

Grace Lutheran School

Plans for the 2021-22 School Year:

Important Information about our School Reopening Plan

Since guidance for schools was released in July, a Task Force of teachers, principal, and board members have been working to update our plans to safely and effectively educate the students of Grace Lutheran School (GLS). The plan is based on important guidance from the Centers for Disease Control (CDC), the Illinois Department of Public Health (IDPH) and the Illinois State Board of Education (ISBE).

This document gives detail as to how we, at this point in time, plan to accomplish schooling during the 2021-22 school year. Guidance changes frequently. **This is our plan as of 08/04/21, but it could change at any time.** Safety will always be our top priority at GLS. 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 follow masking and social distancing guidelines. Like last year, everyone must do their part for this plan to be successful.

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

08/04/21

Health & Safety

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

A: YES. We will no longer have Remote Wednesdays.

Q: Will students need to wear masks at school?

A: Yes. Due to the current rise in COVID transmission and cases in our area, ALL students, teachers, and aides will be required to wear a mask to begin the school year. When these numbers lower to levels that allow us to be indoors without a mask if fully vaccinated, we will consider an adjustment to this policy.

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

A: No, anyone who must wear a mask indoors, must wear them at all times while indoors except for when eating, drinking, or playing an instrument.

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

A: Yes. Students will no longer need to keep their masks on while outside.

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 extra reusable masks at school.

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 by students instead of masks, as per directives from the CDC. In some cases, we will allow teachers who are fully vaccinated to use a face shield for teaching.

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 reenter their classroom.

Q: Will 6 foot distancing be maintained?

A: The CDC guidance for K-12 schools now recommends 3 foot distancing whenever possible. We have arranged classrooms so that desks in every classroom will be placed at a minimum of 3 feet apart in all directions (seat to seat). Desks no longer need to face the same direction, which provides more flexibility with seating. We will also put markings on floors at 3 foot intervals where students typically line up. Teachers can walk around their classrooms to monitor students and answer questions.

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 100.4°F (38°C) or above, your child and any other students in the household must stay home. Please also contact the school office. Temperature checks will no longer be taken as students or parents enter the building. Please do not send your student to school with Tylenol or some other medication to reduce fever.

You will also need to complete an online form each morning, certifying your child is not showing other symptoms of COVID-19. **Students will be withheld from class until that certification is completed.**

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 2 doors, assigned by grade level. PK-SK students will continue to enter the west door, off of the playground. Students in Grades 1-8 will enter the main entrance doors on Bonnie Brae. (We will no longer use the church entrance.)

Q: How will afternoon pick-up be handled?

A: We will continue with the same afternoon pick-up routine as last year. Cars should line up southbound on Bonnie Brae and then eastbound on Division St. Cars should have a sign with last name and grade of students you are picking up. Students will be called out and get ready to enter cars when it is their time. If you wish to walk up, we ask that you stay on the sidewalk, set back from the entrance.

Families in which all students are in 6th grade or higher may park at Priory and have students cross Division Street to meet them.

Students in grades PK-SK will once again be picked up in the parking lot on the south side of the building.

Q: Will students use drinking fountains?

A: No. We 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 should be taken home and washed each day.

Q: What are the procedures for bathroom usage?

A: No more than 2 students will be allowed inside a bathroom at one time.

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. Last year we enhanced the HVAC system with an air purification system. If a room (ex: art room) is used by more than one class, surfaces will be disinfected after each use.

Q: How will lunch take place when school reopens?

A: Teachers will take their class outside for lunch as much as possible. When inside, students will continue to need to be 6 feet apart for lunch. Indoor lunch will take place in classrooms when possible, or in other locations for students who aren't 6 feet apart when sitting in their desks.

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

A: Yes. Parents will once again 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: If you plan to travel out of town, we encourage you to become familiar with the CDPH's Travel Guideline. Any unvaccinated person who travels to another country, or a state identified by Chicago as having a surge in COVID-19 cases, will need to remain at home for 10 days. Another option is to provide a negative COVID-19 test before returning to school. This test must be taken no sooner than 48 hours after your return to Illinois. [Chicago Travel Restrictions](#)

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) or chills, sore throat, coughing, nausea or vomiting, headache, muscle or body aches, new loss of taste or smell, congestion or runny nose, fatigue, diarrhea, and shortness of breath or 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. 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. Even if your child is fully vaccinated, we will require you to provide a negative COVID-19 test 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 ALL of the IDPH's criteria to discontinue home isolation. This includes:

1. 24 hours without a fever over 100.4 F (without the use of fever reducing medication)
2. At least 10 days have passed since symptoms first appeared.
3. Improvement of symptoms

Here is a link to the latest [IDPH COVID-19 Exclusion Decision Tree](#)

Q: What should I do if my child is a Close Contact to someone with COVID-19?

A: If your child is not fully vaccinated, you must immediately contact the school's main office and keep your child home for at least 10 days. If your child shows no COVID-19 symptoms for the 10-day period, your child may return to school.

If unmasked a Close Contact is now defined as being within 6 feet of a person indoors for more than 15 minutes. If masked and indoors, a person needs to be less than 3 feet from another masked person for more than 15 minutes in order to be considered a close contact.

Q: What happens if my student needs to quarantine due to COVID-19?

A: If your student needs to quarantine for an extended period of time due to contracting COVID-19 or being designated as a Close Contact, teachers will make assignments available through Google Classroom or some other means, and will have sessions with the student as needed to provide instruction. Instructional sessions will not be provided for students who miss school due to travel or for students who are only out for a day or two due to illness. Live streaming of the classroom will not be available this school year.

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 may need to move into quarantine for 10 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 unvaccinated students in the class who are considered a close contact will move into quarantine for 10 days. Teachers will work with students so that they can continue to learn during quarantine.

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. Extra furniture has been removed from classrooms so that desks can be distanced at a minimum of 3 feet when masked and learning, and 6 feet when eating.

Q: Will students share school supplies?

A: The CDC guidance for K-12 schools no longer restricts the sharing of school supplies.

Q: Will students share computers?

A: No. We have purchased 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: All students will participate in music classes, including choral (grades 1-8) and handbell ensembles (grades 7-8). Extra precautions will be taken when singing takes place, including masking, improved ventilation, and extra social distancing in large rehearsal spaces. These precautions will be subject to change throughout the school year as public health guidance changes. Any change in practices will be communicated to parents prior to the change going into effect.

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

A: Yes. Both band and orchestra will take place in our building this year. We will implement the latest safety protocol guidance to keep everyone safe.

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

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

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 participate in field trips?

A: Yes, we will allow teachers to choose field trips to venues that administration feels have strong COVID protocols. Regardless of the masking protocols in place at school at the time, our students and adults will be masked for the entire trip (on the bus and in the venue). 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 again this year.

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 CDC guidelines, anytime students are outside they may take off their masks.

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

A: Yes, and we will follow all CDC or local guidance to make certain the gathering is safe.

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

A: This is still to be determined.

Q: How will chapel work?

A: We plan to once again have Grades 1-8 together in the sanctuary, and Grades PK-SK together in an alternate space, for weekly chapel. Students will sit at 3 foot distancing while in chapel.

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

A: Yes. Masking requirements for athletes and spectators are still to be determined, but we are planning for athletic competitions to return this year.

Q: Can parents volunteer in the building at Grace?

A: Yes, volunteers may be present for a pre-arranged activity. There will be limits on how many volunteers are allowed in any given part of the building. Volunteers will need to follow the same masking requirements established for teachers and other adults in the school.

Q: Will this be a good school year?

A: Absolutely! It will still be a 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.