



Return-to-School Plan

2021-2022

IN RESPONSE TO COVID-19

DISCLAIMER: This is subject to change at any point should the Federal, State, Local government entities, or the Texas Education Agency publish information that conflicts with the information published in this document. If any of those entities change their information published, this document will be updated and redistributed to all stakeholders.

This guidance document is being provided based on the public health situation as we understand it today and takes effect immediately. It is to help Gary ISD in planning for the 2021-2022 school year. Changes to the public health situation over the course of the school year may necessitate changes to this guidance, but these are the latest guidelines we have from the Federal, State, Local government entities, and the Texas Education Agency.

Parental and Public Notices

Gary ISD is developing a plan for On-Campus Activities and Instruction. GISD must post for parents and the general public, **before** to the start of on-campus activities and instruction, a summary of the plan they will follow to mitigate COVID-19 spread in their schools based on the requirements and recommendations outlined here. It should broadly address the major points in this guidance, and must be posted on the Gary ISD homepage at www.garyisd.net, Todd Greer has been designated as the staff person that is responsible for responding to COVID-19 concerns. He may be reached by email at tgreer@garyisd.net or at 903.685.2291.

Attendance and Enrollment

Beginning Thursday, August 12, 2021, GISD will only offer face-to-face instruction unless a student has been diagnosed with COVID-19 or conditions listed under 25 TAC 97.7.

1. Per Texas Education Code (TEC), §25.092, students must attend 90% of the days a course is offered 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 2021-22 school year.
2. Student attendance may only be earned through the delivery of on-campus instruction. Student attendance will be taken every day and the truancy process will be followed.
3. Gary ISD will only provide on-campus attendance for students unless the superintendent or other government official closes school. If the school is closed due to the virus, directions will come at the time of the closure.

Practices to Prevent the Virus from Entering the School

Prevention and Precaution	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Daily self-screening by the entire school community before coming on campus.• Do not come on campus if they have symptoms of a communicable disease, including COVID-19.• Lab confirmed COVID-19 individuals, or individuals with immediate family members that are lab confirmed with COVID-19, should not be on campus until a physician's release date is obtained. Proper documentation must be given to the school.• School personnel will monitor students when symptoms are present.• Facial coverings (masks) are optional.
---------------------------	---

Individuals Confirmed with COVID-19 Re-entry Criteria:

ALL individuals must be cleared by the doctor with proper documentation prior to returning to the district/campus. The staff must be cleared by the superintendent through the Human Resources Department prior to reporting back to work. Parents must contact the school nurse once their student has been cleared to return back to school.

Identifying Possible COVID-19 Cases on Campus

Prevention and Precaution	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Students with symptoms will be sent to the nurse. The nurse will determine if the child should be sent home. The student will stay in isolation until picked up by parent/guardian.• Students and staff members may receive voluntary weekly on-site COVID-19 rapid tests.• Students may be asked to submit a medical professional's note for return clearance.• District will report confirmed cases to the local health department.
Positive Lab-Confirmed	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Symptomatic individuals must be excluded until at least 10 days have passed since symptom onset• 24 hour period free of 100° Fahrenheit fever without medication• Symptoms have significantly improved (coughing/breathing)• Asymptomatic individuals must be excluded until at least 10 days after the day they were tested
Household Lab Confirmed Cases	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Well individuals in the home should not be in contact with someone in isolation.• Household members may return according to governing authorities.• Staff must be cleared by Central Office PRIOR to returning.

Additional Options for Return	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Individuals who are fully vaccinated may return with no symptoms with proper vaccination documentation. • Staff must be cleared by Central Office PRIOR to returning. • All individuals may return if they receive a negative result from a PCR acute infection test (3-5 day test).
-------------------------------	--

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

Health and Hygiene Practices: General

1. Gary ISD will have hand sanitizer at the entrance and in every classroom.
2. Students, teachers, staff, and campus visitors will need to sanitize and/or wash hands frequently.
3. GISD campuses will institute more frequent cleaning practices, including additional cleaning by janitorial staff, as well as provide the opportunity for children to clean their own spaces before and after they are used, in ways that are safe and developmentally appropriate.

Health and Hygiene Practices: Masks

GISD will NOT require the use of masks and face coverings this school year. However, if anyone would like to wear them, they will be ALLOWED to continue wearing them.

