

Grainger County Schools plans a return to traditional schedule and attendance guidelines. All students will attend classes with daily teacher lead instruction at school where they are enrolled. GCS does not plan to offer a full- time virtual option during this school year.

Our system safety recommendations and opening plans include, but are not limited to:

- All students will attend classes in person each day with no full-time virtual option.
- Virtual education may be required during times of Governor declared state of emergency or disaster declaration AND during temporary periods of quarantine for individual students. In response to a Governor declared state of emergency or disaster declaration requiring period of school closures, Grainger County Schools can implement our Continuous Learning Plan (CLP) which would provide virtual instruction options for all students during time of declaration. Our CLP will include instructional time requirements set forth in state board policy (3.210 July 2021) and require procedures for confirming attendance for 6 ½ hours for students in grades 1-12 and 4 hours for Kindergarten students. Examples of methods of confirming attendance include students participating in phone calls with teacher, with parent or legal guardian support as appropriate for the age of the student; students participating in synchronous virtual instruction; students completing work in our learning management system (Google Classroom); students submitting work via hard copy and/or virtual format; or combination of listed methods system identifies as appropriate. The teachers will monitor attendance of students. If our district chooses to use a stockpile day for a day of school closure, implementation of the CLP would not be applicable for that day. If we exceed the number of allotted stockpile days and do not provide virtual instruction during those days during state of emergency, days missed will have to be added to existing calendar.
- Students who participate in virtual or distance learning instruction during a temporary COVID-19 Quarantine Period may be counted as present but attendance must be confirmed daily. Examples of methods of confirming attendance include such options as: students participating in a phone call with a teacher, with parent or legal guardian support as appropriate for the age of the student; students participating in synchronous virtual instruction; students completing work in our learning management system (Google Classroom); students submitting work via hard copy and/or virtual formats; or combination of listed methods system identifies as appropriate. If students attendance cannot be confirmed due to lack of participation, the student will have unexcused absences.
- Students who test positive for COVID-19 will be required to stay at home for the recommended days via CDC guidelines. Students who are household contacts of a positive case will be required to stay home (quarantine) for the recommended amount of days via CDC guidelines. If students with COVID-19 are able to participate in virtual or distance learning, attendance must be confirmed as outlined above for temporary quarantine periods. If students cannot participate, they will have excused absences for days missed due to COVID-19 and opportunities to make up work when they are able to return to school and/or participate in virtual instruction.

- The quarantine period for any student/staff testing positive for COVID-19 is ten (10) days, and may return to school on the eleventh (11th) day as long as they are symptom free for at least 24 hours. The quarantine time for household contacts is 20 days and students/staff will return on the 21st day.
- Staff and students will not be sent home based on COVID symptoms! Staff and students will be quarantined only if the school team determines that they have been exposed as a household contact or have tested positive.
- Employees will be offered 10 COVID days if they quarantine as a result of testing positive for COVID-19. Documentation from an official testing location such as a doctor's office or health department must be provided to the HR Department or Director of Schools to confirm the positive test. Home test kits will not be sufficient documentation.
- Daily cleaning and disinfection of all buildings and buses will continue.
- Face coverings or masks for all students and staff (PreK-12) are optional, BUT HIGHLY RECOMMENDED in the schools. However, per federal regulations, masks are currently required for public transportation which includes school buses. This status of masks may change. Masks will be provided by the school system for both students and staff if they so choose to wear.
- Social distancing will be utilized as much as possible.
- Temperature checks will not take place for all students daily; however, students who have symptoms or visit the nurse may have his/her temperature taken. We ask parents to monitor children's health conditions and not send students to school if they have a fever or are experiencing some other type of health issue. Any such absence would be unexcused without medical documentation.
- Students will be changing classes in all the schools except for a self-contained environment.
- Frequent hand washing will be encouraged and access to hand sanitizer for all classes will be available.
- Meals will only be served in the cafeteria. Meals will not be delivered to other locations in the school *unless local COVID conditions warrant distancing that requires optional locations for meals. Meals may not be served outside the cafeteria without explicit written approval by the Director of Schools.*
- All students will be eligible for free lunch this school year, but parents are encouraged to complete the free/reduced lunch application to be eligible for other state benefits.
- Touch free filtered water stations will be provided for students to fill their water bottles. Water bottles will be provided to the students by Grainger County Schools.
- Visitors will be allowed in the schools but may be limited to protect health and safety of students and staff. We will slowly begin to open up schools to visitors this year. We understand parents want to visit and bring students into schools

