

Gasconade County R-1 School District



Safe Return to In-Person Instruction and Continuity of Services

Updated 10/12/23

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Introduction

The world has been experiencing a health care emergency due to the Coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic since the Spring of 2020. For the Gasconade County R-1 School district, this pandemic began to change how we educate students on March 18, 2020. At that time we closed our doors due to concerns that COVID-19 could negatively impact the health of our students, staff, and community. With this closure came a change in how educational material was presented to students. Although we could not educate our students in the traditional way, we were able to offer a variety of online learning opportunities as well as paper packets for those without internet access.

Since the onset of COVID, there has been a significant amount of research completed and dialogue between the school and health care providers about how best to resume and continue educational practices. Throughout this time, we have also sought and obtained feedback from our community. We knew in the fall of 2020 that our community was eager for students to get back to school as quickly and safely as possible. We also know our community expects a plan that will help us remain in session should the pandemic become a large-scale issue once again.

As we prepared the re-entry of students and the continuation of in person learning opportunities, the priorities we held were:

- Providing safe learning environments for our students and staff
- Assuring that all students receive a quality education

The Gasconade County R-1 School District will be accessible to all students through either in-person or MOCAP classes. Students and families may choose the format that works best for them. For planning of instructional practices, we do ask that once a decision has been made for one version or the other, the decision is final for at least one semester. This decision can only be overturned by the superintendent/designee or board of education.

[NOTE: It is understood that choice assumes the COVID-19 conditions and the Missouri and [County Health Department](#), as well as [CDC guidelines](#), allow for schools to stay open.]

PK - 12 Grade Re-Entry and Continuation Plan

Education Options:

As a district, we have sought input from our patrons, staff, and health care agencies prior to formulating the re-entry plan. As part of the plan, we have identified two ways in which a student can receive their education and still be part of Gasconade County R-1. The two means of educational delivery are in-person or virtual learning.

Virtual Learning:

If a family chooses virtual learning for their student(s) it is requested that you notify the building principal as soon as possible of your intent. However, per policy, all requests shall be made 15-30 days prior to the start of each semester. After contacting the building administrator, a meeting will be scheduled to discuss if virtual education is in the best interest of the student.

- Students who enroll in virtual classes at the start of the year will remain in virtual classes regardless of school closure.

In-person:

In-person classes will be taught using traditional approaches to education. However, Google Classroom and Canvas will continue to be a part of the delivery model in grades 4-12 on a daily basis. Grades PK-3 will use Google Classroom when appropriate. If a temporary school closure would be required, all classes will transition instruction to distance learning (Google Classroom and Canvas) and would continue until school resumes in-person classes.

- Students who begin in-person classes will transition to distance learning with their teacher in the event of a school closure.
- Should a student be required to be excluded they will be transitioned to a distance learning platform "Google Classroom and Canvas" for the time they are quarantined. They will then transition back to in-person classes once they are able to return.

Daily Operation

It should be noted that altered restrictions may be made at any time based on changing and current information.

General Expectations

- All parents teach healthy habits to children before school begins including:
 - Educate your child on viruses and the signs of illness
 - Appropriateness of hand washing, good hygiene and social distancing
 - Teach your child how to wipe down surfaces at home, as they will also help disinfect their desks at school

- Teach your child how to appropriately wear a mask and when to use them (if desired)
- Practicing and reinforcing healthy respiratory hygiene. This includes covering your mouth when you cough, coughing into your arm/elbow, and using facial tissue to prevent the spread of COVID-19.
- All teachers will reinforce healthy habits to children including:
 - Make time in the day for good hand washing
 - Have students maintain personal supplies versus communal supplies and if communal equipment is used they are disinfected after use.
- Minimizing Building Access - should an increase in COVID cases begin to develop in the county, building access will be limited to students, staff, and contracted employees who require access. Those entering the building may be screened by being asked questions as well as having a temperature check.

To help minimize the need for people to be in the building other than the necessary employees and students, the District requests the following:

- Parents are encouraged to call ahead if they have a need to visit the school.
- If someone is approved to go beyond the school entryway/main office they may be asked to wear a mask.
- With the exception of bus riders and walkers at Hermann Elementary, all students and visitors should enter the school buildings through the front doors.

Use of Masks: Masks will not be required for students or staff for the beginning of the 2023-2024 school year. However, masks are strongly recommended for anyone who has not been vaccinated or has health related issues. Anyone who would like to wear a mask is welcome to do so throughout the district. Should the number of cases and/or exclusions increase in the school, a mask requirement may be implemented by the board of education. If this is done, training on how to wear a mask appropriately will be conducted by the school nurses. This training will be consistent with CDC.

Diagnostic and Screening Testing: Parents are encouraged to check their children for symptoms daily before putting them on the bus or dropping them off at school.

