

FALL 2020

## Family Handbook

**Reconnect.**  
**Reopen.**  
**Stay Safe.**



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## **Dear GCS Families,**

The 2020-21 school year will be a year unlike any other. If we all do our best to move through this challenging time together, we will finish the year stronger and more prepared for the future challenges life throws at us. Our students will gain the academic knowledge that their teachers will help them master — as well as powerful lessons about resilience, cooperation and adaptability.

We developed this guide to provide you and your family with helpful information that you can access throughout the year. You'll see that we included many links to direct you to more detailed information, should you want to read more about a particular topic. The following pages cover information about the school day, as well as the many critical steps we take each day to prevent the spread of the COVID-19 virus.

Our charge and our privilege is to support students in every facet of their lives and to help them soar to greatness, no matter what stands in their way. We are deeply committed to ensuring every student is challenged academically and cared for socially and emotionally. To that end, we will continue to communicate, to listen, and to be responsive to your needs. We hope this guide is one way that you feel supported and prepared for a great year ahead.

**Sharon L. Contreras, PhD**  
Superintendent





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## Introduction

Please understand that knowledge about the COVID-19 virus and the best practices to respond to the pandemic continue to evolve. For this reason, guidance, plans and policies related to returning to work and school at GCS will also evolve. GCS will adapt to those changes and update this guide as needed in an effort to open doors to safe campuses soon. The content in this manual is not inclusive of all procedures and protocols.

You can always find the most up-to-date information at our GCS website:

[Reconnect. Reopen. Stay Safe.](#)





# I. Reconnect

## Stay in Touch

Community has never been more important. This school year will require us all to work together and communicate with one another to best serve GCS students and support their learning.

GCS is committed to taking every step necessary to ensure that all students — no matter their circumstances — have what they need to stay connected to their lessons, teachers, peers and resources. We will work to keep you up-to-date with any information you and your child need as we progress through the school year so that you feel part of this process and confident in your student's education.

In order to maintain a strong sense of community and keep you updated, please make sure we have your most recent contact information, including your email address and cell phone number. For information in English, learn more at [Stay connected with Schoolmint](#). For information in Spanish, learn more at [Manténgase conectado con Schoolmint](#). We'll use email and text messages to share critical information with you.

## Connectivity

Access is one of our top priorities, especially given the varying levels of what students have available to them at home. GCS will work with you to ensure your child has access to the technology needed to support their learning — including a laptop or tablet, a Wi-Fi network, technology support, email and a reliable infrastructure to keep them connected. GCS implements a number of technology strategies to ensure connectivity for all students.

For information on how to obtain a device, connecting your device, finding a hotspot location near you or to find the SMART bus schedule, please contact your child's school. You may also visit GCS' [Technology Services web page](#).

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## Academics

In order to provide you and your student with options, GCS is excited to offer online learning environments for remote learning as well as two tuition-free [virtual schools](#) for the 2020-2021 academic year. We understand that students and families are facing a variety of situations and there is no one-size-fits-all solution to this complex issue. This is why we are offering the options of virtual learning for the entire year if that is what works best for your child.

For those students who will engage in temporary remote learning, we have created online learning environments to support students' academic needs. You will be able to be fully engaged in your child's learning through the Canvas parent app. Canvas is a learning platform that streamlines all the digital tools and content that teachers and students enjoy, for a simpler and more connected learning experience. Look for tutorials under the [Remote Learning Parents Resources page](#) to learn how to use the Canvas parent resources so that you can be a part of your student's learning.





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## Canvas

Most, if not all, of students' work may be accessed through Canvas. Before logging on, you will need your student(s) Student ID# and password. If you do not have either of these, you may contact your child's school.