and we want you to feel welcome in schools, but our first priority is to keep everyone safe. Please be patient as we limit visitors at the beginning of the year and monitor the number of positive cases in our county. We will lift some of these precautions as the school year progresses. For example, IEP meetings, scheduled principal meetings, scheduled teacher meetings, health plans/504 could be attended by parents/guardians. However, a parent would not be allowed to freely walk down the hallway to take a student to his/her classroom. All visitors will be admitted at discretion of the principal.

- Only faculty that are working bus duty will be required to arrive at 7:30AM. This will go back to the pre-COVID schedule. Standard school hours will be utilized. Therefore, administrators will have students gathering in the gym or cafeteria when they get off the bus in the mornings.

We will follow the traditional schedule and in-person attendance if conditions for COVID spread are not considered as high risk for our area. We will continue to monitor state guidelines and health updates. If there is a surge in cases or new health guidance for our county or state, parents should be prepared for the potential of optional schedules or periods of quarantine.

If conditions are considered at higher risk level for COVID spread, classroom, building, school or entire system may be closed for extended periods of time during the 2021.2022 school year. The decision to follow a Blended Schedule or to Close classroom, school or entire system will be determined by the Director of Schools for the safety of all students based on current health conditions and updates. Parents and families will be notified when/if we require transition from one plan/schedule to another (Traditional, Closure or Quarantine). Employees may be “repurposed” during the 21.22 school year. This applies to all employees. For example, it is possible that some teachers and/or teaching assistants will be pulled from their home school for assistance with the virtual option. This is just one of many ways that the Director of Schools may repurpose employees during the 21.22 school year.

ELECTRONIC DEVICE ACCESS AND LEARNING SUPPORT:

Students will be provided and issued a device to utilize in classrooms and/or home as needed during periods of blended schedule or closure. A device will be issued to all students at the beginning of the school year. This 1:1 initiative will assist if we must quickly implement virtual instruction. Grainger County Schools will use Google Classroom as our learning management platform for any required virtual instruction as well as in the classrooms for traditional in-person instruction when platform is utilized.

PRIORITIZING HEALTH AND SAFETY

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, Grainger County Schools ("District") has been exploring different and reasonable ways to provide services to all students. The District has worked with state and local agencies, including our local health department, to draft and implement guidelines moving forward regarding cleaning, screening, etc. Though the District and its agents will work hard to implement and abide by those guidelines, neither the guidelines themselves nor even recommendations from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention ("CDC") would ever allow the District to guarantee an environment that is entirely free of COVID-19 related risks.

By allowing your child to return to school, you must understand that your child's attendance will require him/her to physically interact with the District's staff members, other students, and even some limited volunteers. As such, despite all reasonable efforts on behalf of the District, physical interaction with the public at large may pose some unavoidable risks to you, your child, and your family due to the COVID-19 pandemic. While the District hopes that everyone remains safe and healthy during this trying time, we also want to remain both honest and transparent with our parents about the very real risks posed by COVID-19 both inside and outside of our schools.

TRANSPORTATION

- All buses will run on a regular schedule.
- Masks are required at this time for all students on buses at the beginning of 21.22 school year due to federal laws requiring masks for all public transportation
- Requirements for masks may be adjusted as indicated by number of active cases and other health updates and federal guidelines
- Buses will be sanitized after morning and afternoon routes
- Buses will have assigned seats

SCHOOL CALENDAR 2021-22:

Our school calendar had an **August 4** start day for students. If we exceed the number of allotted stockpile days due to inclement weather or COVID-19 closures outside of a declared state of emergency, days missed beyond our ten stockpiled days, our school year calendar will be adjusted to meet 180 day requirements.