



Plan for re-reopening 2021/22



“Now is the time to understand more, so that we may fear less.”

- Marie Curie

Updated August 15 2021

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¹ The Center for Disease Control and Prevention, August 2021: Guidance for Covid-19 Prevention in K-12 Schools.

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This concept is based on the map for reopening discussed with the Board of Trustees
on August 17, 2021.

Part 1: Guiding Principles

Introduction

The COVID-19 pandemic presents the most serious public health crisis the world has experienced in generations. While we were confident before the summer that we would be returning to a much more normal school environment, but the Delta variant has taught us differently. From all we know, we are well-advised to take extra care again of our students and colleagues. After our experiences in the previous school year, we however learned to find ways to keep the school open and at the same time provide a safe environment for our students and staff. We will therefore again base our plans for the coming year on the latest developments and expert guidance.

Vaccines are available for all students 12 and older as well as all adults. We encourage everybody eligible to get vaccinated as soon as possible. As long as the vaccine only has an emergency approval, we will not make it mandatory for staff or students. This may change with full FDA approval.

This Roadmap is guided by six principles:

1. Act with fidelity to GISNY's Mission and Guiding Principles.
2. Prioritize student, faculty, and staff health, safety, and well-being over other principles.
3. Ensure hygiene- and health-related policies are research-based, clearly communicated, effectively implemented, and diligently enforced.
4. Promote practices and policies to reduce risk of virus transmission and support our capacity to be responsive and agile when facing changing health circumstances.
5. Favor in-person learning over remote learning.
6. Always acknowledge that it takes a combined effort of the whole school community to achieve success.

Part 1 of this document establishes the first principle as our foundation for planning, acting, and decision making. It is important to present a discussion of rights and responsibilities through the lens of our Mission. Members of our community have certain rights, but they also have responsibilities to others. The significance of these mutual obligations will be heightened for the foreseeable future, which is why GISNY feels an open review of the first principle is an important starting point for this document.

Part 2 of this document addresses the second, third, and fourth principles. The second principle, which concerns the health and safety of our students, faculty, and staff, will **remain the most important driver in decisions taken**. The third and fourth principles complement the second, asserting the importance of mitigating risk through precautions involving social responsibilities, preventative hygiene, and cohorts for those times when it is not possible to maintain a physical distance of at least 3 feet².

Part 3 of this document provides a rationale for our choices of learning models. This section describes the three learning models we anticipate needing next year as we await the advancements in prevention, testing, a vaccine, and the development of an effective treatment that will allow us to resume more familiar approaches to school environments and learning. This section also explains how we will tether these learning models to our assessments of risk – that is, what drivers will influence our movement from one risk level to another and what learning model is most appropriate to each risk level.

Part 4 of this document provides an overview of how we expect our Activities and Athletics programs will need to adjust during the 2021-22 school year. These opportunities are central to the GISNY experience and our students value them greatly. However, our co-curricular programs need to be aligned quite tightly to our assessment of risk and corresponding learning model. This alignment will be explained in Part 4.

Part 5 of this document lists all the sources we consulted when writing this paper. We thank the American School of Japan and the Waldorf School Brooklyn for their great documents which inspired us.

Part 6 of this document is the Appendix in which we specially describe our solutions for **Re**-reopening in September.

No schools will be operating in a business-as-usual manner for the foreseeable future, but through this Roadmap, we hope to maintain positive school and learning experiences within a challenging new context. GISNY would like to thank its students for their resilience, adaptability, and spirit; its parents for their support, patience, and understanding; and its faculty and staff for their courage, professionalism, and dedication. The 2021-22 school year promises to be another challenging one for all of us, but we are confident that we can weather these challenges together.

² New York State Education Department, August 2021: Health and Safety Guide for the 2021-2022 School Year, page 10

This concept will remain to be subject to constant evaluation based on the effectiveness of measures taken (the hard facts), reflection (what is working well and what is not) and feedback from parents, teachers and staff, and students.

Mission-Directed in a Time of Crisis

Values matter, especially during a crisis. They allow individuals and institutions to orient themselves and set priorities quickly. They permit us to navigate confusion, turmoil, and emotion. They compel us to reflect on our relationships with, and obligations to, others. Most importantly, they inform our decisions and actions. Accordingly, the first principle guiding this Roadmap states, “Act with fidelity to GISNY’s Mission and Guiding Principles.”

GISNY’s Commitment, Mission, & Core Values

GISNY’s mission statement circles around the terms of Community, Respect, and Responsibility. This Commitment is a clear call for empathy and a reminder of our duty to others. We believe once any member of the school community feels known, valued, and cared for in a safe community that emphasizes learning, curiosity, and originality, they will be inspired to be “their best selves, empowered to make a difference.”

