

WHAT TO EXPECT THIS YEAR:

Important Information about our School Reopening Plan

Since the beginning of June, a Task Force of teachers, principal, and board members have been working diligently to provide a plan to safely and effectively educate the students of Grace Lutheran School (GLS). The plan was then shared with faculty, medical professionals, and a group of parents for feedback and refinement. The plan is based on important guidance from the Illinois School Board of Education (ISBE) and the Illinois Department of Public Health (IDPH).

In early July, we announced our plan to re-open for in-person learning. This document gives detail as to how we, at this point in time, plan to accomplish this task. Guidance has been changing on a weekly basis. **This is our plan as of July 24, 2020, but it could change at any time.** In all decisions we are committed to the health and safety of all students and adults in the building, while maintaining the level of excellence in Christian education that all have come to appreciate from Grace Lutheran School.

For any plan to succeed, we must take the approach that **we are all in this together**. Teachers and staff will have additional responsibilities. Parents must be honest about symptoms and keep students home who are sick at any level. Everyone must wear masks and do their best to maintain social distancing. This includes during after school pick-up and times away from school. Everyone must do their part for this plan to be successful.

This document is designed as an FAQ divided into three sections: Health & Safety, Infection Protocols, and Academics and Programming. With each answer, an * indicates it meets the criteria set forth by the ISBE and IDPH. A double ** indicates it exceeds the criteria set forth by the ISBE and IDPH.

If after reading this document, you have questions or concerns, please feel free to email gracehelp@graceriverforest.org and we will respond as quickly as possible to your query.

Principles of our Reopening Plan:



ALL STUDENTS

Our plan allows us to welcome back all students for full-day instruction.



BUILDING LAYOUT

In order to keep classes safely distant from one another, Grace Lutheran School is evaluating pick-up and drop off procedures and routes within the school building. Signage and tape on the floors will be used to assist clarity in traffic flow.



MASKS

All individuals over the age of two will be required to wear a mask. Masks may only be removed during designated activities, such as lunch and when outside if students remain physically distant.



TEMPERATURE CHECKS

Parents should take the temperatures of their children daily. Temperature checks will also occur as faculty, students and staff enter the school building every day.



INFECTION PROTOCOL

Our plan provides for clear guidance on how to address individuals with COVID-19 symptoms and/or positive COVID-19 tests.



VIRTUAL LEARNING OPTION

Families who are not ready to return to school will have a virtual learning option, with live stream classroom instruction throughout the school day.

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ)

HEALTH & SAFETY

Q: Will all students be allowed to return to school at the same time?

A: Yes, our plan allows for all students to return to GLS on our scheduled start dates.

Q: Will students be safe when school is reopened?

A: Safety is always our top priority at GLS, and this year it takes on a whole new dimension. In creating our reopening plan, we have studied closely the guidance from the ISBE and IDPH.

(See: www.isbe.net/Documents/Part-3-Transition-Planning-Phase-4.pdf)

Q: Will students attend school in the building 5 days a week?

A: To begin the school year, students will come to Grace on Monday, Tuesday, Thursday, and Friday. Each Wednesday, beginning September 2, students will learn remotely. We will offer an option in our building for families who don't have an adult available to supervise their children on Wednesdays. Contact Principal Koehne for details. **

Q: Will 6-foot distancing be maintained?

A: We have rearranged several classrooms so that desks in every classroom will be placed at a minimum of 6 feet apart in all directions. We will also put markings on floors at 6 foot intervals where students typically line up. **

Q: Should I take my child's temperature every day before school?

A: Yes. A fever is a key symptom of COVID-19. Parents should take their child's temperature every day before their child is taken to school. If your child has a temperature above 100.4°F (38°C), your child and any other students in the household must not come to school. You must contact your child's doctor and the school.

If your child(ren) do not have a fever, you will also need to complete an online form each morning, certifying your child is not showing other symptoms of COVID-19. For more information on the common symptoms of COVID-19 or how to handle potential illness of your child, please see the Infection Protocol section. *

Q: How will morning drop-off be handled?

