



Gary Community School Corporation
Strong. Resilient. Built for Education.

The Gary Community School Corporation (GCSC) COVID-19 protocols for the 2021–22 school year were created based on updated guidance from the Indiana State Department Health (ISDH) and the Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC).

These protocols are subject to change based on new guidance from the health departments/organizations listed above.

Face Masks

GCSC requires all students in grades PreK-12, staff, contractors, and visitors to wear a face mask during all in person class instruction time and when mask-wearing requirements or recommendations will not cause a health risk.

*Masks are required on GCSC buses for all students, staff, and drivers, regardless of vaccination status. This is a federal Transportation Security Administration (TSA) Mandate.

- *Optional for staff and students when outside. Masks are required only if socially distancing is not possible.

Contact Information

- **All students must have valid and current means of contact information for staff to always reach parents or designated guardians on file with their schools.**
 - Contact information must be updated regularly and whenever there is a change (new phone number, change of address, new authorized adult etc.

- o Parents must maintain a plan and the resources necessary to have an ill child picked up by an authorized adult, within one (1) hour of being contacted by GCSC personnel.
- o Failure to do so repeatedly without correction may be viewed as “child endangerment” and may be referred to Indiana Children and Family Services for investigation.

Contract Tracing/Quarantine

The GCSC district nurses will track positive cases throughout the district and schools will notify families and staff of any positive cases at their location.

- When both people are masked, close contact is when an individual is within 3 feet of a positive case for more than 15 minutes. Families will be notified to monitor for symptoms for 14 days. Close contacts must quarantine only if they have or develop symptoms of COVID-19. Contact tracing will be followed for those who have been in close contact with anyone who tests positive for COVID-19. Close contact is defined as being within 3 feet of a person who tested positive for COVID-19 for a total of 15 minutes or more in a 24-hour period.
- Individuals who test positive for COVID-19 must stay home 10 days following the onset of symptoms or a positive test result and must be 24 hours fever free without fever reducing medications and symptoms improved before returning from isolation.
- Symptomatic staff or students without a positive exposure to COVID will require a negative PCR test or a release from a medical provider to return.
- Seating charts will be maintained in all classrooms, cafeterias, and school buses so that contact tracing can be conducted.
- COVID-19 symptoms must be monitored at home for students and staff. Those displaying symptoms must remain at home.

Return to School After Isolation/Quarantine

- Return to School After Exclusion
 - o Once a student is excluded from the school environment and has a positive test for COVID -19, they may return if they satisfy the recommendations of the CDC (Center for Disease Control). Currently those guidelines are:

- They have not had:
 - a fever for at least 24 hours (that is a full day of no fever without the use of medicine that reduces fevers); **and**
 - Other symptoms have improved (for example, no longer has shortness of breath and coughing or other symptoms have improved); **and**
 - At least 10 calendar days have passed since symptoms first appeared: **or**
 - The individual has tested negative and has no fever for at least 24 hours without use of fever reducing medication; **or**
 - Have been released by a healthcare provider.
- Excluded students are not allowed to return to the building before speaking with the School Nurse (Medical exclusion days are not counted against a student's attendance or truancy)
- **Even without symptoms, the district/school may exclude a student from the school building and recommend that they self-quarantine for 10 calendar days if:**
 - a student is in close contact to a household member that tested positive for COVID-19.
 - has someone in their home being tested for COVID-19, or
 - has recently traveled from somewhere considered to be a “hot spot” by the CDC.

COVID-19 Symptoms Checklist

The following are the COVID-19 symptoms parents and staff should check each morning before attending school or work. Those who have these symptoms should stay home.

- Fever above 100.4
- Chills
- Cough
- Shortness of Breath
- Fatigue
- Muscle/Body Aches
- Headache

- Loss of Taste/Smell
- Sore Throat
- Sinus Congestion

Isolation Room Protocols

Students and staff may become ill and display signs of infection that are consistent with COVID-19 while at school. When this happens, if the student or staff are unable to leave school immediately, they will need to be placed in a designated isolation area that is away from other staff and students.

A space is to be set aside to monitor students, staff, or support personnel who develop or are sent to school with a suspected airborne infectious disease or condition. This room will be monitored by the school nurse. In the nurse's absence or incapacitation, secondary personnel as designated by the school principal will be trained to monitor occupants for distress, and how to respond, enter, exit and if necessary, safely aid assistance to people isolated as described.