GISNY’s Commitment, Mission, and Core Values should orient us during these unprecedented times. They allow us to cut through competing priorities and make difficult decisions. They remind us that we are all connected and that we have reciprocal obligations to one another.

Our Mission Statement matters now more than ever!

Rights and Responsibilities within the GISNY Community

Rights — Every student, teacher, or staff member should be known, valued, and cared for. This fundamental right accompanies membership in GISNY’s school community. It implies we all have a right to expect both emotional and physical safety. During the COVID-19 pandemic, this means members of our community can reasonably expect a heightened level of concern for their health and well-being. While it is possible that students, teachers, or staff members will be exposed to COVID-19 in the course of their work or studies, everyone is entitled to expect that every effort and reasonable precaution will be taken to prevent this from happening.

Responsibilities — Our Guiding Principles – Bridging Cultures, Learning as a Community, and Building Community must be practiced by everyone. This means our interactions with others—friends and

strangers, students, and adults—should be self-aware, respectful, and courteous. During the COVID-19 pandemic, this means complying willingly with rules and policies designed to keep our community safe and healthy. This means thinking of others, appreciating that their risk tolerance might be lower than ours, and adjusting our behavior with sensitivity and respect. This means respecting policies and expectations, even when inconvenient to us. In some communities, measures taken to prevent COVID-19 infection have ignited conflicts between the liberty of individuals and perceptions of the common good. We were fortunate to not have experienced that in GISNY's school community. Rather, we learned to value our respect for and sense of duty to others to be visible in myriad ways, including the following:

- How all members of our community and visitors to our campus wear masks³, wash and disinfect their hands frequently, and observe physical distancing norms;
- How all members of our community and visitors to our campus interact with each other in and out of the classroom, and take responsibility for maintaining a healthy environment;
- How all members of our community and visitors to our campus treat key workers—bus drivers, nurses, cleaners, teachers, cafeteria workers, office administrators, etc.—as people worthy of their respect and deserving of safety themselves;
- How all members of our community and visitors to our campus follow self-screening guidelines for symptoms of illness and refrain from coming to campus when symptomatic; and
- How all members of our community and visitors to our campus comply with self-quarantine rules regarding exposure to COVID-19 and recent travel.

We understand that we are all getting tired of the fight with virus and that over the last months differences have become apparent, but we remain determined to not let this bring us down but rather assemble behind a set of sensible rules and regulations to keep our school community safe.

³ See Appendix 1

Part 2: Health & Safety

Introduction

The challenge of planning for the reopening of GISNY's campus started with a thought experiment: What would an average school day for a typical student look like in GISNY's new normal? We imagined taking the bus in the morning and the trip to the campus in White Plains; walking through to reach classrooms; how those classrooms would need modifications; where or if students would study music, art and physical education; where they would eat lunch; how recess might need to change; and how we would get them home safely at night. We quickly realized every policy, protocol, and practice would need to be reviewed with the goal of ensuring preventative hygiene or providing for physical distancing. Guiding Principles 2, 3, and 4, which are repeated below, further informed this planning:

2. Prioritize student, faculty, and staff health, safety, and well-being over other principles⁴.
3. Ensure hygiene and health-related policies are research-based, clearly communicated, effectively implemented, and diligently enforced.
4. Promote practices and policies to reduce risk of virus transmission and support our capacity to be responsive and agile when facing changing health circumstances.

The following shared understandings frame the work in this section:

- Focus on the variables we can control;
- Use reliable, scientific sources to guide our understanding of the virus that causes COVID-19 and how to best effectively prevent our community's exposure to it;
- Remain adaptable, knowing experts' understanding of the virus will evolve;
- Seek ways to reduce risk of virus transmission;
- Identify external and internal drivers that would lead us to tighten or loosen restrictions; and
- Ensure new policies are flexible and can be implemented and maintained.

GISNY's Approach to Safety

GISNY's approach to safety follows the CDC's 9 pillars of prevention⁵:

1. Promoting Vaccination
2. Consistent and correct mask use
3. Physical distancing
4. Screening testing to promptly identify cases, clusters. and outbreaks
5. Ventilation
6. Handwashing and respiratory etiquette
7. Staying home when sick and getting tested

⁴ Appendix 2

⁵ The Center for Disease Control and Prevention, August 2021: Guidance for Covid-19 Prevention in K-12 Schools.