Once ready:

Canvas **Username: Student ID#**

**Password: (password)**

- Go to NCEdCloud (<https://my.ncedcloud.org>)
- Type in your username/password
- Example: Username – PowerSchool Number (0000000) Password: Student created
- Students who experience password issues should email their teacher about resetting their password. Teacher email addresses can be found on the school website under the Staff link.
- Once you get in, click the red Canvas icon

To login to Canvas and access Canvas apps for students, teachers and parents, on your mobile device, please utilize the appropriate link below:

- **Student App**
  - [iTunes \(iOS\)](#)
  - [Canvas by Instructure iOS Guide](#)
  - [Google Play \(Android\)](#)
  - [Canvas by Instructure Android Guide](#)
- **Parent App**
  - [iTunes \(iOS\)](#)
  - [Canvas Parent iOS Guide](#)
  - [Google Play \(Android\)](#)
  - [Canvas Parent Android Guide](#)

For help logging into Canvas, please click [here](#).

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Once you're logged in, you have all the tools you need to help your child be successful. For more information about the first nine weeks of remote learning, click on the appropriate link below:

- [What Elementary Parents Need to Know](#)
- [What Middle School Parents Need to Know](#)
- [What High School Parents Need to Know](#)

To see an example of what a day in the life of virtual learning might look like, view [Day in the Life of Denise – Remote Learning](#)



Guilford County Schools has partnered with Microsoft and is pleased to offer employees and students license to download and install Microsoft Office on up to (5) personal devices with an active GCS user account, including email address for students. Click on the links below to get started and to access helpful Microsoft information.

- [Microsoft Office 365 - How to Login to Microsoft Office 365 - access EMAIL and ONEDRIVE](#)
- [Microsoft Office Download - for Student's Personal Devices](#)



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## ESL Resources

GCS serves a large, diverse group of students, with 118 languages spoken in our classrooms and 142 student cultural and ethnic groups represented across GCS. Our size and our diversity makes us unique and is a part of our identity as a district. The English Learners department is committed to providing the proper support and tools students need to develop the necessary language skills for success. To learn more about the English Learners department and the services offered, visit the [English Learners web page](#).

## Social and Emotional Health

While we need to connect to get our work done, we also want to be sure to connect on a more personal level. Our top priority at GCS is the health and safety of our students; this includes their social and emotional health. Students, families and teachers alike are experiencing the stress of new challenges and changes. We are here to help guide students and families through this transition and provide students with the resources they need to feel secure in themselves and their learning.

We want you and your children to know that you are not alone. Mental health coordinators are available and ready to support students, schools and our communities through any kind of stressful circumstance. The names of our mental health coordinators are listed on our website along with their contact information and online resources for families and children. Please visit the [GCS Health Services and Nursing page](#) to find:

- Who to contact if a student needs social or emotional assistance
- Mental health coordinator contacts
- Helpful online resources

## Call Center

For questions from students, parents and the public about school closures, distance learning, special education, food assistance locations, how people can help, etc., contact our call center at 336-332-7290. The GCS COVID-19 Call Center is open Monday-Friday, 8 a.m. to 4 p.m.

## Student Crisis Hotline

The GCS Student Crisis Hotline operates 24-7 and is staffed by GCS counselors, social workers, school psychologists and those trained to assist students in crisis. **(This does not replace 911 for emergencies.)** The student crisis number is 336-332-7295.

## II. Reopen.

### Virtual and In-Person

As one of the first districts in the country to create and implement a response plan when COVID-19 first hit, we are dedicated to exploring the best possible reopening options for our students.

Our goal is to serve the largest number of students for as long as possible while maintaining their health and safety. GCS plans to continue remote learning through at least October 20. This difficult decision was made based on local public health data and trends. Our long-term goal is to have our students safely back in the classroom, learning in-person. The board will discuss that goal and what in-person learning would look like after the remote learning phase is complete. (Hopefully before that – The Guilford County Board of Education is working diligently to determine the criteria we need to meet as a community to safely reopen schools, as well as what that will look like when the time comes.)

To find important documents, helpful links and calendars, please visit our [Reopening web page](#) and [Reopening Plan FAQs](#).

### Calendar

School began on August 17 this year, with remote learning until at least October 20. Current 2020-21 school calendars can be viewed on our [Reopening Schools page](#). They are subject to change pending state requirements and health guidance.