Symptoms include:

1. Fever or chills
2. Cough

3. Shortness of breath or difficulty breathing
4. Fatigue
5. Muscle or body aches
6. Headache
7. New loss of taste or smell
8. Sore throat
9. Congestion or runny nose
10. Nausea or vomiting
11. Diarrhea

Technology:

Technology will be provided to all students K-12 if a short term school closure is required. If a student does not have internet access, they may notify their building office staff and a hotspot will be provided if available. Students are responsible for any damage to equipment that is sent home.

Schedules:

If cases in the county increase, building schedules may be reevaluated to limit interaction and promote student safety.

Open House:

An open house will be held for PK - K on August 15, 2023 with staggered times for students to attend. This method is in an effort to help reduce the number of individuals in the building at one time. The open house for 1st-12th grades will be held on August 17, 2023 with staggered times as well.

Extra & Co-Curricular Events:

During a student's semester of participation, the student shall be enrolled on a full-time basis at Hermann High School and Herman Middle School. Policy IGD and IGD-AP(1) will be followed throughout the re-entry phases.

Attendance:

Regular attendance, being crucial to student success will continue to be encouraged as in years past. However, attendance incentives will not be in place this year. This is being done in an effort to re-enforce the strong need for students who are sick to stay at home rather than come to school.

Personal Protection Equipment:

Students and staff may wear personal protection equipment such as masks/face coverings. **While wearing this equipment is not a requirement to attend school.**

- Students and staff may bring their own mask or one will be available upon request.

- Proper mask or face covering procedures should be taught at home and will be reinforced at school.

Special Services:

- All special education students will continue to be provided with instruction as outlined in their IEP Goals.
- Each student's case manager will work with families to ensure a child's IEP is being met, through a variety of modalities, in order to meet each student's needs.

Transportation:

The transportation department will initiate the following precautions to help enhance safety measures for riders.

- The driver will assign seats to riders.
- Household family members will be seated together.
- Students will be asked to use hand sanitizer as they enter the bus.
- The district bus fleet and contracted buses will be cleaned and sanitized at regular intervals.

Definitions

- CASE
 - Someone who has tested positive for COVID-19
- CONTACT
 - Someone who has had close prolonged contact with a case (closer than 6 feet for longer than 15 minutes)
- CONTACT TRACING
 - The process of tracing and monitoring contacts of cases

If You Test Positive for COVID-19 (Isolate)

Everyone, regardless of vaccination status.

- Stay home for 5 days. Try to separate from those in your household.
- If you are symptom-free without the use of medication, you may return on day 6.
- If you are not symptom-free without the use of medications, wait to return until symptom-free for 24 hours OR wait until day 11.
- If you are fever free without the use of fever reducing medications, and your symptoms have improved you may return on day 6.
- Continue to isolate if you are not fever free for 24 hours without the use of fever reducing medications OR your symptoms have not improved.
- **Use of a face mask is strongly recommended but not required for the remainder of the 10 days from symptom onset or from the positive test. (whichever is earliest)**

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

Someone in your HOME tests positive for Covid-19 then follow these guidelines:

If you develop symptoms, get a test and stay home. Please keep your child home if you are awaiting test results.

- Do not send your child to school with symptoms of COVID 19. Headache, stomach upset, vomiting/diarrhea, loss of taste/smell, sore throat, new runny nose or cough
- We don't want to spread covid, flu, strep or colds so please do not send your children to school sick.

School District Role

- Implement strategies to reduce the spread of COVID-19.
- Communicate information, when possible, remaining within state and federal guidelines.

Health Services

- Health Services staff providing health care will be wearing masks while assessing students and staff.
- Health Services staff will continue to keep a log of visits to the nurse. The log will record persons seen and include the type of symptom information such as fever, new cough, or sore throat. Due to student privacy issues, this information is not public. However, information may be shared with the Gasconade County Health Department as appropriate.

Health Screenings:

When a student is sent to the nurse, they may be asked a series of questions about their health. Some of the questions include:

- Have you traveled outside the area?
- Have you been around anyone tested for COVID-19?
- Do you have a new loss of smell or taste, new muscle aches?
- Do you have chills, a cough, a sore throat, a headache?
- When was the last time you took any medicine for your fever?

When a student demonstrates or complains of COVID-19-like symptoms, they will be sent to the nurse just like any other sick child. If the student has a fever of 100.4 degrees or more, they will be sent home. Students must be fever free with no medication for at least 24 hours before returning to school.

Once it has been determined a student should go home rather than stay at school, parents/guardians will be contacted. If they are not able to be reached, all contacts

listed in Infinite Campus will be contacted. If emergency contacts are unable to be reached, siblings will be asked if they know how parent/guardian may be reached. If no one is able to be reached, a home visit may be conducted. Students will not be allowed to ride the bus home.

Upon returning to school from an illness, isolation, or exclusion, students are to report immediately to the nurse's office to be evaluated prior to going to class. At that time, the nurse will do another health screening and ask a variety of questions prior to determining if they are ready to go back to class.