8. Contact tracing in combination with isolation and quarantining
9. Cleaning and disinfection

Each of these critical areas helps shape our approach to ensuring our policies and protocols provide the necessary conditions on the ground to mitigate risk of exposure to COVID-19. We identified these pillars through ongoing study of the growing literature on COVID-19, such as the benefits of vaccinations, how to reduce transmission risk of the virus, the role masks and effective hand-washing play in protection, and how to reduce and kill surface germs in a school setting. We also know that the best operations plan must be clear, flexible, and sustainable, and therefore our efforts only become operational when we can communicate, train and coordinate these efforts effectively. Lastly, incorporating our pillars into the typical day of a GISNY student remains paramount, as the “new normal” needed to preserve elements of what’s special about coming to school every day.

With confidence we can say that these routines helped us greatly to keep the school open last year. We are determined to approach the coming year with the same diligence and discipline.

1. Vaccinations

We strongly promote vaccinations of eligible students, faculty and staff. As long as we do not have full FDA approval, we will not make the vaccination mandatory. As soon as that is the case, that discussion will have to held.

2. Physical Distancing & Reducing Student Density

Luckily, our building and campus provides great opportunities for us. We have refurbished all our classrooms to accommodate as many students as possible under the guidance for physical distance⁶ and form cohorts of student groups that will. We have moved large portions of our days outside to further eliminate the chance of infection. In PreK and Kindergarten (ES), we have introduced a *Nature-Based Early Childhood Educational (NBECE) Program@GISNY* which has enhanced all advantages of the outside experience for the youngest learners.

We will keep separate entrances to different groups of the school to reduce the number of possible contacts even further.

Other factors such as the age of the students, vaccination status and the layout of the classroom also influence decisions around distancing. Student density, therefore, will remain a fundamental mitigation

⁶ See Appendix 3

factor we continue to rely on for decision-making, as we face the new realities of the 2021-22 school year. This layered approach to mitigation is evidence-based and recommended by the CDC, AAP and NYSED.

Specific Areas of Enhanced Protections

Bus Transportation⁷

GISNY does not have its own school buses and therefore must rely on the various school districts and private bus companies to be fully compliant with CDC and NYSDOH mandates. Parents should also discuss bus safety procedures directly with their bus company.

There will be two designated bus stops in front of our building and only two busses will be allowed to stop to deliver or pick up students at any given time. The students will exit the busses and follow clearly marked ways to their designated entrances where they will be screened. After the screening, they will be asked to proceed directly to their classrooms.

Pick-up will start earlier, and the arrival of busses will be announced via the PA system. Only students on these busses will then be allowed to leave the building and make their way straight to the busses. That way we avoid gathering of waiting students.

Students that are being picked up will be released by their teachers after an announcement through the PA as well.

Security and Campus Access

Visitors will continue to be restricted from campus temporarily, until we can ensure our new protocols have become standard and routine. Of course, there will be accommodations for essential visitors. Essential visitors include sales vendors, package delivery vendors, facility specialists, potential students/families, and pre-approved students and coaches or sponsors visiting from other schools. All essential visitors to school must remain in their vehicles and phone the main office prior to entering the school. They will be verbally screened over the phone, and if cleared to enter, they will be invited to proceed to the main entrance and the front office so that the health screening form can be signed. Essential visitors will need access for entry through our main entrance, which incorporates a health declaration statement. All essential visitors will have to provide identification. The school will retain a copy of this identification for contact tracing purposes. Non-essential visitors will be asked to contact the school immediately if they are diagnosed with Covid-19 or if they are quarantined by the WCDOH due to a Covid-19 exposure within 14 days from the date of their visit to GISNY.

⁷ Appendix 8

Cafeteria⁸

GISNY uses an outside vendor to provide lunch. When school opens FLIK will:

- Offer packed lunches for all students and staff.
- Lunches will have to be ordered online.
- Lunch will be served in the classrooms.

The FLIK associates will adhere to all CDC and NYSDOH regulations. In addition:

- all high touch surfaces will be cleaned and sanitized at least every hour.
- All surfaces will be disinfected at the beginning and the end of each shift.
- FLIK associates are required to wear mask and will be vaccinated.
- Gloves will be placed at each area of service/delivery
- Managers will ensure all guidelines are being adhered to, including sanitation of PPE.

Nurse

As always, our nurse will be here to support and care for students and families with health and local healthcare system navigation, answer questions, and is our contact liaison (along with the head of school) with the local Westchester County and New York State Department of Health.