A: This may change throughout the year, but to start the year, students who arrive before 7:45 will enter the main entrance on Bonnie Brae and report to the Extended Day Care room. Students arriving from 7:45-8:15 will enter one of 3-4 doors, assigned by grade level. Exact locations for each grade level are still to be determined. All students coming in after 8:15 will need to enter the main entrance. Students must wear a mask during arrival procedures.

Upon arrival, the temperature of each student and adult who works at GLS will be taken. Anyone with a temperature above 100.4°F (38°C) and anyone else living in the household will need to go home. Sometimes factors such as wearing a hat or riding in a warm car will affect a person's temperature. More than one temperature check will be administered before a student is sent home. In addition, any student who does not have a completed parent-certification stating they are COVID-19 symptom-free that morning will be withheld from class until that certification is completed.

Once cleared to go to class, students will clean their hands using hand sanitizer.

Q: How will afternoon pick-up be handled?

A: Again, this may change throughout the school year, but to begin the year students will exit from various locations. Students must wear a mask until inside a vehicle. Details on where students will exit and where families should park will be distributed closer to the start of school.

Q: Will students need to wear masks at school?

A: Yes. The directives from ISBE and IDPH state that all individuals over the age of two must wear a mask while in school, even if they are maintaining proper social distancing. The only exceptions are while eating or drinking, or playing an instrument that one must blow into. There is also an exception for individuals who have trouble breathing, but this must be accompanied by a physician's note stating this condition. *

Q: Can students remove their mask if inside for recess or PE?

A: No, everyone must wear a mask at all times while indoors except for the exceptions mentioned above. *

Q: Can students remove their mask if outside at school?

A: Yes, but only if they can maintain 6 foot social distancing. We will encourage teachers to take their class outside on occasion. If a teacher takes their class outside for instruction and students remain 6 feet apart, masks may be removed. Students will need to keep their masks on while playing on the playground. *

Q: Do I need to purchase masks for my child?

A: Yes, we are asking all parents to purchase masks for their child. Parents may decide to buy disposable or reusable masks. For disposable masks, each mask must be thrown away at the end of each school day, and parents should send plenty of extra masks to school with their child. For reusable masks, masks should be cleaned after each school day by hand or in a washing machine. Students should have one extra reusable mask at school. We suggest that you start soon having your child get accustomed to wearing a mask inside. First for 30 minutes, then 60, and continue increasing. It takes time to feel comfortable wearing a mask for extended periods of time.

A supply of masks will be available at school on an as-needed basis.

Q: Can face shields be used instead of masks?

A: No. Face shields cannot be used instead of masks, as per directives from the IDPH. *

Q: What will be the hand-hygiene procedures?

A: Students and adults will wash their hands with soap and water or hand sanitizer as they enter the building at the beginning of the day, and every time they enter or leave their classroom. **

Q: Will students be required to physically distance at school?

A: Regulations from the ISBE and IDPH call for students to be 6 feet apart whenever possible, but do not mandate 6 foot distancing at all times. We will have all student desks at 6 foot distancing in every classroom. We are rearranging several classrooms to accomplish this. *

There will be marks on the floor to indicate 6 foot distancing where students typically line up, such as in the classroom before leaving for recess, and at bottle filling stations. *

Teachers can walk around their classroom to monitor student classwork. When students are around other classes, they need to remain at least 6 feet apart. *

Q: Will students use drinking fountains?

A: No. We now have 5 bottle filling stations in the school. All other drinking fountains in the school will be turned off. Students need to bring a refillable water bottle to school to use throughout the day. Water bottles must be taken home and washed each day. **

Q: What are the procedures for bathroom usage?

A: Procedures for bathroom usage are still being worked on and will be shared when completed.

Q: What does the plan say about safety and cleanliness requirements for the school building?

A: The building will be thoroughly cleaned each day with high traffic areas cleaned more than once a day. Windows should be open, and the HVAC system running at all times to maximize air flow. We are also enhancing the existing HVAC system with an air purification system. As often as practical, specials teachers will come to homerooms rather than students traveling to shared rooms. If a room (ex: music room) is used by more than one class, an electro-static sprayer will be used to disinfect the room after each use. 7th and 8th grade will not switch rooms for core subjects. **

Q: How will lunch take place when school reopens?