Click links below to access calendars directly:

- [Traditional Academic Calendar 2020-21 \(including Allen Jay Middle, Brooks Global Studies, Johnson Street Global Studies and Washington Montessori\)](#)
- [Middle and Early Colleges and Academies 2020-21](#)
- [Early College at Guilford Academic Calendar 2020-21](#)
- [Greensboro College Middle College Academic Calendar 2020-21](#)
- [Middle College at UNCG Academic Calendar 2020-21](#)



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## Returning to School Schedule for Re-entry

STARTING DATE	GRADE LEVELS	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
September 29*	PreK	In School Building (half days)				AS
October 5*	Kindergarten	In School Building				AS
October 20*	PreK, K, 1, 2	In School Building				AS
	Grades 3, 4, 5, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12	Remote Learning				
	Grade 6	50% of students In School Building	50% of students In School Building	AS	50% of students In School Building	50% of students In School Building
	Public Separate Schools	In School Building				AS
	Special Populations In Grades PreK-12: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Some students with disabilities</li> <li>Students with multiple risk factors</li> <li>Students in foster care</li> <li>Students in first year of language acquisition</li> <li>Students who are homeless</li> </ul>	In School Building	In School Building	Grades PreK-5: In School Building  Grades 6-12 only: Remote Learning	In School Building	In School Building AS
October 26*	Grades 3-5	In School Building				AS
	Grades 7 & 8	50% of students In School Building	50% of students In School Building	AS	50% of students In School Building	50% of students In School Building
January 20*	Grades 9-12	50% of students In School Building	50% of students In School Building	AS	50% of students In School Building	50% of students In School Building
 <b>Health &amp; Safety Protocols</b> face coverings, health screenings, regular handwashing & social distancing 						

\*Pending review of primary & secondary indicators

AS = Deep Cleaning

## 2020-2021 Bell Schedules

Grade Span	Start Time	End Time	2019-2020 Times
Elementary	7:35am	2:05pm	7:30am-2:25pm
Middle	8:35am	3:25pm	8:05am-3:05pm
High	9:35am	4:25pm	8:50am-3:50pm

\*Magnet times may vary

\*\*Some variance based on transportation zone

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## Attendance

We understand that this is an unpredictable time and that attendance may be challenging for some students. Because we want to prevent learning loss to the best of our ability, it is important that students engage in online learning daily or as much as possible. We have asked teachers to record lessons when possible so that if there is an attendance issue, students can go back and review what they may have missed. You may read more about the Guilford County Schools Attendance Policy by [clicking here](#).

## Grading Policies

We understand that, while we engage in remote learning, students and families may be concerned with our grading processes and how this may affect a student's overall grade. Canvas serves as our central point for communicating students' grades and their performance throughout the year. As always, GCS teachers should always be available to discuss performance in more detail and guide students on how they can succeed. You can learn more here: [GCS Grading Policies](#).





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## **EC Student Resources**

We are dedicated to providing all students with the necessary tools to keep them healthy, safe and on track with their academics. The Exceptional Children Department works as a collaborative team to serve and advocate for students with disabilities through personalized instruction and by continuing to work closely with families of students with disabilities so that we follow through on their Individual Education Plan (IEP). To learn more about eligibility, parent resources, programs and services and transportation information, please visit the [Exceptional Children web page](#).

## **Activities**

We know children rely on school not just to develop their minds, but also to provide a wide range of activities to help students explore their interests, grow their confidence and create their own communities.



GCS will follow the [NCHSAA guidance](#) for high school sports, and make any needed adjustments based on how the virus is progressing in our own community.

## III. Stay Safe.

### The Basics

As educators, we know how important the basics are. Once students are back in classrooms, we will emphasize the importance of the 3 Ws: wear, wait, wash. That means wear a cloth face covering, wait six feet apart to maintain social distance and avoid close contact, and wash hands with soap and water for at least 20 seconds. Visit the North Carolina Department of Health and Human Services [website](#) to learn more about how you can stay safe, stay informed, protect yourself and your neighbors, check your symptoms, find a testing location and more.

