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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 no longer requires masks, at school or on the bus. Individuals may continue to wear a mask if they choose.

## **Contract Tracing/Quarantine**

Gary schools no longer will need to quarantine students who are exposed to a positive COVID-19 case and asymptomatic, regardless of vaccination status or whether the school requires masks.

- Gary schools no longer will be required to conduct contact tracing or report positive cases to IDOH.
- Individuals who test positive for COVID-19 should isolate for five days and may return on Day 6 if they have been fever-free for 24 hours without the use of medication so long as symptoms are improving, according to guidance from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.
- Individuals should wear a mask through Day 10 any time they are around others inside their homes or in public.

## **Return to School After Isolation/Quarantine**

- Individuals who test positive for COVID-19 should isolate for five days and may return on Day 6 if they have been fever-free for 24 hours without the



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use of medication so long as symptoms are improving, according to guidance from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

- Individuals should wear a mask through Day 10 any time they are around others inside their homes or in public.

## **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



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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,



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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)



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## **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
  - After using shared equipment
  - Before and after recess
- Hand sanitizer will continue to be available.
- GCSC will stock disposable masks for emergency use only.
- 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**

Gary schools are expected to continue assisting local health departments with notification in the event of an outbreak or cluster and are encouraged to continue to share information with families when a case is identified so parents can monitor their children for symptoms.

Gary schools will still use other strategies to keep our students and staff as safe as possible, including but not limited to:

- Isolate children who have tested positive and/or symptomatic
- Regular cleaning of all learning spaces
- Hand sanitizer in various locations and regular hand washing
- Upgraded air filtration systems and/or assessment of HVAC



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## **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 5 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.**



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## **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**

- 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.

## **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. Due to GCSC's universal mask policy, close contacts will no



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longer be reported to the Indiana State Department of Health (ISDH) per their policies. 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."