For infection control purposes, there will be no unannounced 'drop-ins' visits to the nurse's office until further notice. Teachers will call the nurse prior to sending a student, and/or prior to visiting themselves. This is essential to ensure that students and staff presenting with acute illness can be kept separate from students and staff needing first aid, or other non-illness related visits (medication visits, chronic medical condition visits, etc.). provide guidance about treatment when appropriate. In addition, the school nurse will start her day earlier, so that she will be readily available to evaluate any student or staff member who arrives with symptoms or who is flagged for follow-up as a result of the daily screening⁹

Contact Tracing

- The GISNY has successfully completed the Johns Hopkins Covid-19 Contact Tracing Course through Coursera. The school nurse will work in close cooperation with the Westchester County Department of Health to enhance their contact tracing efforts within our school community.

Part 3: Learning Models

Introduction: GISNY does not believe complete distance learning is a satisfactory long-term substitute for regular school. Rather, distance learning could be a necessary expedient when health, safety or other

⁸ Appendix 9

⁹ Appendix 10

conditions leave no other option. Accordingly, GISNY has developed different learning models to increase the likelihood that it will be positioned to re-open its campus in September 2021.

Looking for the new normal!

GISNY believes that learning should be an active, contextualized, and constructive process for students that allows them to grow academically, socially, and emotionally. We believe that learners construct knowledge through experience and social mediation and that the essential purpose of school is to provide “supportive environments rich in engagement, social interaction, and feedback.” Relationships play an essential role in every student’s school experience; these connections make us human. Accordingly, GISNY is highly motivated to open its campus to provide all students with opportunities to learn in in-person environments whenever it is safe to do so. We acknowledge that online learning provides endless opportunities to provide an individualized learning environment for our students. The skilled, every-day use of modern technology will enable our students to competently adapt to a future working environment. We are therefore determined to integrate modern technology into our teaching and to capitalize on the learning technology advances that COVID-19 has given rise to.

Three Potential Models for Learning ^{10/11}

In anticipation of ongoing and evolving challenges associated with the COVID-19 pandemic, GISNY has developed different models for learning. These models are all based on principle 5, which states,

“Favor in-person learning over remote learning.”

The first model, which we call our In-person Learning Model, describes a traditional school experience where students attend school five days a week. If conditions demand that we close our campus, GISNY will continue to default to our Distance/Blended Learning Model (See Guidelines for Distance/Blended Learning). As a third option, we have identified an alternative to this open-or-closed dichotomy, which we call our Hybrid Learning Model. This model acknowledges the critical role in-person interactions play in a child’s learning while implementing physical distancing norms that reduce student density. More detail about each of these models follows below:

1. In-person Learning Model:

¹⁰ Appendix 11

¹¹ Appendix 12

This is a traditional school experience with students attending school in person five days a week. Students interact with peers. The learning that happens off campus is mostly in the form of homework or projects. Preventative hygiene policies are implemented. Afternoon activities will remain limited. All sports activities will have to be assessed carefully. We will make every effort to assist students that are not allowed to attend school and will depend on being provided with online material. In PreK and Kindergarten (ES), we will continue our highly successful *Nature-Based Early Childhood Educational (NBECE) Program@GISNY* which is based on spending large parts of the day outside (see concept).

2. Hybrid Learning Model

This model combines in-person learning with coordinated online experiences. This model recognizes that Distance/Blended Learning does not provide the social interaction most students desire; therefore, a hybrid model provides in-person learning to a varying degree while leveraging digital experiences the remaining time. This model introduces physical distancing and density reduction as key strategies to further reduce exposure within our community, while at the same time providing in-person interaction between students and teachers. GISNY believes that in-person instruction is especially important for Kindergarten (ES) and the lower grades so if necessary, they will be prioritized when assigning classroom capacities. Students in the higher grades would then have less in-person time as they manage distance learning more independently. Online support for students that cannot attend school will be increased.

3. Distance Learning Model

We will base this model on the routine our community experienced in the final months of the 2019-20 school year: if safety conditions dictate that GISNY's campus must be closed, school remains open through remote learning. Students attend school virtually through synchronous and asynchronous lessons, activities, and projects. Students collaborate online, but not with the same frequency as in regular school experience.

Safety Implications of Each Model

As we navigate the uncertainties associated with COVID-19, GISNY will need to remain agile in how we adjust and respond to external health conditions and risks. Great advances have been made and most certainly the vaccinations will help us beat the virus. However, the new variants showed clearly that we must remain alert. Until we have confirmation that the virus does not pose a risk anymore, external conditions and risk will continue to fluctuate. The following table provides a review of safety implications of the three learning models described on the previous page.

Model Safety Implications

In-person Learning Model

When Risk Level is Deemed to be LOW by the NYS Department of Health. External indicators support our confidence in opening campus to full density and usage.

This is the model prioritized by the NYSED for the 2021-2022 academic year¹².