Although the isolation room protocols are geared to respond to Covid-19 safety criteria, any patient that the nurse deems as possibly infectious (primarily through airborne particles, such as the flu, measles etc.) may be placed in isolation until appropriate transportation out of the school is arranged.

The isolation room is to be a designated space monitored either by direct line of sight or through electronic audio and visual monitoring. The space must be a minimum of 10'X10' (preferably larger) and separated from routine patient population and traffic. It will be equipped to a minimum:

Equipment List:

- 1 Examination room
 - 2 Examination Benches / Beds
- 1 HEPA or similar air filtration system
 - 1 Supply Cart
 - 1 Video Monitor
 - 1 Room partition/ Privacy screens

1 Examination Stool / rolling chair
1 trash bin
1 red bag trash bin
1 Emesis kit
2 Floor Mats

Supply List:

1 No Touch Thermometer
1 case barrier pads (chucs)
Hand Sanitizer
Pillows
Blankets
1 Box of gloves
3 sets of PPE
1 Cooling blanket
Facial tissue
Disposable towels
Disposable masks

When isolation room is occupied by more than one patient, a room divider or screen is to be installed between patients and each patient is to have, and be able to maintain, at least 6 feet of separation while on their cot. Mask / facial coverings are to be worn by all occupants as tolerated.

Nursing personnel attending to a child's needs while in isolation will wear an N95 level or better particulate mask, eye covering/facial barrier and gloves. Additional PPE will be donned as deemed appropriate based on evaluated risk factors. No one other than the nurse or principal appointed, and trained nursing support designee are to enter an occupied Isolation Room.

NURSE, designated isolation room attendance

PRINCIPAL when nurse is not available

ASST. PRINCIPAL when nurse is not available

DEAN when nurse is not available

SECURITY when nurse is not available

Cleaning Procedures

An aerosol disinfectant and hard surface cleaner / disinfectants are to be used immediately after patient discharge by nursing personnel to clean and sanitize area. In addition, the room is to be thoroughly cleaned and disinfected daily by maintenance staff.

Anyone coming in direct, extended contact with the student must have gloves, disposable facial mask, and gown. If just opening the door to instruct that parent has arrived, then a facial mask is adequate.

After touching, and/or prolonged contact in the area with the isolated patient, nursing staff members should discard gown, dispose of mask and gloves in a designated trash can and wash hands with soap and water, and sanitize hard and frequently touched surfaces. Maintenance must be notified and requested by nursing to clean and disinfect any wet or grossly contaminated surfaces in the isolation room, and the affected student/staff space in the general education classrooms at least daily (e.g. the specific student's desk in their general education room)

Cleaning/Sanitizing/Hygiene & PPE

- All high-touch surfaces will be cleaned and sanitized frequently in school and office buildings and on buses.
- Handwashing as much as possible
 - Start of school day
 - Before eating
 - After using washroom
 - After blowing nose, coughing, or sneezing

- o After using shared equipment
- o Before and after recess
- Hand sanitizer will continue to be available.
- GCSC will stock disposable masks for *emergency use only*. Students are required to wear a mask to school and on the bus every day.
- Proper hand washing, cough and sneeze protocols are required.
- Water fountain will be closed. GCSC will provide water bottles or alternate water methods and have them available in all schools.

Reporting Requirements

Parents must notify the school if the student has been exposed to a person who has tested positive for COVID-19, is exhibiting any signs and symptoms of COVID-19 or has tested positive for COVID-19. Please call the school and ask for the school nurse, and if not available, ask for an administrator. For individuals that are confirmed positive (**through a copy of the positive report provided to the school if the positive individual is a student or staff member at GCSC**), the parent will be informed that the local health department will be notified and will be contacting them.

When a **confirmed** positive COVID-19 case is reported to the school, the nurse, or in the absence of the nurse the school administrator, will notify GCSC Human Resources and the nurse will notify Gary Health Department.



Once schools receive a notice from a parent or staff member that they have tested positive for COVID-19, the school must immediately contact the Gary Health Department. Schools should no longer report cases of COVID-19 to the Indiana Department of Education (IDOE).

