

Georgia Academy for the Blind

Reopening Plan

1st Nine (9) Weeks of School

August 24, 2020 – October 23, 2020



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Dr. Cindy Gibson, Superintendent

A cross-functional team of central office staff and school leaders, utilizing survey responses from staff and parent/guardians, was organized to address when and how to reopen the Georgia Academy for the Blind for the 2020-2021 school year. The cross-functional team's focus was to base the reopening of school on recommendations from the Center for Disease Control (CDC), Department of Public Health, and Department of Education. The recommendations include cleaning/disinfecting school buildings and implementing social distancing protocols to limit the spread of the COVID-19. The following plan outlines the two (2) instructional learning models (in-person and remote) to be used for the opening of the 2020-2021 school year on August 24, 2020 for the first nine (9) weeks of school for students. The pandemic will be monitored closely during that time, and parents/guardians will be informed with as much notice as possible regarding instructional learning models that will be implemented after the first nine (9) weeks of school.

We know the importance of students learning and interacting with others in a traditional, in-person learning model; however, we need to understand that when we come back to an in-person learning model at school, it will not be the same as previous school years because of the pandemic. It is critical that we do whatever possible to limit the spread of the COVID-19. Safety precautions are being taken, and they will make school look and feel differently. Social distancing will change how school events are handled and what new behaviors are expected from students and staff so that everyone is as safe as possible. These changes may be difficult for some, and staff are ready to help students adjust to changes.

The in-person and remote learning models provide options for attending the Georgia Academy for the Blind for the first nine (9) weeks of school with school starting for students on August 24, 2020. In early July 2020, parents/guardians were surveyed to determine which instructional learning model they preferred for their child attending the Georgia Academy for the Blind. Staff made multiple attempts using various communication methods to elicit feedback from parents/guardians regarding their learning model preference for their child. If a parent/guardian did not respond to the multiple communication attempts, the student will be scheduled for the in-person learning model.

The aforementioned cross-functional team will monitor the spread of COVID-19 during the first nine (9) weeks of school to determine what instructional learning model(s) will be provided at the end of the first nine (9) weeks of school. In the event the spread of COVID-19 risks the safety of students and staff, the school will give as much notice as possible to parents/guardians if the instructional learning model chosen by parents/guardians needs to be changed. Staff will contact parents/guardians each week to update them regarding current school operations and any needed changes to the instructional learning models offered with the safety of students and staff being the highest priority. This reopening plan contains contingency plans should COVID-19 cases continue to rise and cause interruptions to the in-person learning model. See the COVID-19: Potential Exposure Protocols on page seven (7) and the COVID-19 Decision Making Matrix on page eight (8).

Instructional Learning Models - 1st Nine (9) Weeks of School (August 24th to October 23th)

The two (2) instructional learning models offered are in-person and remote learning. Details about each learning model are discussed in the remainder of this plan as well as contact information that parents/guardians can use to address questions and/or seek support.

In-person Learning Model: Students and staff will report in a traditional, in-person learning model with modified social distancing and cleaning/disinfecting practices in place in accordance with recommendations from the CDC, Department of Public Health, and Department of Education.

Remote Learning Model: Students and staff will be involved in a remote learning model using technology provided by the school.

In-person Learning Model

Below are the considerations being made for operations and instruction for this learning model.

Instruction

1. Staff will provide in-person instruction to students to address the goals in each student's Individualized Education Program plan (IEP) and incorporate the Georgia Standards of Excellence.
2. Staff will provide students in elementary and middle school and parents/guardians with student grade progress reports every four and a half (4 ½) weeks. IEP progress monitoring is reported according to individualized education plans for each student. Students in high school receive a grade progress report every nine (9) weeks.

Safety and Sanitization

1. The cleaning/disinfecting of school buildings will be implemented on a continuous basis the protocols used will be aligned with recommendations from the CDC, Department of Public Health, and Department of Education.
2. Students and staff will follow recommendations from the CDC, Department of Public Health, and Department of Education regarding personal hygiene practices and social distancing.
3. Staff will be required to wear masks provided by the school or that staff bring to school. The masks should adhere to the recommendations by the CDC, Department of Public Health, and Department of Education.
4. Students are asked to wear masks that they bring to school or masks the school provides that are in accordance with recommendations from the CDC, Department of Public Health, and Department of Education.
5. Students and staff will participate in daily health safety checks including hands free digital temperature checks multiple times a day.

6. Students that become ill at school will be quarantined, and their parents/guardians will be notified immediately so that travel arrangements home can be made.
7. Staff that become ill at school will be sent home immediately.
8. In-person athletic competitions, practices, and field trips will be considered on a case-by-case basis.