A: Students will eat lunch in their classroom instead of their unit common room. Teachers may also decide to take their class outside for lunch.

Q: Will extended day care (before and after school) be available this year?

A: Yes. However parents will be required to sign-up for extended care during the prior week so that proper plans can be made for room usage and staffing. All of the safety procedures for the school day (including masks and social distancing) will be maintained during extended day care.

Q: Is it okay for my family to travel out of town during the COVID-19 pandemic?

A: We recommend that you not travel out of town during the current pandemic. However, if travel is necessary, we encourage you to become familiar with the IDPH's Travel Guideline. If you or a member of your household travels to another country, or a state identified by Cook County as having a surge in COVID-19 cases, your children will need to remain at home for 14 days or provide a negative COVID-19 test result before returning to school. **

Q: What do I do if I do not feel safe sending my child back to school?

A: We have taken every step to ensure the safety of students at our school. However, we understand that some families still may not wish to return. We will be implementing a system that will live stream classes through a private Zoom feed for students to participate from home. Students will be able to view instruction and even ask questions through the Zoom feed. All of the same homework will be expected of students learning from home. Attendance for each course will be mandatory and at the time it takes place in school.

This option may not include some courses (such as art or music) where materials will not be available at home. Families who choose this option will need to contact the school office and commit to remote instruction in four week intervals. Families who wish to choose this option to start the school year must notify the school by August 7 so that proper planning can take place. Once the school year begins, families will be contacted one week prior for their decision on the upcoming interval. **

INFECTION PROTOCOLS

Q: What are the symptoms of COVID-19?

A: The Centers for Disease Control (CDC) has identified several symptoms of COVID-19, including a fever (above 100.4 F), sore throat, coughing, nausea, headache, muscle aches, loss of taste or smell, runny nose, fatigue, diarrhea, and difficulty breathing.

Q: What should I do if my child has symptoms of COVID-19?

A: If your child shows symptoms of COVID-19, you must contact your doctor. Your doctor may ask that your child participate in a COVID-19 test. You must alert the school's main office and do not send your child to school.

If the symptoms occur during the school day, your child will be immediately referred to the office and will wait in a quarantine room. You will be contacted to pick your child up from school.

Q: My child had COVID-19-like symptoms. When can he/she return to school?

A: If your child does not have COVID-19, but another illness, you must keep your child home until your child is symptom free for at least 24 hours. We will require you to provide a negative COVID-19 test and/or a doctor's note before your child can return to school.

Q: What should I do if my child tests positive for COVID-19?

A: You must immediately contact your doctor for additional instructions. You must also contact the school office. You may not send your child to school.

Q: When can a student return to school after receiving a positive COVID-19 test?

A: If a student tests positive for COVID-19 or does not seek medical attention, students must isolate and not return to school until they have met the CDC's criteria to discontinue home isolation. This includes:

- 72 hours without a fever over 100.4 F.
- At least 14 days have passed since symptoms first appeared.

Q: What should I do if a member of my household (who is not my child) tests positive for COVID-19?

A: You must immediately contact the school's main office and keep your child home for at least 14 days. If your family member recovers from COVID-19 (through meeting the criteria in the previous question) AND your child shows no COVID-19 symptoms for the 14-day period, your child may return to school.

Q: What happens if my child's teacher tests positive for COVID-19?

A: Should any employee have COVID-19 symptoms or tests positive for COVID-19, we will follow the same protocols used for students (see above). If your child's teacher becomes sick and is unable to work, a substitute teacher will be used.

If your child's teacher tests positive for COVID-19, the entire class (and their siblings) will move into quarantine for 14 days.

Q: What happens if another student in my child's class tests positive for COVID-19?