Our campus therefore will remain open with:

- Full density of all students.
- Full classrooms in a standard room. (adhering to the 6feet guidelines)
- Active use of all campus spaces. Each student in grades 5 – 12 will bring a folding chair to school for outside use. Still limited use of gym facilities.

An on-campus experience would include:

- Encouragement of vaccinations
- Distancing norms that are encouraged, but not possible in all situations (e.g. in smaller classrooms, hallways, during transitions).
- Personal hygiene protocols (handwashing, masks, etc.) that are encouraged, but with greater responsibility shifted to students.
- Cleaning protocols that are less frequent/robust as all spaces (rather than designated zones) would be in full, active use throughout the day.
- A potentially hazardous level of exposure for high-risk community members.

Hybrid Learning Model

When Risk Level is deemed to be MEDIUM by the NYS Department of Health. External indicators challenge our confidence in opening campus at full density and usage, and support:

- *Density reduction on campus.*
- *Use of only well-ventilated larger or combined classroom spaces.*
- *Limited use of specialized rooms e.g. labs.*
- *“Designated zones” that support distancing norms and enhanced hygiene protocols.*
- *PreK, Kindergarten (ES) and younger grades will be prioritized when it comes to in-person time at school.*

An on-campus experience would include:

¹² ¹² New York State Education Department, August 2021: Health and Safety Guide for the 2021-2022 School Year,

- *Only situations where distancing norms are possible.*
- *Personal hygiene protocols (handwashing, masks, etc.) strictly enforced.*
- *Robust cleaning protocols would be focused on designated zones.*
- *High-risk community members would be vulnerable.*
- *Groups of students will remain off campus for periods of time and will be taught online.*

Distance Learning Model

When Risk Level is deemed to be HIGH by the NYS Department of Health. External indicators support our confidence that physically closing our campus is the best course of action. Indicators might include rising infection rates, a high degree of medical uncertainty, or infections within our own school community. There would be no on campus experiences. We believe locus of control should remain with parents to make decisions about the health and safety of their children.

Part 4: Activities, After-School Programs & Athletics ¹³

Introduction

After-school and extra curricular activities play an essential part in the life of our school. After we had very limited offerings last year, we will pick up a number of activities this year.

In order to offer the variety of programs people expect, we need to mix students from different cohorts for AGs for students from grade 7 and up. That means that only vaccinated students will be allowed to participate. For Kindergarten (ES) to grade 6, AGs will be offered for the individual cohort which will lead to reduced offering. We aim to have a variety for each grade level.

After school activities will be guided by the following principles:

- We will encourage all programs to be held outside if possible.
- Masks will have to be worn inside and outside. Guidance for exceptions will be shared.
- Access will depend on vaccination status.
- All WCDOH and NYSED/NYSDOH guidance will be observed.

¹³ Appendix 13

Part 5: Sources

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, August 5, 2021: *Guidance for COVID-19 Prevention in K-12 Schools*. Available at: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/schools-childcare/k-12-guidance.html>

New York State Department of Health *Pre-K to Grade 12 COVID-19 Toolkit*, February 2021. Available at: https://coronavirus.health.ny.gov/system/files/documents/2021/02/nysdoh_prekgr12_toolkit_update-020121.pdf

New York State Department of Health *Communicable Disease Reporting Requirements*, August 2020. Available at: <https://health.westchestergov.com/images/stories/PDF/communicablereportform2020.pdf>

American Academy of Pediatrics, Interim Guidance: *COVID-19 Guidance for Safe Schools*, July 18, 2021. Available at:

<https://services.aap.org/en/pages/2019-novel-coronavirus-covid-19-infections/clinical-guidance/covid-19-planning-considerations-return-to-in-person-education-in-schools/>

Part 6: Appendix

Here we specify details of our concept to be implemented on September 1, 2021. These details will be subject to constant evaluation and adapted to any change.

Appendix 1

Face Coverings & Personal Protection Equipment (PPE)

Who Must Where Them and When?

All persons in the building over the age of 2 must wear masks indoors and outdoors. This applies to all students (even Early Childhood), faculty, staff, and any other individuals in the building including all “public areas” such as hallways, stairwells, bathrooms, or other spaces multiple individuals or groups may pass through.

Mask breaks:

- Early Childhood students, especially younger ones, may be given “mask breaks” outside at the discretion of the teacher.
- Older students may take mask breaks outside.
- Students of any age learning or playing outside in low-risk activities do not need to wear masks. This includes most common childhood games and activities that do not involve prolonged close physical contact.
- Students may remove their mask to eat if it is done in an area of the school determined to have the appropriate capacity for physical distancing during mealtimes.
- A teacher has discretion in determining if a child is safe or not to remove their mask, as all teachers receive training on COVID-19 specific hygiene.
- Please see school nurse if there is a medical contraindication to wearing a mask.