Student Supports

1. Staff will support the social and emotional needs of students through wellness checks, counseling, and positive behavior supports and intervention.

School Nutrition

1. Breakfast and lunch will be provided to students that are on campus and engaged in the in-person learning model.

Residential Services

1. Students that stay in the residential component of the school will practice hygiene and social distancing recommendations made by the CDC, Department of Public Health, and Department of Education.
2. As mask fatigue may be a challenge for students in the residential component, students will not be required to wear a mask while living in the residential component.
3. Note that students who require personal assistance in the instructional and Living and Learning Centers settings will have that with the understanding that 6 foot distance is not possible. PPE will be required by staff and students to the extent appropriate and possible. Students/staff who have any symptoms or exhibit even one symptom of COVID-19 must either remain to return home following guidelines in this plan.

Remote Learning Model

Below are the considerations being made for operations and instruction for this learning model.

Instruction

1. Remote Learning Model Expectations:

- Remote instruction will be considered full instruction and will mirror on campus instruction as much as possible while considering each student’s ability to engage in mobile device “screen” time. Learning expectations for students will be similar to expectations for students participating in instruction and learning on campus.
 - Students will have specific times and dates for on-line instruction and will be expected to participate unless there are extenuating circumstances. GAB's attendance policies will apply to remote learning.
 - Parents/guardians choosing the remote learning model assume responsibility to facilitate learning at home and remain in touch with GAB staff regarding student progress.
 - Parents/guardians who choose the remote learning model for the first nine (9) weeks of school shall assume additional responsibility related to student learning including student attendance and participation in class. Parents/guardians will receive and acknowledge weekly lessons and assignments for children under 18 years of age.
 - Parents/guardians shall assure that students attend on-line sessions as designated by their child's schedule. Lack of attendance will be considered an absence. GAB's attendance policy will be applied to students who attend school remotely.
 - Parents/guardians shall receive and acknowledge progress reports from their child's teacher.
 - Parents/guardians shall remain in communication with the teacher or case managers for technical and other support as needed.
2. Staff will provide on-line instruction to address the goals in each student’s Individualized Education Program plan (IEP) and incorporate the Georgia Standards of Excellence.
 3. Staff will provide students in elementary and middle school and parents/guardians with student grade progress reports every four and a half (4 ½) weeks. IEP progress monitoring is reported according to IEPs for each student. Students in high school will receive a progress report every nine (9) weeks.
 4. Staff will communicate lessons and assignments to parents/guardians of students that are younger than 18 years old on a weekly basis, at minimum.
 5. Staff will communicate lessons and assignments to students that are 18 years old and older on a weekly basis, at minimum.
 6. Staff will provide regularly scheduled live video instruction to students unless a parent/guardian of a student younger than 18 opts out and would prefer assignments be mailed home.

Technology

1. The school will issue mobile learning devices (e.g., laptop or tablet) for use at home for students engaged in the remote learning model.
2. Parents/guardians of students younger than 18 years old must sign that they have received a mobile learning device to support remote learning and acknowledge that the mobile learning device is state issued property.
3. Students 18 years old or older must sign that they have received a mobile learning device to support remote learning and acknowledge that the mobile learning device is state issued property.

Student Supports

1. Staff will support the social and emotional needs of students through wellness checks, counseling, and positive behavior supports and intervention.

