

Plan for the 2021-2022 School Year



Excellence. Community. Engagement.

Approved by the St. George MSU School Board on Monday, August 23, 2021

This will remain a working document and will be revised based on new federal and state guidelines; the impact of COVID on our school, community, and state; and the lessons we learn along the way in terms of the best approach to safely educating and caring for our students

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Introduction

The Return to School (RtS) Committee, school staff, and the School Board developed this plan for the fall of 2021 with three goals in mind:

1. To protect student, staff, and family health and safety;
2. To keep our kids in school;
3. To return to as normal a school day as possible by identifying essential health and safety protocols and reducing disruptions to students' learning and school functions.

Similar to last year, in making decisions, we considered

- student, staff, and community health;
- the costs and benefits of strategies that mitigate the risk of viral spread during the school day; and
- the importance of in-person learning and the school experience to our students' academic growth, social development, and overall health and wellbeing.

We relied on data, research, and guidance from many sources, including the following:

- [U.S. CDC](#)
 - [U.S. CDC Guidance for COVID-19 Prevention in K-12 Schools](#)
 - [COVID Data Tracker](#)
 - [Delta Variant: What We Know About the Science](#)
 - [Key Things to Know About COVID-19 Vaccines](#)
 - [U.S. CDC Order Requiring Masks on School Buses](#)
- [Maine CDC](#)
 - [COVID-19: Maine Data](#)
 - [COVID-19 Vaccination in Maine](#)
- [Maine Department of Education COVID-19 ToolKit](#)
- [American Academy of Pediatrics](#)

These resources *informed*, but did not dictate, our decisions. We developed a plan tailored to the unique characteristics, strengths, and needs of our community.

We recognize that no plan can eliminate all of the risks associated with the COVID-19 and in-person instruction carries some inherent risks related to the virus. Our plan seeks to *maximize* student learning and social-emotional development during the school day while *minimizing* the risk of viral spread and the disruption caused by health and safety protocols.

This plan will change as the situation with COVID changes.

The RtS Committee will meet monthly to review and recommend revisions to the plan.

We faced a much greater challenge last summer and found a way to not only survive, but thrive. We can – and will – do it again. **Dragon Strong isn't a slogan. It's our commitment to do whatever it takes to care for our kids and one another. That's who we are. And that will not change.**

Return to School Committee

Autumn Belajonas, School Nurse
Jessica Berry, Special Education Director
Kate Bourne, Public Health Consultant
Adam Bullard, Instructional Administrator
Beckie Delaney, St. George Parents' Group
Amy Dyer Drinkwater, St. George Ambulance Director
Meghan Elwell, Upper Elementary Team Leader & 2/3 Multiage Teacher
Randy Elwell, Facilities & Transportation Director
Mike Felton, Superintendent
Ashely Geel, Unified Arts Team Leader, Athletic Director, & PE/Health Teacher
Beth Giggey, District Administrative Assistant
Janet Harjula, Food Service Director
Amy Hufnagel, School-wide Behavior Interventionist
Alane Kennedy, School Board & St. George Community Development Corporation Operations Manager
Cassie Kilbride, Business Manager
Elizabeth Matthews, School Administrative Assistant
Josh McPhail, High School Transition Coordinator & Middle Level Social Studies Teacher
Paul Meinersmann, Technology & Makerspace Director
Shasta Minery, School Board
Sonja Schmanska, Middle Level Team Leader & ELA Teacher
Stephanie Simmons, Special Services Team Leader & School Social Worker
Meghan Rice, St. George Education Association Vice President & K/1 Multiage Teacher
Tamela Upham, Ed Tech Team Leader
Rachel Wilcox, School Health Advisor & Pediatrics Nurse Practitioner

Overview of 2021-22 School Plan

School Schedule: Return to a regular school schedule with school starting at 8:00 a.m. and ending at 2:30 p.m. Monday – Friday. Students may arrive beginning at 7:30 a.m. and go to morning recess.