Masks: General Guidelines

- Acceptable face coverings for COVID-19 include but are not limited to cloth-based face coverings and surgical masks that cover both the mouth and nose and should have at least two layers of protection.
- Face shields worn without other face coverings are not considered adequate protection against COVID-19 and should not be used except in combination with an acceptable mask.

Provision of Masks

- Each family is encouraged to purchase or make five cloth face masks (one for each day of the week) per child to reduce environmental waste. Face masks should be labeled with the child’s name or initials, so it is clear to whom the mask belongs.
- The school will have a supply of disposable surgical masks on hand (adult and child-sized) for emergency use.
- Masks must not be shared.
- Teachers and staff are provided by the school with masks.

Appendix 2: Mental Health and Well-being

Mental Health, Behavioral and Emotional Support Services and Programs

GISNY has a strong Social-Emotional Multi-Tiered Support System in place. It begins with the homeroom teacher, who has “looped” with the class for several years, and hence knows the families and students well. Trust is actively cultivated through frequent parent meetings and opportunities for socialization among families, and a close relationship with each student—all possible because of our small class sizes and strong community life. In addition to the homeroom teacher, the school is also served by a school psychologist once a week and a full-time resource teacher. Both are available to students, family, and teachers for individual and family appointments, as well as consultation with teachers about student needs in the classroom. Almost every week, the resource teacher meets with the Psychologist in a “Care Group” meeting that aims to share notes on students of concern and track progress in getting students and families the help they need. When necessary, outside referrals for follow up are made. Certain students also benefit from counseling through their IEP provisions. In those cases, we work with the Board of Education to provide counseling for those students who need and benefit from it.

In the school year 2019-20, GISNY started to have social learning lessons in our Upper School each quarter of the school year to support equality, individuality, and inclusivity. The lower school is working with a program called “Teamgeister”. This program involves topics like family and family members, feelings – to express and to read feelings, empathy, friendship including what is a good friend and what is important to me in a healthy friendship, talking about strength and weakness, supporting each other.

Every year in the spring we have our diversity week. It’s one week of school where we approach a different and new topic every single year. The whole school and school community is studying and working on this topic.

In addition to our curriculum, we will continue to provide support for students and faculty to process reactions to COVID-19 in the upcoming school year by:

Before the first week of school

- the whole faculty is receiving an overview with all changes/adjustments/differences
- a first virtual Wine & Cheese event will be held to introduce the new regulations to all parents and discuss questions arising.

First week of school

We will again begin the school year slowly with ample time for students and faculty to re-adjust. Teachers and students will discuss all regulations, implications for their learning process and a possible outlook for the year.

Students

- giving them an overview about everything that is going to happen.
- creating a daily routine with the students to make them feel welcome
- learn to manage the impact of minimized social contact e.g. squeeze/stress ball for those students who need it
- explaining that mental health is the most important thing!
- welcoming new students
- train the students on hygiene regulations
- explaining that they are not allowed to share food and material
- training and practicing how to enter and to exit the building/the classroom
- practicing new recess procedure
- train the students how to walk through the building – getting used to new ways
- explaining all changes (recess, lunch, use of the bathroom, subject changes, wearing a mask, how to behave when you are not feeling well, ...)

We are taking as much time as needed with the students to practice and make sure that Covid protocols really become routine and automatic!.

Faculty

- evaluation about the school day on a regular basis. Throughout the week, teachers can write everything in a shared document (best practice/worries, their feelings, ...) to provide a regular feedback model when needed

Mental health as the basis for academics

- starting each lesson with a quick *check-in* “How are you feeling?” “How was your afternoon/recess/lunch?” “Is there anything you want to talk about?”

A calm place

- offering a place to calm down when anxiety, occurs. We are going to pick one tree outside and then build a shelter there and put a bench underneath it so that one individual at a time can go there to calm down.

Support

- Offering support to faculty, as well as families, through individual appointments with our school psychologist, resource teacher and school nurse.
- Professional development for teachers on how to work with children in class during a prolonged crisis--lessons taken from other trauma-informed schools and settings.

Appendix 3: Physical Distancing

GISNY will strive to maintain appropriate physical distancing (generally 6 feet) between all individuals while in school facilities and on school grounds, unless safety or the core activity (e.g., instruction, moving equipment, traveling in common areas) requires a shorter distance or individuals are of the same household.