## If you leave home, know your 3 Ws!

		
<b>WEAR</b>	<b>WAIT</b>	<b>WASH</b>
a cloth mask over your nose and mouth.	6 feet apart. Avoid close contact.	your hands or use hand sanitizer.

@NCDHHS #StayStrongNC

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## Maintaining Healthy Spaces

While our students engage in remote learning, we are hard at work creating a healthy, and secure environment at our schools so that we can welcome students back safely when the time comes. Sanitation crews are ensuring all buildings are prepared for in-person instruction by cleaning and disinfecting all student spaces and classrooms. In addition, we are implementing new procedures for food preparation and meal distribution as well as for bus drivers regarding cleaning of vehicles and social distancing protocols. We know it is so important to feel comfortable sending your child to school — from the time they get on the bus to the time they leave after-school programs — and we will take all necessary steps to maintain your trust and comfort. To learn more about the steps we are taking to create healthy and secure environments, visit the [Procedures and Protocols page](#).

## During Class

Desks will be spaced six feet apart to avoid close contact from student to student. Students will also be encouraged to wash their hands with soap and water for at least 20 seconds throughout the day, including specified hand-washing breaks. Any classrooms without a hand-washing sink will be provided with hand sanitizer.





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## School Bus Daily Protocols

Sending children back to school safely is our ultimate goal. When we return to in-person instruction, we will implement daily bus screening protocols as well as daily cleaning. To learn more, view [School Bus FAQs](#) and [School Bus Rider Protocols](#).

Please note: Per state public health requirements, students may not board school buses during the COVID-19 pandemic without a completed health attestation form. You may access the form [here](#).

Due to more limited capacity to transport students on school buses while maintaining appropriate social distance, parents have been encouraged to drive their children to school and/or carpool while practicing appropriate health protocols (face coverings, hand hygiene, respiratory etiquette, social distance – where possible).

If families need transportation for their children, they should fill out [this form](#) by October 1.

## Car Riders and Drivers

To increase safety and ensure we are facilitating a healthy, safe atmosphere when students return to the classroom, there will be designated pick-up and drop-off areas that will allow for optimal social distancing. Students will be reminded to wear a face covering, and their temperature will be checked prior to entering the building.

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## Hallways

Where possible, hallways will be designated as one-way, with directional reminders posted on walls and/or floors. Signs will also remind individuals to maintain a distance of six feet from other individuals.



## Nutrition

As part of our mission to keep all of our students safe and healthy, we are committed to providing meal options and secure distribution methods. New procedures for meal distribution will be implemented. Please visit the [School Nutrition Services](#) page. For a complete list of distribution sites, click [here](#).

Our school nutrition employees will continue to prepare food in our school kitchens following very strict food safety and sanitation procedures required by the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA), Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA), NC Department of Health and Human Services (NCDHHS), and NC Department of Public Instruction (NCDPI). All meals will be individually packaged for direct service to students.



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## Limiting Visitors to Reduce Exposure

Our campuses are for students and teachers, and we want to prioritize their attendance. Anyone who must visit a school will be properly screened and required to wear a face covering and social distance to protect our school community. To reduce contact and COVID-19 exposure, visitors (non-GCS staff) are not allowed in schools or in classrooms. Parents and guardians must make an appointment in advance, and will not be allowed to visit their children at school, in the classroom or in shared spaces during the pandemic. Conferences and meetings will be conducted virtually, when possible. When face-to-face meetings are required, participants will wear face coverings and adhere to social distancing guidelines. When professional staff are working one-on-one with students in the provision of related services, they will wear additional PPE (gloves, gowns, face shields and face coverings) and follow additional guidelines. See [EC guidelines](#) for more information.



## **What to Do if a Student/Staff Member is Exposed or Has Symptoms**

Informed by the CDC, GCS has a clear and thorough protocol with defined steps for handling situations in which a student or staff member has been exposed to COVID-19 or has symptoms. In the case of exposure, we plan to work closely with the GCS Health Services Department in order to protect and inform our students and staff. Staff will be trained to recognize symptoms and respond appropriately.