Morning Drop-off and Afternoon Pick-up: Same as last year with parents dropping off and picking up in the lower parking lot by the main entrance. Buses will arrive and leave from Juniper Street.

Daily Symptom Screening: Families screen students each morning before school using the state's [COVID-19 Pre-Screening Tool](#) (see Appendix A for a copy of the screening tool). Students should stay home if they're sick.

Masks: Following State of Maine and U.S. CDC recommendations, students, staff and visitors wear masks when indoors at school regardless of vaccination status. Federal rules require drivers and students to wear face coverings while on buses. Masks are NOT required when outdoors. Regular mask breaks will be provided to all students.

Physical Distancing: When indoors, we encourage 3 feet of distance between students and staff when feasible. Students will move between classes and work together in groups. We'll use the cafeteria for lunch again, though there will be more space between students and less students in the cafeteria at one time. We will have air purifiers in the cafeteria and classrooms.

Access to the School Building: Parents, volunteers, and visitors will have opportunities to access the school building. While at school, adults will need to follow the health and safety protocols in place at that time.

Pooled Testing: We will continue to investigate the role that pooled testing could play for our school but will not use it to start the school year.

Positive Cases in School: We are required to follow Maine CDC and DHHS [Standard Operating Procedures for Positive Cases in Schools](#), which includes protocols for determining close contacts and quarantine.

2021-2022 School Plan

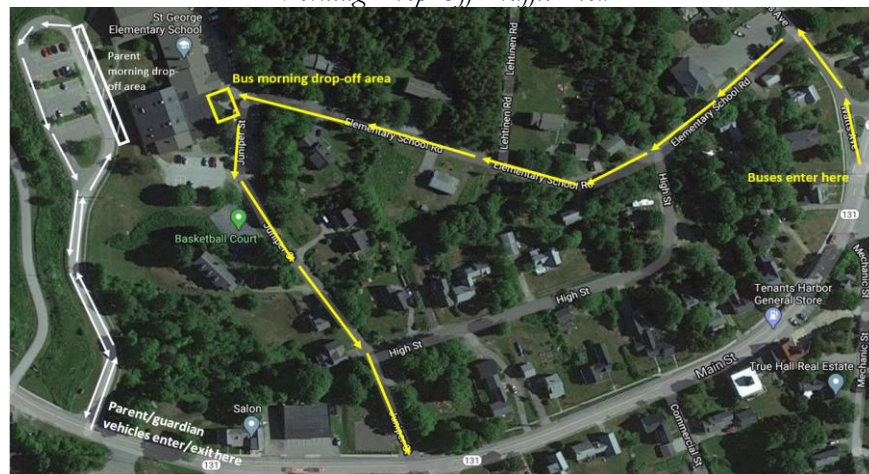
Daily Schedule

- **Return to normal:** *Regular school schedule: Monday – Friday, 8:00 a.m. – 2:30 p.m.*
- **Return to normal:** *Morning recess between 7:30 a.m. – 8:00 a.m.*

