestion/Runny Nose |
| Difficulty breathing | Myalgia |
| Shortness of breath | Nausea/vomiting/diarrhea |
| Loss of taste | Sore throat |
| Loss of smell | Headache |
| New onset or excessive cough | Fatigue |
|  | Chills |

* Students with suspected Covid symptoms will be moved to the contamination/isolation area until picked up by parent/guardian/emergency contact.
* Student will not return to school until at least 10 days from the onset of symptoms and 24 hours without fever and without fever reducing medication.
* Or may return prior to 10 days with a negative Covid test and 24 hours after fever free without fever reducing medication (must return to normal at or below 98.6) and symptoms are improved if **Physician approved**.
* Examples of accepted diagnoses (From a Physician) would include fever due to urinary tract infection, strep throat confirmed by a positive strep test, rash from poison ivy, etc.
* Examples that **DO NOT** exclude the diagnosis of Covid-19 and **DO NOT** justify return to school would include diagnosis of respiratory and viral conditions such as allergic rhinitis, seasonal allergies, upper respiratory tract infection (URI), pneumonia, pharyngitis without positive strep test, viral illness.,

**Additional Health Considerations**

**Appearance/Behavior** - Lethargy (unusually tired, pale, and difficult to wake), confused or irritable.  These symptoms can be sufficient reason to stay at home, if severe or unusual.

**Fever** - Temperature of 100.4 F or higher, then child must go home and be fever free without medication for at least 24 hours (at or below 98.6) before returning to school.  While at home, caregivers are encouraged to ensure that the child receives adequate fluids.

* *It is recommended that all students who are sent home with a fever, are evaluated by a physician.*

**Diarrhea** - Two (2) or more watery stools in a 24-hour period, unless accompanied by other symptoms, at which time the nurse will determine if there is a need to send home sooner.

**Vomiting** - Two (2) or more times within the past 24 hours, child should be kept home.  If vomiting occurs at school, child must be sent home and free of vomiting episodes for at least 24 hours.

**Rash** - Children with a skin rash should see a doctor, as this could be one of several infectious diseases. Heat rash and allergic reactions are not contagious, and the student may come to school if symptoms are tolerable.

**Sore Throat** - A minor sore throat is usually not a problem, but a severe sore throat could be more serious, even if no fever exists.  Special tests are needed to diagnosis strep throat.  If other symptoms are part of the complaint, it is advised that the child’s parent be called to pick them up because they may be contagious.

**Eyes** - With pink eye (conjunctivitis), you may see a white/yellow discharge, matted eyelids after sleep, or eye pain and redness.  Child should go home if suspected pink eye and treatment has not begun.  The child may return to school after 24-hour treatment of an antibiotic eye medication.

**Communicable Disease** - Refer to Board Policy SP 6.403 and Shelby County Health Department guidance.

**Ringworm** - Ringworm is contagious, and to stop the spread of infection, timely treatment is extremely important.  Avoiding skin contact with the infected person is the best way to stop it from spreading. Ringworm can be treated simply with some over-the-counter anti-fungal cream, though more severe cases may require the use of an oral anti-fungal medication.  The area must be covered and treated for the student to remain in school.

***Allowing your child to be in school with any of the above symptoms puts other children and staff at risk.  The intent of these guidelines is in the best interest of all and can translate into fewer missed days due to illness.  We will be proactive in maintaining a healthy environment in our schools for all our community.***

