



Grace Christian Academy

# Healthy School Plan 2021-22

The safety and health of the Grace Christian Academy (GCA) scholars, teachers, staff, and families are of utmost importance. Accordingly, GCA will adhere to the following health and safety procedures as school begins on August 25. These procedures may be adjusted, as necessary, as the school year progresses.

A major emphasis in GCA's Healthy School Plan is prevention. The idea is, "If no sick people come into the building, then the likelihood of anyone else getting sick is minimized." As you read through GCA's Healthy School Plan, you will note that the Board of Christian Education and GCA's teachers and staff take this strategy very seriously. We hope and pray that you, the reader of this Plan, do as well. If all of us *work together as the GCA Family* and *do the best that we can to adhere to the following procedures*, our hope is that GCA will be able to remain open throughout the 21-22 school year for in-person classes.

## Attendance

Each scholar must attend in-person classes every day that GCA is in session for in-person classes pending the results of the scholar's at-home and at-school health screening and temperature check. **GCA will not provide distance learning while in-person classes are meeting.** If a scholar misses in-person school for any reason, that scholar will be provided his/her assignments and expected to complete those assignments according to the requirements outlined in the GCA Handbook.

## At-Home Health Screenings

The parent/guardian of each scholar will complete and submit (electronically) a health screening—including a temperature check—for each scholar every school day. For those making use of Beforecare, this screening will need to be submitted by 6:30 a.m. every day that Beforecare is utilized. For those beginning school at 8:00 a.m., this screening will need to be submitted by 7:30 a.m. If a scholar has a temperature of 100.4 degrees Fahrenheit or above, or is not feeling well in any way, that scholar should remain home until the scholar is free of fever (without medication) for at least 24 hours and is feeling well.

## Daily Health Screening of Scholars

Each school day, every scholar will undergo a temperature check and health screening (will be asked questions about the scholar's wellness) before the scholar is allowed to enter the GCA facility. Canopies will be set up on the sidewalk leading into the entrance of GCA so that health screenings can occur under cover during inclement weather. If a scholar has a temperature of 100.4 degrees Fahrenheit or above, that scholar will not be allowed to enter the GCA facility. If a scholar does not pass the health screening or temperature check, that scholar will immediately be isolated from others, the scholar's parent/guardian contacted, and a request made that the scholar be picked up from GCA as soon as possible.

In order for a scholar to return to GCA after missing school because of illness, GCA will require a note from a health care professional before they can return to school. However, if your child's symptoms are caused by

diagnosed seasonal allergies or other diagnosed causes, please talk to Pastor Wattles or Julie Crain before sending them to school.

## **Daily Health Screenings of All Grace Staff, Teachers, and Ministers**

Each school day, before entering Grace's facility, every Grace staff member, teacher, and minister who enters the building will need to complete—and pass—a health screening including a temperature check.

## **Drop-off Procedure**

Scholars will enter GCA's facility through the "flagpole entrance." Parents/guardians will not be allowed to accompany their scholars into GCA's facility. Scholars will be required to wear face coverings when entering the facility.

GCA recognizes that K4-K5 scholars may need more assistance to enter Grace's facility at the start of the school day. Because of that, for the first three days of the school year, K4-K5 drop-off time will be 8:00-8:30 a.m. During this period of the school year, K4-K5 parents/guardians may accompany their scholars into the K4-K5 classrooms, if necessary. K4-K5 parents must pass a health screening, including a temperature check, before entering the facility. K4-K5 parents/guardians must exit the facility by 8:30 a.m.

Any scholar arriving at GCA after 8:00 a.m. (or after 8:30 a.m. for K4-K5 scholars) must enter the facility through the "glass doors entrance." Scholars entering at these times must also complete, and pass, a health screening including a temperature check.

## **Pick-up Procedure**

Scholars will be dismissed from their classrooms at pick-up time (3:30 p.m.). Arriving cars will be announced via walkie talkie to each classroom. Parents/guardians picking up scholars from Aftercare will use the buzzer at the "parking lot glass doors" to announce the name of the scholar being picked up. That scholar will meet the parent/guardian at the door. Parents/guardians will not be allowed into the facility at pick-up.

## **Parent/Guardian Visits to GCA**

GCA recognizes that there will be times when a parent/guardian needs to visit GCA in person (meet with the scholar's teacher, talk with office staff, etc.). In order for a parent/guardian to enter GCA, the parent/guardian will need to undergo a temperature check and health screening. Parents/guardians who have a 100.4 degree Fahrenheit temperature or above, or do not pass the health screening (they are not feeling well), will not be allowed to enter GCA's facility.