Transportation

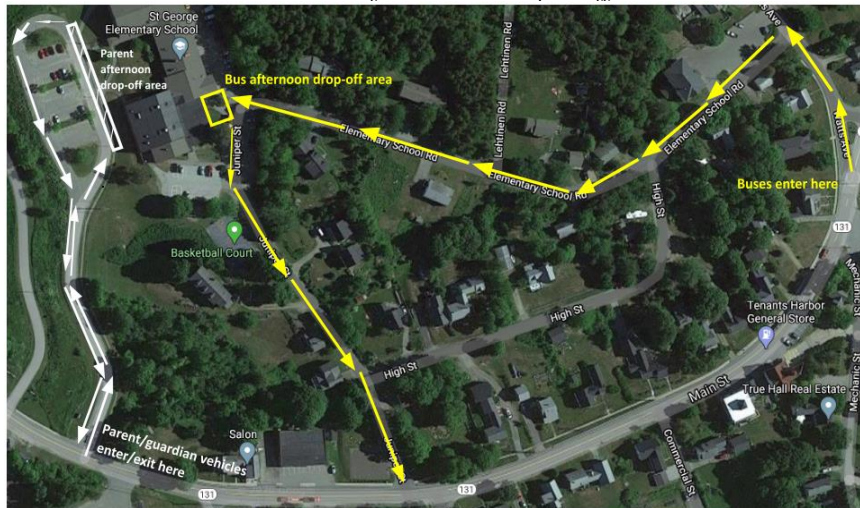
- **Buses**
 - **Return to normal:** *Regular bus run times and number of students on the bus.*
 - Federal rules require drivers and students to wear masks while on the bus.
 - The driver will provide students with hand sanitizer upon entering the bus.
 - Families must complete the [Daily Symptom Screening](#) (see Appendix A) with students before they ride the bus each morning.
 - When weather permits, windows should be opened in the front and rear of the bus for increased ventilation.
 - Buses drivers will take attendance on morning and afternoon bus runs to assist with contact tracing if necessary.
 - Buses will be cleaned and disinfected between runs.
 - **Students MUST ride on their regular bus run each day unless there is an emergency situation.** Parents will not be able to send notes with students or call during the school day asking that their child be allowed to ride on a different bus for non-emergency reasons, e.g., attending a birthday party at a friend's house.
- **Morning Drop-off Protocol** (*same locations as last year*)
 - **Buses:** K-8 bus runs will drop-off students near the Middle Level playground on Juniper St.
 - **Morning Recess:** Morning recess will take place between 7:30 – 8:00 for all student (K-8). After recess, students will enter the building at the following locations:
 - **Lower Elementary (K, 1, K/1, 2)** will enter the school using the door by the K-5 playgrounds.
 - **Upper Elementary (2/3, 3, 4, 4/5, 5)** will enter through the main entrance by the lower parking lot.
 - **Middle Level (6-8)** will enter by the entrance near the cafeteria.
 - **Drop-Off**
 - In the morning, families should drop off students in the lower parking lot near the main entrance. **All students should be dropped off at the lower parking lot.**
 - Students can begin arriving at 7:30 a.m.
 - **Walkers**
 - Walkers should arrive between 7:30-8:00 a.m. and go to morning recess locations.

Morning Drop Off Traffic Flow



- **Afternoon Dismissal Protocol** (*same locations as last year*)
 - **Buses**
 - Afternoon K-8 buses will leave St. George School between 2:30-2:45 p.m.
 - **Pick-up**
 - Families will pick up students in the **lower parking lot** (i.e., the same location as morning drop-off) and should remain in cars during dismissal
 - Staff will be assigned to assist with dismissal. **Staff will only dismiss children to adults who are on the student's emergency card.**
 - **Walkers**
 - Walkers will be dismissed at 2:30 p.m.

Parent/Guardian Afternoon Pick-up Traffic Flow & Times



Daily Symptom Screening

- Families should screen students each morning before getting on the bus or arriving at school using the [Maine DOE's COVID-19 Pre-Screening Tool](#) (see **Appendix A** for a copy of the screening tool). We will update the screening tool as Maine CDC and DOE make changes.
- The key to this approach is simple and based on a responsibility that we ALL share in order to allow us to continue to offer in-person instruction *while* keeping our children, school staff, and community safe: **if your child is sick or exhibiting specific symptoms, you must keep them home.**
- If you ever have questions about whether to send your child to school, please contact School Nurse Autumn Belajonas (a.belajonas@stgeorgemsu.org; 207.372.6312)