Space Configurations

Space configurations and usage will change for the duration of the COVID-19 period. Some of the changes include:

Classrooms

- Desks moved to be as distant as possible, and all facing one direction so that students sit side-to-side rather than facing one another.
- Outdoor classroom spaces provided for all classes. Where possible, they will be entered and exited through the individual secondary classroom exit doors that leads directly to the outdoors.
- Reconfiguration of large gathering spaces (e.g. cafeteria or gym) as “classrooms” for higher-risk activities (music, chorus, movement) that need an indoor space for the winter months.

Common Areas

- Hallways will be designated with one-way lanes and marked accordingly with signage and tape arrows on the floor.
- Staircases are already designated up and down.
- The library will only be open to individual classes. Beyond that, we will provide alternate ways of browsing --through the use of a mobile cart brought to the classroom and/or “library requests” submitted to our librarians.

Physical Distancing Considerations for Faculty and Staff

We will maintain options for physical distancing for faculty and staff next to providing advanced filter systems and enhanced ventilation of all buildings

- The reconfiguration of the faculty lounge to accommodate only 20 persons at a time, with individual physically distanced cafe-style seating that allows the space to be used for work or eating.
- The reconfiguration of shared faculty and staff offices to allow for social distancing within the space. Under no circumstances should faculty/staff be present together in small spaces

(elevators, storage closets, small offices or tutoring rooms) for longer than 10 minutes. Photo copiers will be moved to open spaces for teachers to use individually.

- Faculty meetings will either be held outside or in a setting that allows for physical distancing.
- Non-GISNY employees, including outside tutors and other private service providers are not permitted to provide in-person services inside the school building.

Appendix 4: Creation of Cohorts

GISNY has always valued its relatively small class and group sizes. In the context of COVID-19, this allows us to make each grade its own “cohort” with a specific schedule and space that does not overlap with any other grade. In PreK and ES, as maintaining social distancing is more difficult, the single groups will each present a cohort that will not interact with other groups.

Appendix 5: Screening Protocols

Mandatory Daily Screenings

For everybody entering the building, GISNY will implement mandatory health screening to identify any individuals who may have COVID-19 or who may have been exposed to the COVID-19 virus.

Our screening program will have the following components:

A daily online health screening routine completed at home (paper copies available to those who need them) and submitted before departure for school in the morning.

The short list of symptoms/conditions in the questionnaire will include (but is not limited to):

- Having knowingly been in close or proximate contact in the past 14 days with anyone who has tested positive through a diagnostic test for COVID-19 or who has or had symptoms of COVID-19;
- Having tested positive through a diagnostic test for COVID-19 in the past 14 days;
- Having experienced any symptoms of COVID-19, including a temperature of greater than 100.0°F, in the past 14 days;
- If they, or a member of their household – if that member is not quarantining away from other household members – have travelled internationally or from a state with widespread community transmission per the CDC Travel guidelines.

For students, the questionnaire will provide a short list of symptoms or situations that might indicate a COVID+ status, like the ones outlined above, but also including some child-specific symptoms. High school students may fill it out themselves. In the case of younger students, the individual's parents or guardians will certify whether any of the listed symptoms/conditions apply.

These forms will be updated periodically to make sure they reflect any updated understandings of the Covid-19 as expressed by the CDC and/or DOH.

The school will not retain individual medical or health information from this online questionnaire. Only the “clear/not clear” status of the individual as determined by the questionnaire will be available to the school or kept on file.

A daily greeting at the door from a staff member will confirm that the form has been filled out, and if not, provides a form for the parent/guardian/older student to fill out on the spot.

An immediate review each morning of all the data from the forms by the staff responsible for attendance, including follow-up calls to families of children who are not in school that day if those families have not already submitted their daily form.

Reporting of any “not clear” statuses (of children who have been turned away or have stayed home) to the school nurse or follow-up according to DOH guidelines.

Visitors to the school will be asked to call the front office prior to entering the school. They will then be screened via the telephone with their temperature checked at the door.

Appendix 6: Hygiene, Cleaning & Disinfection

The school’s outside cleaning contractor is primarily responsible for cleaning and disinfection. They will be supported by the school’s maintenance staff. A comprehensive COVID-19-specific cleaning plan per State guidelines has been developed for the school and is available through the Business Office. Per DOH guidelines, custodial staff will keep logs that include the date, time, and scope of custodial cleaning and disinfection. In addition to these measures, the following extra steps will be taken in classrooms, offices, and common areas:

- Water drinking fountains will be closed. Non-touch refill dispensers are available for refilling of bottles that students and faculty bring with. Students, faculty, and staff are encouraged to bring their own labeled water bottles for refilling.
- In general, students remain in their own classroom with their cohorts. However, shared items (gym equipment, etc.) will be cleaned between each cohort’s use.
- Materials and tools used by staff or employees are regularly cleaned and disinfected using registered disinfectants. If cleaning or disinfection products or the act of cleaning and disinfection causes safety hazards or degrades the material or machinery, GISNY will supply disposable gloves and/or place limitations on the number of employees using such machinery or will add new machinery to limit the number of users and the traffic flow to such machines.
- Custodial staff will keep logs that include the date, time, and scope of custodial cleaning and disinfection.