A: We will make all parents aware that a student has tested positive for COVID-19. All students in the class (and other students in their household) will move into quarantine for 14 days. A student may return earlier if a negative COVID-19 test can be provided. If more than one student tests positive for COVID-19, it is likely the entire class will be sent home for at least 14 days. Students will continue to learn through our live stream model.

Q: Could my child's school building be closed down due to COVID-19 this year?

A: We will do our best to ensure a safe and healthy environment in the coming year. However, if numerous cases appear in the school, resulting in multiple classes going into quarantine, we may need to close the building and transition all students to virtual learning for a time. Parents will be updated regularly should that need arise.

ACADEMICS & PROGRAMMING

Q: Will my child's classroom look different?

A: Yes. All extra furniture has been removed from classrooms so that desks can be distanced as much as possible. All desks will be facing one direction, and not in groups, to promote the safest environment. *

Q: Will students share school supplies?

A: No. Students will have individual supply kits for both school supplies and non-digital manipulatives. Exceptions may be made for activities outdoors (such as outdoor PE classes and recess). This equipment will be wiped down after every use. *

Q: Will students share computers?

A: No. We are purchasing enough devices so that each student in SK-2nd grade will have a specific iPad assigned only to them, and each student in Grades 3-8 will have a specific laptop assigned only to them. Students in Grades 7-8 will continue to be the only ones who will take their laptop home. **

Q: What will music education look like?

A: Current research shows that singing increases the risk for virus spread. To begin the year, students will not be singing. Instead, music classes will incorporate general music education lessons.

Q: Will Grace offer band and orchestra this year? If so, how will that look?

A: At this point, a decision on band instruction from Walther and orchestra led by Ms. Hedlund has not been determined.

Q: I have a child in PK or JK. Is high-quality learning possible?

A: Yes. We are working closely with our early education teachers to continue to provide the best possible quality of instruction in preschool. While health and safety requirements are in place, our teachers will continue to work hard in the coming year to ensure your child grows intellectually, emotionally, and spiritually.

Q: Will students in Grades 5-8 change into PE clothes?

A: No. The locker rooms will be locked at all times. **

Q: Last spring all grades on the report card were P for Pass. Will that continue to be the case?

A: No. The guidance from the ISBE has changed on this. Grading of assignments and assessments will return to normal. At grade levels where percentages were displayed on Report Cards, this will return.

Q: Will MAP testing resume?

A: Yes. We will conduct MAP testing in Grades 2-8 at the three typical times throughout the school year.

Q: Will students participate in field trips?

A: Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, students will not leave the school for field trips, but when possible will attend them virtually. Guest speakers will be done virtually or go through the same entry requirements as all others. *

Q: How will parent-teacher conferences work?

A: Parent-Teacher conferences and other similar meetings such as Curriculum Night will take place virtually. *

Q: Will teachers ever take students outside for class?

A: Yes. We have permission from the River Forest Park District to use Priory Park, and from Concordia University to use places on their property for instruction. Per IDPH guidelines, if outside and at 6 foot distancing, students may take off their masks. *

Q: Will there be all-school assemblies in the gym this year?

A: No. The ISBE and IDPH guidelines have a limit of 50 people in any one space inside the building. If outside, larger groups may gather if there is at least 30 feet of spacing in between each group of 50. *

Q: Will there be GPO Events or Family Fun Fridays at Grace this year?

A: We will not be hosting these types of events in the building at Grace until further notice.

Q: How will chapel work?

A: No more than 2 classes will be able to participate in the church for chapel, sitting at proper social distancing. Anyone not in the church will participate through live stream. *

Q: Will there be after school athletic teams this year?

A: This has not been determined yet. The Northwest Suburban Lutheran Conference of which we are a member, and the Lutheran Sports Association (state tournaments) will follow guidance from the Illinois High School Association when making decisions about competitions. We have heard that the National Lutheran School Cross-Country Meet has been cancelled for this fall.

Q: Will this be a good school year?

A: Absolutely! It will be a very different looking school year than we are used to, but we are confident all of our students will grow academically, socially, and spiritually. We will adjust as new situations arise. In all situations, the physical and social-emotional wellness of our students will be the priority.