Masks

- **Return to normal:** *Students and staff are **NOT** required to wear masks when outdoors.*
- To protect the health and safety of our students, staff, families, and community, St. George MSU is following the recommendations of the U.S. CDC and State of Maine and requiring all students, staff, and visitors to wear masks – *regardless of vaccination status* – while indoors at school.
- When adults are in their office or classroom by themselves, they are not required to wear masks.
- Mask breaks will occur on a regular basis during the school day and occur outside when possible. During *indoor* mask breaks, classroom windows will be open and students will be at least 3 feet from one another and remain seated.
- Masks should have two or more layers of washable, breathable fabric; completely cover your nose and mouth; and fit snugly against the sides of your face. Additional information about masks can be found on the [U.S. CDC website](#).
- Face shields may be an alternative for students with documented medical or behavioral challenges who are unable to wear masks.
- We encourage families to send children to school with at least two clean masks each day. Masks should be stored in a resealable plastic bag. If you need help obtaining masks, please contact School Social Worker Stephanie Simmons at s.simmons@stgeorgemsu.org or 372.6312. We have a supply of disposable face masks at school in case a child forgets their mask or needs a replacement.

Social Distancing

- **Return to normal:** *Students will move between classes.*
- **Return to normal:** *Students will engage in group work together.*
- **Return to normal:** *Students will eat together in the cafeteria.*
- **Return to normal:** *Class sizes will not be limited due to health and safety protocols.*
- **Return to normal:** *Students can sit at desks and together at tables.*
- When indoors, we encourage 3-feet of distance between students when feasible.
- We will provide HEPA air purifiers for classrooms and the cafeteria.
- Unvaccinated staff should maintain 6-feet of distance from students when compatible with educational needs.
- Students will be members of one of three “Houses”:
 - Lower Elementary House - K, 1, K/1, 2
 - Upper Elementary House - 2/3, 3, 4A, 4B, 5
 - Middle Level House - 6A, 6B, 7A, 7B, 8Interaction between Houses will be limited during the school day.
- We will continue to get students outside as much as possible. Maine weather can make this challenging, but we’re committed! **Please send your child with appropriate clothing and gear for sun, rain, snow, and cold.** If you need help obtaining appropriate outdoor clothing, please contact School Social Worker Stephanie Simmons (s.simmons@stgeorgemsu.org; 372.6312).
- We will continue to limit, when feasible, students sharing items such as pencils, calculators, books, or laptops.
- **Cafeteria:** Students will eat together with their Houses (Lower Elementary, Upper Elementary, Middle Level) in the cafeteria in groups of approximately 40 or less. If a House has more than 40 students (such as the Middle Level House) classes may alternate between eating in classrooms and the cafeteria. We will provide a HEPA air purifier for the cafeteria.
- **Bathrooms:** Classes will have assigned bathrooms. Multi-stall bathrooms can only be used by one student at a time. If the bathroom is in use, up to one student can wait outside.

Extended COVID-related Absences

- Students in quarantine who are still able to work from home will have an extended absence learning plan developed by their classroom teacher, the Instructional Administrator, and their parent/guardian.
- Students who are unable to work while in quarantine will have makeup work similar to other extended absence protocols.
- The School Nurse will notify the Instructional Administrator when a student will be absent for 5 or more days due to a documented medical issue, which would include quarantine. The Instructional Administrator will inform the student’s Crew (i.e., classroom or homeroom) teacher and the Grade Level Team Leader that the student will be out for an extended period of time. The Crew teacher will contact the students’ parent/guardian to develop an extended absence learning plan.
- The Instructional Administrator will maintain a list of students with extended absence learning plans and check in with the students’ Crew teachers at least weekly.
- If families have questions about extended absence learning plans for students in quarantine, they should contact Instructional Administrator Adam Bullard (a.bullard@stgeorgemsu.org; 207.372.6312)

Cleaning & Disinfecting

- High touch surfaces, such as door handles and railings, will be cleaned and disinfected during and at the end of each school day.
- The cafeteria will be cleaned and disinfected regularly during lunch as well as after lunches are over.
- Buses will be cleaned and disinfected between runs.