Communication Process

School nurses, and in their absence an administrator, will utilize the current form of “Notice of Suspected Contagious or Infectious Disease” and complete the form

regarding the suspected COVID-19 symptoms and close contacts. The form shall be sent home with the student with a follow up email or phone call to the parent or guardian. The form shall include the “Return to School after Exclusion” which is a copy of the following information:

- Return to School After Exclusion
 - Once a student is excluded from the school environment and had a positive test for COVID -19, they may return if they satisfy the recommendations of the CDC. Currently those guidelines are:
 - They have not had a fever for at least 24 hours (that is a full day of no fever without the use of medicine that reduces fevers); **and**
 - Other symptoms have improved (for example, no longer has shortness of breath and coughing or other symptoms have improved); **and**
 - At least 10 calendar days have passed since symptoms first appeared: **or**
 - The individual has tested negative and has no fever for at least 24 hours without use of fever reducing medication; **or**
 - Have been released by a healthcare provider.
 - **Parents: Please call your child’s school nurse prior to sending your child back after the exclusion process.**

For students that are not considered close contacts, the Gary Community School Corporation Human Resources Department will send an email or robo-call to families in the respective schools, when there is a confirmed, positive case.

Social Distancing — Classrooms/Cafeterias/Buses

An individual is a close contact if UNVACCINATED and meets one of the following:

- If anyone in the classroom is unmasked and individual is within 6 feet of a person who has tested positive for COVID-19 for a total of 15 minutes or more within a 24-hour period

- If all individuals are masked in the classroom, an individual is a close contact only if fewer than 3 feet from the person who tested positive for COVID-19 for a total of 15 minutes or more in a 24-hour period
- In all other areas of the school environment, any unvaccinated individuals within 6 feet of a person diagnosed with COVID-19 for a total of 15 minutes or more in a 24-hour period
 - Schools will continue to cohort students as much as possible and practice social distancing of 3 feet when possible.
 - Seating charts will be maintained in classes, during lunch periods, and on buses for contact tracing.
 - Students will be able to eat in school cafeterias but will have assigned seating. Masks are not required for students while eating and drinking.

Student Quarantines & Learning

- Students who must quarantine due to COVID-19 will receive classwork from their individual teachers.
- While in quarantine, students are expected to complete classwork via their school-issued device.

Visitors & Volunteers

- Masks are required for all visitors — parents/guardians, community partners, volunteers — regardless of vaccination status while indoors. If outdoors, masks are required only if socially distancing is not possible.
- Visitors/Volunteers will be asked to conduct a symptom check before entering a school building.
- Visitors/Volunteers will not be permitted to eat with students/staff during breakfast or lunch.

PE & Recess

- Students and staff can remove masks during active play outdoors — regardless of vaccination status — if socially distanced.
- During inside recess and PE, students are required to wear their masks.

Athletics & Extracurriculars

- Student athletes are not required to wear masks during practice and games.
- Band, orchestra, and choir groups must limit the duration of practice and performance to no more than 45 minutes.
- Bands and orchestras must be socially distanced between string and percussion instruments (with face masks if not vaccinated), and wind instruments (without masks).
- Choirs must maintain social distancing and wear face masks.
- Public attendance at games and extracurricular performances is allowed. GCSC will consider these public events and follow GHD guidance of asking attendees to wear masks.

Testing/Vaccination

- Currently for ages 12 and older, receiving the COVID-19 vaccine is the best way to protect yourself and others from the virus.
- COVID-vaccine sites are conveniently located throughout the community.
- GCSC will continue to host vaccination clinics throughout the school year. Dates, times, and locations will be provided on the district website and via district communication to families and staff.

Dear (name of school) parents:

This letter is for informational purposes only. If you and your student are **not** contacted individually by the school nurse or administrator, we do **not** believe that you are affected by this incident.

This call is to inform you that there has been a confirmed case of COVID among our in-person learning students. Due to our isolation protocols, very few students were in close contact with this student at school. GCSC is not required to quarantine close contacts who are asymptomatic as long as masks are required. We are working closely with the health department, education, and nursing staff to identify any children or staff who may have been in close contact with the affected student and their families.

Any students and their families that are determined to be at risk will be contacted directly by Health Department and GCSC staff and given specific instructions.

However, we ask that all our GCSC families continue to closely monitor our student's health and safety. Please note any changes in your child's health and seek medical attention as needed. Free COVID testing and health screening services are available through the Gary Health Department and other area providers.

Please do not send your child to school if they are not feeling well or have been around other family members who are ill. Thank you for your calm cooperation, remember "We're All in This Together."