School Nutrition

1. The school will not provide breakfast or lunch to students engaged in the remote learning model.

Contacts

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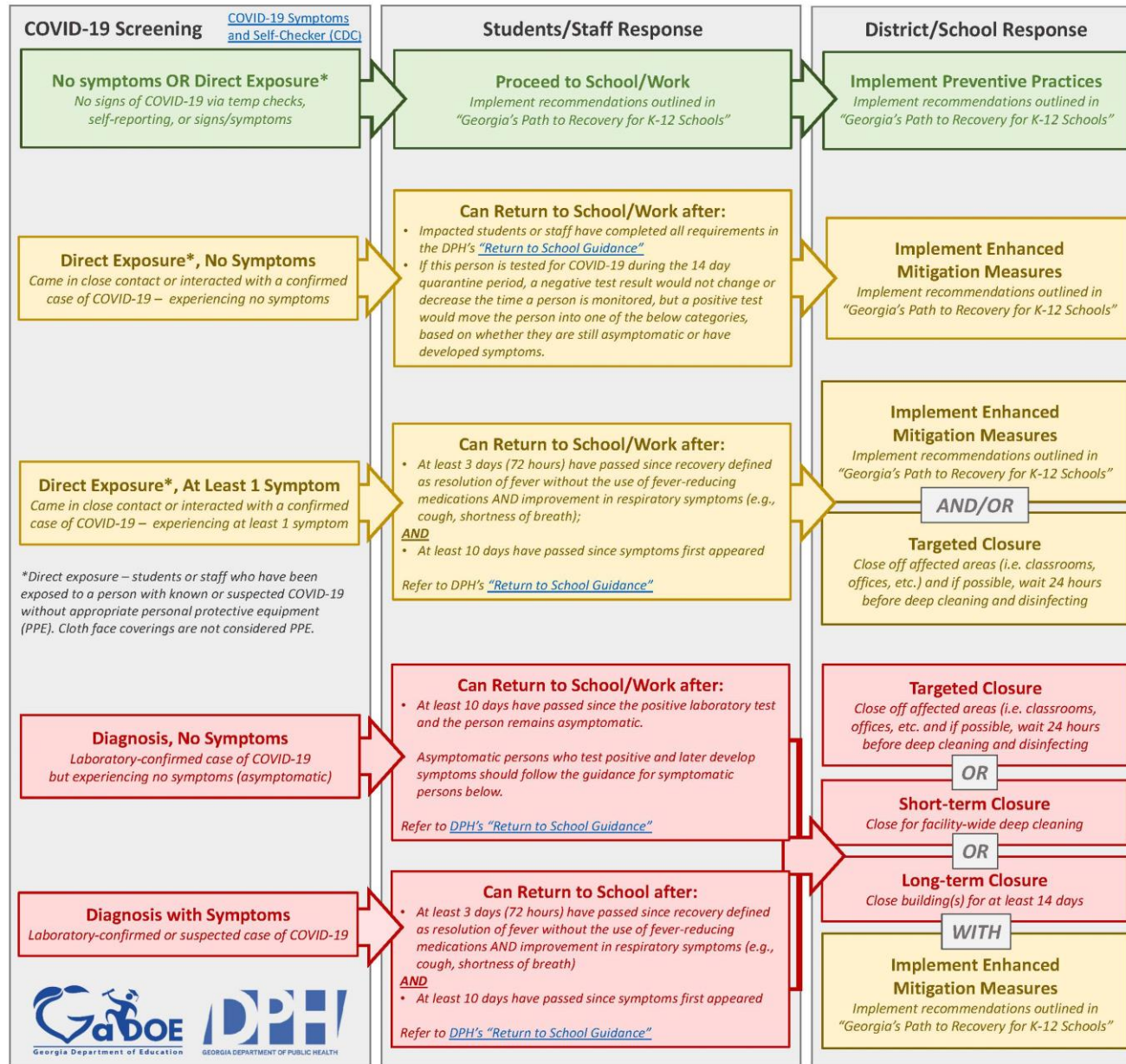
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COVID-19: Potential Exposure Protocols

- Staff and students that become ill at school will be sent home.
- Staff and students exposed to COVID-19 outside of school or become ill outside of school must inform Dr. Cindy Gibson, Superintendent, 478.751.6083 X 1110 or email at cgibson@doe.k12.ga.us.
- Schools will use tracing protocols (monitoring the interactions of staff and students on campus) to determine who may have come in contact with an individual that is ill.
- Staff and the parents/guardians of students that have been in contact with someone on campus that is ill will be informed.
- Any students that are potentially exposed to someone that is ill and are staying home may have access to instruction using the remote learning model.
- Any staff that are potentially exposed to someone that is ill and are staying home may be involved in teleworking with approval from Dr. Cindy Gibson, Superintendent. cgibson@doe.k12.ga.us 478.751.6083 X 1110
- Use the COVID-19 Decision Making Matrix on page eight (8) to determine what to do if any staff or students have COVID-19 symptoms or a positive COVID-19 test.
 - Each scenario includes a response protocol for communication, public health engagement, contact tracing, staff and/or student quarantine, cleaning, disinfecting, and recovery.
- Before staff and students that are ill or may have been exposed to COVID-19 come back on campus, they must complete a wellness check survey from the school. The form can be found on the school's website at www.gabmacon.org.

COVID-19 Decision Making Matrix



DPH DOES NOT recommend using a test-based strategy for returning to school for children or adults (2 negative tests at least 24 hours apart) after COVID-19 infection.* CDC has reported prolonged PCR positive test results without evidence of infectiousness. Although persons may have PCR-positive tests for up to 6 weeks, it remains unknown whether these PCR-positive results represent the presence of infectious virus. At this time, PCR positive specimens capable of producing disease have not been isolated more than 9 days after onset of illness.

More information about the science behind the symptom-based strategy for discontinuing isolation can be found [here](#).