

# Gengras Center 2021-2022 School Year

## Addendum to Student/Parent Handbook

Connecticut has done well in following recommendations for social distancing, frequent hand washing, wearing masks, and other procedures to reduce the risk of infection from COVID-19. We are fortunate to have a strong medical staff and have worked closely with the West Hartford – Bloomfield Health District as well as the School Medical Advisor to develop a set of protocols and practices for the health and safety of all students and staff. As you will see in our policies below, we have layered mitigating strategies built into our plans, wearing masks and additional PPE, cohorting, vigilant cleaning and disinfecting, social distancing as feasible, and limited the number of visitors inside the building. As we re-open the school for the 21-22 school year, we have developed a plan around the risk of exposure and illness in the student population. Our procedures and policies are being enacted to help keep our staff and students safe and to address any potential illness. We closely follow the guidance from the State Department of Education.

### Attendance

It is important for students to attend school every day and arrive on time to maximize their instructional time. If a student needs to be absent a parent/guardian should notify the school by 8:00 AM by calling 860-232-5616 to report the reason for the absence. If the absence is due to a medical issue related to COVID-19, call the School Nurse at 860-231-5277. Attendance data is reported to the sending school districts monthly for all students. If a student is absent without an excuse, the school nurse will call the primary contact for information regarding the absence.

Our school hours remain the same and students should arrive at 8:30 and be in the building no later than 8:45 to start their day. Dismissal starts at 2:50 each day except Wednesdays, which are a 1:00 dismissal.

### Daily Health Assessments

Each morning, prior to sending your child to school, you will perform a health assessment. Please review the symptoms below and take note of any that your child is experiencing that day. If your child has any of the following symptoms that indicate a possible illness, then further attention is warranted and monitoring from home. Please see the section below: Exclusion from School Guidelines to determine next steps if your child has any of the COVID-19 symptoms as well as additional documents for daily assessments and Addendum 5 of the State Department of Education's Adapt, Advance, Achieve Plan.

#### Symptoms of COVID-19

- **Fever: over 100.4° F**
- **Chills**
- **Cough**
- **Shortness of Breath/Difficulty Breathing**
- **Fatigue**
- **Muscle or body aches**
- **Headache**
- **Sore Throat**
- **New loss of taste or smell**
- **Congestion & runny nose**
- **Nausea or vomiting**
- **Diarrhea**

### Exclusion from School Guidelines Related to COVID-19

It is important that we are contacted immediately if your child displays symptoms or if your child has had contact with a person who is positive or presumed positive for COVID-19. In the event there is an exposure

in the school setting, a classroom cohort may be required to quarantine if not vaccinated. Students and staff who are fully vaccinated will not need to quarantine if they are symptom free. If your child has an alternate diagnosis for symptoms from a healthcare provider, a note should be provided to the school nurse.

As the situation evolves, we may need to modify the plans as directed by the CDC or State of Connecticut Department of Public Health, and our School Medical Advisor.

Please report any absence related to these symptoms or concerns of COVID-19 to the school as soon as possible at 860-231-5277. Please report in detail what the symptoms are and what precautions are being taken. This will allow the school to monitor for any signs of a potential spread of the illness.

## Masks

All Gengras Center staff and students will be expected to wear masks. We understand that there are several reasons that a student may not be able to wear a mask (including health and behavioral concerns) and exceptions will be put in place based on individual needs. The school will have disposable masks and face shields available for students, but if a student has a mask or cloth face covering from home that they prefer they may bring it in with them. Additional PPE is available in all locations and will be used regularly.

Mask breaks will be an important part of the school day. We understand the physical and psychological need to have a break from face coverings. For these reasons regular masks breaks will be scheduled into the day. They will be staggered and in designated areas where social distancing can be enforced. Weather permitting, outdoor areas will be utilized, but there will also be areas inside the building that are available.

## Physicals

Letters were sent out for all students who will be requiring a physical for the 2021-2022 school year. We understand that at this time getting a physical scheduled may be more difficult than usual. Accommodations can be made if you are unable to get a physical by the start of the year. We ask that you communicate with us regarding any difficulty getting a physical and that you would please inform us of when you have an appointment scheduled. All documents related to returning to school can be faxed to 860-231-6795.

## Cohorting

Students in the elementary and middle school classrooms will be in cohorts which is a group of students and educators with consistent members who stay together throughout the day. Maintaining stable cohorts helps to mitigate the risk of spreading the virus. Students will receive their related services while remaining in their cohort. Student interactions and discourse will be promoted within the classroom while maintaining social distancing between students and other cohorts as feasible.

Art, music, and physical education will be provided each week and the students will go to the specials' teacher in her or his room as a cohort. Besides attending the specials each week and being in their classrooms, the students will have access to outside spaces throughout the day. Each class will be assigned an outdoor location to use at any point during the day. The classroom teacher will determine, based on the space and students, how it will be used and how often.

High school and transition students will be in their cohorts most of the week but may have days that they join other students for vocational or fitness activities. For the students to receive the maximum benefits from the vocational services they need to be working in the building, on campus and in the community. During those vocational assignments, it is likely they will encounter Gengras students from other classrooms. Alternate planning will be made for student who do not wear masks and are not vaccinated.

## Visitors

We will continue to limit visitors inside the buildings. Visitors, including parents, will not be permitted to enter either building during drop-off and pick-up. If you are transporting your child to and from school, remain in your vehicle while waiting for a staff member to receive the student or bring the student to the vehicle at the end of the day. If you need to drop-off items for a child, please park in visitors' parking space and ring the doorbell for assistance.

PPTs and parent meetings will be held virtually to start the school year but we hope to hold these meetings in person as the year progresses. We recognize that parents are key members of the educational team, however in an effort to keep our students and staff safe, we are restricting the people who enter the building beyond staff and students. This policy will be reviewed on a regular basis and may change as individual school districts update their policies

## Curriculum & Instruction

As we start the school year under new guidelines, our curriculum will be altered to align with best practices. Our high school and transition students as well as the vocational department will be going in the community for learning experiences. We will resume cooking and food prep lessons that pertain to IEP goals and objectives. For students who work on daily living activities, we will continue with instruction in activities such as hand washing and hair brushing however, we will not be providing instruction in any oral hygiene needs such as tooth brushing. For students needing specific instruction in oral hygiene, we can provide step-by-step guides to support your child at home and to promote progress.

## Meal Preparation and Service

Food service with a hot lunch will continue to be provided for students to buy or as free lunch for those who are eligible. Lunch will be delivered to the classrooms for students to eat at their desks as well as served in the school cafeteria. A schedule will be made to rotate classrooms at the start of the school year. Some teachers will make arrangements for their classes to eat outside in their assigned space for the day. Students may bring their lunch and snacks and it must remain in their lunch container in their individual cubby with their backpack and supplies from home. A student may put their lunch box in the refrigerator if necessary. Classroom staff and students may heat-up food brought-in from home in a microwave.