In the event of a Suspected Case of COVID-19

In the event of a suspected case of COVID-19, the following protocols will be followed:

SCENARIO

- An employee or student doesn't feel well and visits the school nurse.
- The nurse determines symptoms may be COVID related.
- The employee or student will be temporarily separated from others and will be asked to wear a mask. **"Masks will not be forced."**
- An antigen test will be offered but not required.

STUDENT

The school nurse will contact the parent. When the parent arrives, the nurse will encourage the parent to have the child tested. The nurse will offer to assist the parent with making phone calls to the healthcare provider.

- The healthcare provider will arrange for the student to be tested if they feel it is COVID related. If the student tests positive for COVID, the healthcare provider will contact the parent.
- An antigen test will be offered by the school nurse "but not required."
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Staff

1. If the employee has been told to self-isolate, they should contact their direct supervisor/principal. If a student has been told to self-isolate, the family will be requested to call the school. The school will check to see if there are siblings or other family members in Gasconade County R-1.
2. The principal/supervisor will contact the superintendent. The superintendent will advise the administrative team and the Board of Education.
3. Superintendent will consider initiating the following COVID Protocols:
 - Communication with the health department will continue for additional guidance.

- Official communication to the Board of Education, families (as appropriate), community, and media (if appropriate). Communications will come from the superintendent.
- The building principal will follow-up with the staff member or family of the student.

Self- Screening Protocol

- **The following questions and protocols should be conducted prior to students coming to school or staff coming to work:**
 - Do you have a new onset of any of the following not explained by another known condition (note: the CDC may update symptoms at any time). If the answers are “yes” to any of the screening questions, they should not report to work/school.
 - Fever or chills
 - Cough
 - Shortness of breath or difficulty breathing
 - Fatigue
 - Muscle or body aches
 - New loss of taste or smell
 - Sore throat
 - Vomiting or diarrhea
 - Been in close contact in the past 2 weeks with an individual with a confirmed case of COVID-19
 - Take temperature and refrain from coming to work/school if temperature is 100.4 or higher

Custodial & Maintenance

Gasconade County R-1 will maintain adequate supplies of personal protective equipment, soap, paper towels, hand sanitizer, and tissues throughout each school. The custodians and maintenance staff will ensure stock is adequate to meet the needs of the district.

Staff will clean frequently-touched surfaces and objects (e.g., tables, doorknobs, stair railings, countertops) with district-supplied cleaning and disinfectant products. Computer safe disinfectant methods will be used for computers and keyboards.

Hand sanitizer will be placed in high traffic areas for students and staff to utilize when hand washing is not available.

Water fountains will be transitioned to touchless water bottle fillers. Students will not be able to drink from fountains but will be given a cup if they do not have a water bottle.

School Closure

The Gasconade County R-1 School District will do everything possible to stay open throughout the 2022-2023 school year. However, when dealing with a pandemic, situations can arise that require a school to close.

Possible School Closure Trigger Points:

- Teacher/Staff absenteeism
 - When the number of staff available to supervise and instruct students drops below what is necessary to maintain a safe learning environment.

If it is necessary to close school, parents will be notified as soon as possible through the school app, phone call and social media outlets.

Trauma

The importance of assuring that our students and staff mental health needs are adequately met is vital to the re-entry and continuation plans. COVID has caused a great deal of stress for everyone since it started in early 2020; staff and parents are encouraged to be mindful of the stress students may be under as school resumes. If changes are noticed, we ask that you have a conversation with the child. If you struggle with the conversation or need assistance, our school counselors and social worker are available to support you and your child. A referral upon request can be given for providers & resources.

Resource to help navigate the mental health side of COVID-19.

Helping Children Cope - Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/daily-life-coping/for-parents.html>

Professional Development

At Gasconade County R-1 we know that professional learning is a key factor for a strong educational system. Therefore, professional learning opportunities will continue for staff on distance learning, incorporating technology, and being trauma informed. All measures to provide a safe learning environment for our staff will be taken.

Vaccinations - The district will work with the Gasconade County Health Department as well as Hermann Area District Hospital to offer vaccination clinics on site should the

need arise. This will be monitored on a continual basis to assure all those who desire to be vaccinated have the ability to do so in the community.

This document will be reviewed on a regular basis to assure it addresses the current COVID situation. Should major changes be needed they will be brought to the Board of Directors for consideration immediately. However, at the current time, the plan will be presented to the Board of Directors every month for a review and if needed, with any changes which the oversight committee would like to see take place.

To have this plan translated or viewed in another language please reach out to the Gasconade County R-1 School District at 170 Blue Pride Drive, Hermann, MO 65041, or 573-486-2116

BOE APPROVED - 9/8/22, 10/13/22, 11/10/22, 12/8/22, 1/12/23, 2/9/23, 3/9/23, 4/13/23, 5/11/23, 6/8/23, 7/20/23, 8/10/23, 9/14/23, 10/12/23