## **Face Covering Policy**

All adults (parents, caretakers, teachers, staff) and scholars will be required to wear face coverings (face masks or face shields) while inside GCA. This includes all drop-offs and pick-ups at GCA. The exception to this policy is when it is medically unsafe for a scholar to wear a face covering. A letter from the scholar's physician to verify this condition will need to be provided prior to the first day of school. This requirement for face coverings follows the Virginia Health Commissioner's most recent mandate that all individuals wear face coverings while indoors at all Virginia public and private schools.

What does this mean?

Grace scholars will be required to wear face coverings while moving around Grace's facility. This will be the case when scholars are walking from one place to another inside the GCA facility. Because each scholar's desk

has an acrylic sneeze guard (see picture below), scholars will not be required to wear face coverings while seated at their desks. However, if there is close interaction between a scholar and another scholar, teacher, or staff member, both the scholar and the other person (scholar, teacher, staff member) will be required to wear a face covering.

Said another way, when a scholar is seated at his/her desk, the face covering may be removed. If a scholar gets up from his/her desk, a face covering must be worn.

## **Scholars and/or Immediate Family Members Who Have Traveled out of the Washington, D.C. Metro Area or Internationally during the Month of August—or at Any Time during the School Year**

If a scholar or the immediate family member of a scholar has traveled out of the Washington, D.C. metro area or internationally during the month of August (before school starts), or at any time during the school year, that scholar's parent/guardian is required to speak with Julie Crain before the scholar is allowed to return to GCA. The scholar may be required to self-isolate for up to 14 days or provide a negative COVID test before entering GCA. If this occurs during the school year, the scholar's teacher will provide that scholar with homework assignments while the scholar is absent from in-person classes at GCA.

## **What if a scholar or faculty member gets sick?**

GCA's Healthy School Plan places an emphasis on preventative strategies. If a scholar or staff member becomes ill during the school day (with COVID-like symptoms or otherwise), the scholar will be moved to a safe, isolated place. The scholar's parent(s)/guardian will be contacted. The parent(s)/guardian is required to pick up the scholar as soon as possible. If a teacher or staff member becomes ill during the school day, that teacher or staff member is required to leave the GCA facility as soon as possible.

We strongly recommend having the scholar and their siblings tested for the virus immediately and isolate at home until the results are available. If a scholar or faculty member has a confirmed case, GCA will work closely with local public health authorities on case management and specific recommendations based on the unique needs of every case. For student cases, GCA may assist the Fairfax County Health Department with contact tracing. **IF YOUR CHILD HAS A POSITIVE RESULT PLEASE CALL GCA AS SOON AS POSSIBLE.**

In the event of a scholar, teacher, or staff member at GCA testing positive for COVID, the school will work closely with, and follow, the directives given by the Fairfax County Health Department regarding handling the case and how such an occurrence may affect the operations of GCA. GCA will use its own best judgment regarding a certain situation if specific guidance is not given by the Fairfax County Health Department.

## **Beforecare**

Beforecare will begin at 7:00 a.m. each day that GCA is holding in-person classes. At-home health screenings are to be received at GCA by 6:30 a.m. each school day, otherwise the scholar will not be allowed to enter Beforecare. A scholar must also pass the health screening at GCA before the scholar is allowed to enter GCA's facility. Based on the number of scholars in Beforecare, more than one room in GCA's facility may be used for this purpose. This will be done so that appropriate social distancing can be maintained.

## **Aftercare and Homework Club**

Aftercare and Homework Club will begin at 3:45 a.m. each day that GCA is holding in-person classes. The charge for Aftercare and Homework Club will be \$7 per hour. Scholars must be picked up from Aftercare and Homework Club by 6:00 p.m. The late charge is \$1.00 for every minute the scholar stays after 6:00 p.m.

## School Health and Safety

In order to facilitate the health and safety of the scholars, scholars' families, teachers, staff, and the community at large, GCA has taken the following actions:

- All bathroom faucets operate via “no touch” technology
- All hand towel dispensers operate via “no touch” technology
- A storage container on Grace’s property houses all non-essential classroom items so that maximum space is available in all the classrooms to achieve appropriate social distancing of student seating
- Sneeze guards have been installed on all scholars’ desks
- A large tent (30’ x 30’) will be erected on Grace’s parking lot. This will be used as an outdoor learning space.
- Each classroom has been equipped with a HEPA air sanitizer.