Student-Teacher Groupings

Physical Distancing

General Expectations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • When practical, please practice social distancing. • Wash or sanitize hands frequently.
----------------------	--

Transportation Recommendations

1. Students and staff will use hand sanitizer upon boarding the bus.
2. Weather permitting, the bus windows should be open to allow outside air to circulate in the bus.
3. GISD would like to encourage families to drop students off to school to reduce possible virus exposure on buses.
4. Buses will be thoroughly cleaned daily, focusing on frequently touched surfaces such as bus seats, steering wheels, knobs, and door handles. During transport, bus windows will be open to allow for additional ventilation and air flow.
5. GISD will NOT require the use of masks and face coverings for bus drivers or students this school year. However, if anyone would like to wear them, they will be ALLOWED to continue wearing them.

Visits to Schools

1. Parents and other adults may visit schools. During these visits, parents and other visitors must follow the virus prevention requirements of the school. The campus has a secure entrance. Visitors will be asked to wait in those entrances for their students. If you are dropping off items, there will be a place for you to leave the items so the student can pick them up.
2. School visits may be restricted to visits that are essential to school operations. At this time we are able to accommodate lunch guests this year. Christmas and Thanksgiving lunch will be reviewed closer to the event to determine if we are able to accommodate large crowds. We will continue to practice social distancing to the fullest extent possible. You may only eat with your child and there will be a special location designated for your visit.

Campus Visitors	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• No visitors are allowed on campus with lab confirmed COVID-19 or symptoms of COVID-19.• Visitors should utilize hand sanitizer upon entering a campus.
-----------------	---

Staffing

1. Employees of GISD, like employees of any organization, must continue to meet the work expectations set by their employers, subject to any applicable employment contract terms. If a staff member is ill, they will follow the normal leave policies established by the Gary Board of Trustees prior to the COVID-19 protocols.
2. Gary ISD may reduce 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, remain at least 3 feet apart where feasible, consider the use of dividers, and consider whether increased airflow from the outdoors is possible in those settings.

COVID-19 Symptoms

In evaluating whether an individual has symptoms consistent with COVID-19, consider the following:

- Feeling feverish or a measured temperature greater than or equal to 100.0 degrees Fahrenheit
- Loss of taste or smell
- Cough
- Runny Nose
- Nausea
- Difficulty breathing
- Shortness of breath
- Headache
- Chills
- Sore throat
- Shaking or exaggerated shivering
- Significant muscle pain or ache
- Diarrhea

Instructional Expectations for the 21-22 School Year

Beginning Thursday, August 12, 2021, GISD will only offer remote conferencing instruction and will start school with the following exception: Required quarantine due to illness. Synchronous instruction will be provided for students. This allows live, face to face (virtual) instruction between students and teachers. This will require a strong internet connection, with no data caps. This will require the student to be engaged in learning for a total of 4 hours for a full day or 2 hours for half day. During this virtual instruction, students will be taught by a separate teacher from their general education classroom. This teacher will only instruct the virtual classroom.

Homeschool

According to the Texas Education Agency (TEA) policy you must officially withdraw your child(ren) from Gary ISD if they are already enrolled.

The date that you will begin homeschooling is now required by TEA in order to withdraw a child from public school. It is important to make certain that your students are withdrawn before homeschooling begins and that homeschooling begins as soon as your student is withdrawn in order to avoid the public school counting your student as absent and potentially filing truancy charges.

GISD enrollment process for HOMESCHOOL students should you decide to return to public school after attending a homeschool:

1. Assessments are used for determination of placement, the passing standard is 70%.
2. Per TEA, school districts may assess students by administering valid and reliable achievement tests as stated in Board policy FD Local. The determination of whether or not to use such instruments is a local matter.
3. Districts may place students according to a review of the homeschool curriculum, course of study, and work of the student coming from a homeschool environment if the local criteria listed below are met. §28.021 of the Texas Education Code (TEC) requires advancement or credit to be awarded on the basis of "academic achievement or demonstrated proficiency of the subject matter."
4. Local Criteria for placement of Homeschool students once they enroll or reenroll at Gary ISD. If any or all of the following criteria are not met, the students may be retained in the previous grade level as determined by the principal.
 - a. Scores on achievement tests, which may be administered by appropriate District personnel.
 - b. Recommendation of the sending school.
 - c. Prior academic record.
 - d. Chronological age and social and emotional development of the student.

- e. Other criteria deemed appropriate by the principal.

There will be a letter for you to sign stating you understand the information provided to you should you decide to continue with the Homeschool process. This will serve as our documentation of our conversation and requirements should you choose to re-enroll the student in GISD.