If a student/staff member is exposed to someone with COVID-19 or is exhibiting symptoms during the school day, that individual will be evaluated by a nurse who will assess the symptoms, ask about recent history and exposure, and isolate that person in an isolation room or area designated for persons who are ill, exhibiting symptoms of COVID-19, or receive word of a positive COVID-19 test result or diagnosis. From there, the nurse will notify the principal, GCS Health Services, and in the case of a student, the student's family. The CDC requires that all areas visited by an infected person be closed, cleaned and disinfected after 24 hours of allowing the space to properly ventilate.

We will use the following resources as guides during the 2020-21 school year:

[Student Symptom Screening Checklist](#)

[Student Safety Protocols](#)

For helpful information on children and COVID-19, visit the North Carolina Department Health and Human Services [website](#).

## **COVID-19 Contact Tracing & Communications**

Contact tracing is a private, public health process used in response to a confirmed positive case of COVID-19 or other infectious disease. Contact tracing is conducted by the Guilford County Public Health Department.

Within GCS, this process is coordinated by our Chief Student Services Officer and our Department of Health Services and Nursing. School and department personnel cooperate fully in this process while also adhering to strict guidelines designed to protect the privacy of students and staff.

## **Confidentiality of Health-related Information**

As part of local, state and federal laws, personal information about students and staff cannot be released to the public or shared with individuals who may have come in contact with someone at school with a verified/confirmed case of COVID-19.

## **Parent, Employee and Public Interest**

An outbreak of COVID-19 and other infectious diseases often generate employee, parent/guardian and public interest. Notification will be provided when the purpose of the notice is to control spread of the infection and protect those who may have been potentially exposed.

These notifications will occur as follows:

- When a student has been identified by public health as a close contact, the student's parent/guardian will be notified directly via a phone call or letter from the school.
- The communication will outline next steps the employee or student's family should take.
- Parents/guardians who haven't been contacted by public health, do not have a child with potential exposure.
- Parents and staff members at the individual school will generally be notified by the principal via the district's mass notification system (voice mail, text and/or email).
- Parents/guardians should contact their child's school to ensure that their child's contact information is updated in PowerSchool.
- Parents and staff members also may access the GCS website to review district and school data regarding verified/confirmed cases COVID-19. [The dashboard](#) will be updated weekly.

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## Public Health Definitions

**Confirmed Positive Case:** An individual case of COVID-19 that has been verified/confirmed by public health or another healthcare provider.

**Contact Tracing:** The process of identifying, assessing, and managing people who have been exposed to a contagious disease to prevent onward transmission.

**Close Contact:** anyone who has been within 6 feet of a person infected with the virus for 15 minutes or more or has had direct contact with the infected person's secretions.

**Exposure:** Condition of being subjected to something (e.g., an infectious agent such as COVID-19) that could have a harmful effect.



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## **IV. Resources**

We want you to feel equipped with all of the necessary resources you need to feel confident when you send your children to school this fall. Here is a list of numbers to call and links to look through that can answer any question or address any problem you may have. We are here for you and your student through every step of this transition and beyond.

### **Food, shelter and more:**

Call 2-1-1 or 888-892-1162

Search online at [NC211](#)

Text COVIDNC to 898211

### **Mental Health Support:**

Call Hope4NC at 855-587-3463

[Guilford County Department of Health and Human Services COVID 19 Information](#)

[NC Department of Health and Human Services COVID-19 Response](#)

[State Guidance for Reopening Public Schools](#)

[CDC guidance for schools](#)

[CDC Guidelines on Cleaning and Disinfecting](#)

[OSHA guidance for reopening workplaces](#)



# GUILFORD County Schools

SOAR TO GREATNESS

Information in this handbook is posted on the [Reconnect. Reopen. Stay Safe. website](#) which serves as our communication hub.

For the most current information, visit this site often!

New

Used

A big thank you to the staff at Brooks Global Studies for modeling our COVID-19 safety protocols.