Classroom doors will be opened and closed by only the teachers.

When scholars need to move about outside their classrooms, they will do so in single file lines and with appropriate social distancing.

Each time a scholar, teacher, staff member, or parent enters a GCA classroom, that individual will be required to use hand sanitizer. Containers of hand sanitizer will be located at the entrance to each classroom. Frequent handwashing by all is encouraged. At the beginning of the school year, teachers will take significant time to emphasize and teach appropriate handwashing and social distancing.

All the scholars’ seats (desks or tables) will be outfitted with sneeze guards such as the one pictured below. This is being done for two reasons: one, for the sake of the health of all; and two, in order to provide the scholars breaks from having to wear face coverings for the entire school day.



## Facility Cleaning

Frequently touched surfaces and bathrooms in GCA’s entire facility will be disinfected multiple times during each school day. The professional cleaning service that cleans GCA’s facility will do an extensive cleaning of GCA’s facility at the conclusion of each school day. The disinfectant used by the cleaning service is approved by the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) for killing coronavirus and is safe for use around children.

## **Lunch**

All scholars will eat lunches in their classrooms. Monday Hot Lunch will be provided starting on September 13. As in years past, Wednesday Subway Sandwich lunches may be purchased for delivery to GCA for our scholars. At the beginning of the school year a sign-up form for Subway lunches will be provided to all families so that those who wish to purchase Wednesday Subway lunches for their scholars may do so. The cost of the Subway lunches will be listed on the sign-up form.

## **Parent Health & Safety Covenant**

Parents of GCA scholars will be asked to sign a covenant stating that they understand GCA's Healthy School Plan and the health and safety procedures that will be implemented during the 21-22 school year; and that, as a part of the GCA family, they will follow these procedures to the best of their ability for the purpose of the health and safety of all concerned. This covenant must be signed before the start of school on August 25.

## **Teachers & Staff Health and Safety Covenant**

Teachers and staff of GCA will be asked to sign a covenant stating that they understand GCA's Reopening Plan and the health and safety procedures that will be implemented during the 21-22 school year; and that, as a part of the GCA family, they will follow these procedures to the best of their ability for the purpose of the health and safety of all concerned. This covenant must be signed before the start of school on August 25.

## **Recess and Physical Education Class (PE)**

Recess and PE will take place outside as much as possible. If there is inclement weather and scholars can not go outside for recess or PE, the scholars will remain in their classrooms and do appropriate indoor activities (no physical activity).

## **Modified Activities and Events for the 1<sup>st</sup> Semester of the 21-22 School Year**

On account of COVID, the following modifications will be implemented to GCA's usual curriculum, events, and activities:

- Field trips will be attempted. That means that if the location of the field trip (e.g., the Kennedy Center) allows GCA to come, GCA will go. All occupants in vehicles traveling to and from field trips will be required to wear face coverings. Flexibility will be key to successful field trips during this school year.
- Whether GCA holds a Scholastic Book Fair is yet-to-be-determined.
- At this point, GCA is planning to offer GCA classrooms the opportunity to carry on GCA's long-standing tradition of the GCA scholars singing for Grace Lutheran Church's Sunday worship services (usually each classroom is provided two opportunities per semester). Participation in these events will not be mandatory for scholars. This practice will be closely monitored during the school year and may be modified.
- GCA will carry out its music curriculum in a modified manner that is healthy and safe for the scholars.
- At this point, GCA plans to conduct a basketball program. However, that plan may be modified based on the availability of indoor practice space and the status of COVID's impact on our local community.
- At this point, GCA is planning to carry out a Fine Arts Day/Grandparents Day, Christmas Program, Academic Fair, and end of year theatre production. However, these plans may be modified as the year progresses based on COVID's community impact. More information about these events will be shared as the dates for these events draw closer.

## **Distance Learning**

In the event that GCA ceases in-person classes for any reason for more than a short period of time (e.g., a couple days), GCA will pivot to distance learning using the Google Classroom platform (the same platform used for distance learning in the spring of 2020).

## **COVID Response Team**

GCA's COVID Response Team members are Julie Crain and Pastor Wattles. All questions or comments regarding GCA's response to COVID should be directed to them.