Hand Hygiene

- Students and staff will wash or sanitize their hands upon arrival at school, before and after eating, after using the restroom, before and after using shared or playground equipment, and before getting on the bus.
- Students will receive hand sanitizer from the bus driver upon entering the bus.

Positive Cases in School

- We are required to follow Maine CDC and DHHS [Standard Operating Procedures for Positive Cases in Schools](#), which includes protocols for, among other things, determining close contacts and whether individuals need to quarantine.
- We will continue to utilize a room as a separate area for any students or staff exhibiting COVID-19 symptoms during the school day and follow [Maine DOE and CDC protocols](#).

Vaccination

- The vaccines work and are [safe and effective](#) in preventing COVID-19, especially severe illness and death. We encourage families to talk with their doctors about vaccination for children 12 and older prior to the start of school. Vaccination for children under 12 is expected to be available this winter. We are committed to supporting families with information about vaccination opportunities, including vaccine clinics offered by St. George EMS at the Town Office.
- Under the DHHS Declaration of Public Health Emergency, Maine schools are required to collect vaccination status of all employees and report de-identified rate information to Maine public health officials each month.

Students Traveling Outside of Maine

- **Return to normal:** *At this time (8/23/2021) there are no requirements or restrictions for students who travel outside of Maine. We will continue to monitor CDC guidelines.*

Recess & Playgrounds

- **Return to normal:** *Students are NOT required to wear masks while at outside recess.*
- **Return to normal:** *Students from multiple classes and grades can have recess together.*
- Students and staff will wash or sanitize their hands before and after recess and using playground equipment.

Food Service Program & Cafeteria

- **Return to normal:** *Students will eat lunch together in the cafeteria.*
- **Return to normal:** *Students can order breakfast and lunch at school each morning, i.e., no more online ordering form.*
- Students will eat together with their Houses (Lower Elementary, Upper Elementary, Middle Level) in the cafeteria in groups of approximately 40 or less. If a House has more than 40 students (such as the Middle Level House) classes may alternate between eating in classrooms and the cafeteria. A HEPA air purifier will be used in the cafeteria.

Access to the School Building

- **Return to normal:** *There will be opportunities for parents, volunteers, and visitors to access the school building.*
- **Return to normal:** *There will be opportunities for parent meetings to occur in the school building.*
- While at the school, parents, volunteers, and visitors will be required to follow the health and safety protocols in place at that time.
- Parents may choose to attend meetings, including IEP and 504 meetings, in person or virtually. Teachers will share volunteer opportunities as they arise. Parents who need to drop off items for the students or pick up students may enter the school between 8:30 a.m. and 2:00 p.m. We ask parents not to enter the building during morning drop off or afternoon pick so we can avoid crowding in halls and entry ways.

Heat Days

- If the school determines that the temperature will rise to a level that makes it too uncomfortable to wear a mask for most of the day, school will be cancelled.

Athletics

- We will follow State of Maine and MPA requirements for athletics once those are released.

Pooled Testing

- We will continue to investigate the role that pooled testing could play for our school but will not use it to start the school year. If conditions change, we will consider the program again at that time.

Appendix A: COVID-19 Prescreening Tool

Pre-Screening Tool for School Attendance

Within the past 24 hours have you
had a fever* or taken fever
reducing medicine?

YES =



Do you feel sick, had
vomiting/diarrhea, fever*, sore
throat, or felt unwell?

YES =



Have you been told to stay home
and isolate/quarantine due to
COVID-19 exposure?

YES =



Stay home with any YES response to the questions above.

Attend school when all answers are NO and your child is feeling well with no other symptoms of illness. Call or see your school nurse or other designated person at school if you have questions.

IF YOUR CHILD HAS ANY ILLNESS THEY SHOULD STAY AT HOME UNTIL NO FEVER FOR 24 HOURS WITHOUT TAKING FEVER REDUCING MEDICATION AND SYMPTOMS ARE IMPROVING OR GONE.

*A fever is 100.4F/38C or greater.



Updated 8.16.21