**Students Exposed to Covid**

* If you are **fully vaccinated** and have been in close contact with someone who has COVID-19, you do **NOT** need to quarantine or get tested, **unless you have symptoms.**
* Students are considered a direct exposure if they’re within 6 feet of a person that’s a confirmed case for 15 minutes or more during the “contagious period” (48 hours prior to onset of symptoms)
* Must stay home and quarantine for 14 days after the date of last exposure (If a 2nd or 3rd person in the home or circle tests positive after the original exposure, the 14-day quarantine restarts for the undiagnosed student).
* \*If asymptomatic through 10 or 7 days, the student could return earlier if the family chooses to do so, with the following stipulations being met. \* *As the CDC states, a full 14-day quarantine is still the safest option.*
* If an individual does **NOT** develop symptoms during quarantine, then they are only required to be out for a period of 10 full days. If they test negative after day 5 and have remained asymptomatic since exposure, then that period can be reduced to 7 full days.
* A negative COVID-19 note **MUST** be submitted to your child’s school (nurse and/or administrator) to reduce time from 14 days to 7 days. (This test cannot be taken prior to day 5)
* Upon return, student must check in with the nurse for temperature check.
* Any student returning prior to the full quarantine will be sent directly to the isolation room until a parent/ guardian/ emergency contact arrives to pick them up.
* Students with a **positive** test will be isolated and should not return to school until they are at least 24 hours fever free (must return to normal at or below 98.6) without fever reducing medication (this **MUST** be at least 10 days from onset) AND symptoms are markedly improved AND approved by the local health department to return.
* If a student has had close contact with someone that has COVID-19--Lives with the person but can avoid further contact. Your last day of quarantine is 14 days from when the person with COVID-19 began home isolation unless the above-mentioned criteria for return at 7 or 10 days are met. If under quarantine and have an additional contact or new exposure to someone testing positive for COVID-19— You will have to restart your quarantine from the last day you had contact with them.  **Any time a new household member gets sick with COVID-19 and who has not been completely isolated, you will need to restart your quarantine.**
* If a student lives in the same household with someone who has COVID-19 and complete isolation is not possible, they will need to quarantine for 24 days. (10 days for the time that the person is contagious and then 14 days more for the incubation period unless the above-mentioned stipulations for early return are met.)

### Health Checks

GMSD will not be continuing the daily student health checks in Skyward during the 2021-2022 school year.  However, schools will continue working with families to provide excused absences if students have been exposed to COVID-19 or if they are showing any symptoms. GMSD wants families to practice necessary precautions and are ready to work with parents to keep all our students healthy.

### Positive COVID-19 Cases in the Schools

Parents will continue to receive school wide COVID notifications.

In all cases of either suspected or confirmed cases of COVID-19, FERPA and HIPAA protection laws will be followed by all staff.  Due to the privacy issues governed by law, the identity of the person cannot be shared.  It is, however, important that parents report confirmed COVID-19 cases to the school so that proper protocols can be enacted.

Standard health procedural letters will be sent via email or text message to notify parents if students or staff have come in direct contact with individuals who tested positive for COVID-19.  On a case-by-case basis, situations may occur in which an entire class, cohort, or school building will transition to distance learning to allow for quarantine.

### Building Sanitization and Cleaning Procedures

Increased cleaning efforts have been outlined with our custodial service provider, SKB, to include multiple daily cleanings of common areas and increased efforts in each classroom.

GMSD will continue the employment of day porters at each school building to both clean and monitor the increased cleaning effort protocols and ensure that their building is in alignment with district standards.

GMSD has purchased eight Clorox Total 360 Cleaning Systems.  These systems are often used in hospitals to mitigate the spread of germs. High traffic areas will be disinfected on a regular basis, and classrooms on a case-by-case basis.

All school HVAC systems have been upgraded with High-MERV filters.  The MERV-13 filters are the industry standard in reducing particles and bacteria in the air.  Our HVAC systems also have the ability to circulate fresh air in programmed bursts through the building.  GMSD has programmed fresh air in short, frequent bursts.

Schools will provide opportunities for all students to take regular breaks to wash their hands throughout the day.  Restrooms will be regularly checked for necessary materials.  Hand sanitizing stations have been placed throughout each building.

### Limited Guest Access

The district will be limiting interactions between students and non-staff adults during school hours to minimize additional contact exposures to non-household members.

Our schools are excited to provide free, USDA subsidized, breakfast and lunch to students again this year.  Food deliveries by parents will be strongly discouraged this year to minimize unnecessary exposures and disruptions to the school day.

In-person meetings such as IEPs and 504s will be offered to families.  However, alternative options will still be provided for families.

### After School Activities, Arts, & Athletics

After school activities, athletics, and fine arts are an important part of the social emotional well-being of students.  GMSD has prioritized that these activities will continue with protocols and safety guidelines. Athletics will follow TSSAA & TMSAA guidelines.

### R.E.A.C.H.

For many working parents, our partnership with the City of Germantown Parks and Rec Department R.E.A.C.H. Program is essential.  R.E.A.C.H. will be permitted to provide this service on our campus and will follow all school procedures and safety measures. Questions about R.E.A.C.H. need to be directed to Germantown Parks and Recreation.

### Transportation

Our transportation provider, Durham, will provide information about their safety procedures on buses.  Social distancing may not  be possible on buses and mask wearing will be recommended.