Ventilation

Most of the school has steam heating which generates ample heat to enable windows to be left open for fresh air on all but the coldest days. The school’s HVAC installers have assured the school that HEPA filters with Merv 13 capacity can be installed in all AC units that have circulating air. Stand-alone air filters were introduced to all classrooms in September 2020. Their filters are changed regularly according to manufacturer’s recommendations.

Appendix 7: Communication

GISNY maintains a healthy dialogue with its constituency and will leverage all our usual communication methods to message out our reopening plans, as well as safety information pertaining to mitigating the risk of COVID-19 infection. In addition to our website, we send out regular e-newsletters, and use both Instagram and Facebook to reach our families. Parents/guardians from each class who collect the most pertinent information from the school via the Parent Association and distribute it peer-to-peer.

Specifically, we will:

- Publish our **Re**-reopening plans on our website and update them as they evolve
- Provide resources and education on COVID-19 prevention and safety, including information on CDC and DOH COVID-19 guidelines
- Ensure that students and faculty are trained in how to follow COVID-19 prevention protocols safely and correctly, including but not limited to hand hygiene, proper face covering wearing, social distancing, and respiratory hygiene
- Use verbal and written communication (e.g., signage) to encourage all students, faculty, staff, and visitors to adhere to CDC and DOH guidance regarding the use of PPE, specifically acceptable face coverings, when social distance cannot be maintained.

Appendix 8: Transportation

The GISNY does not have its own school buses and therefore must rely on the various school districts and private bus companies to be fully compliant with CDC and NYSDOH mandates. We have received assurance that full compliance is maintained.

Drop Off:

GISNY will have marked drop-off spots for buses in the morning where staff will greet the students and guide them to their respective entrance. At the entrance, they will have to present proof of screening for symptoms. If unable to show proof, the students will be screened before entering the school building.

Parents will be asked to park at their assigned parking areas and drop their children off, ways to the respective entrances will be clearly marked and parents will be asked to leave the parking lot again.

Special arrangements will be made for parents in ES and PreK.

Pick-up:

The buses will stop at the designated drop-off spots and the students will be guided to their respective busses.

Students that are picked up will take a marked path keeping physical distance to meet their parents at the parking lot.

Appendix 9: Food Services

Meals will be served to student in the classrooms. Students will be allowed to remove their masks when eating and drinking.

The school's food service vendor, FLIK, has assured the school that their workers will comply with all CDC and BOH best practices in the training of their staff and in the procedures, they will use in preparing meals. FLIC will encourage all staff to get vaccinated.

Appendix 10: Health Regulations

Testing Protocols

All students and staff members who fail daily screening will be referred to their medical provider for further management. All students and staff whose Covid-19 symptoms arise during the school day will be referred for testing.

A negative Covid 19 PCR Test will be required before the student or staff member may return to school. We can only accept a PCR Test from a laboratory, no rapid tests will be accepted.

Testing Responsibility

- Students, faculty,
- and staff will be referred to their healthcare provider or to the NYSDOH for testing.
- The GISNY school nurse will refer students/faculty and staff. The school nurse will track all persons referred for testing.
- GISNY will facilitate periodic testing events at school.

Early Warning Signs

- The GISNY Health Services are provided by the WPCSD. We will follow their guidance and that of the WCDOH.

School Health Offices

- Protocols are in place for students/faculty/staff who develop symptoms of Covid-19 during the school day.
- Students will be transferred to the isolation area while awaiting pick up. They will be transferred to the area via an outside route. The Isolation area will be closed to all other traffic. A staff member will remain outside the area (visible through a wall of glass) in PPE to supervise the student.
- Symptomatic Faculty and staff will be advised to leave the school immediately.
- All visitors to the health office will be required to call the health office for pre-screening ahead of the visit so that potential Covid-19 cases will be kept separate from other health room visits.

Isolation

- The school nurse will be alerted if an individual screens positive upon arrival to school or when an individual becomes symptomatic while at school.
- The individual will be screened by the nurse in PPE and escorted to the isolation area through an outside walkway.
- The student will be under the direct visual observation of a school staff member, sitting outside the isolation area.
- The student's parent/guardian will be contacted immediately and will be required to pick up their student within 30 minutes.
- Faculty and staff will be referred to their HCP and sent home as expeditiously as possible if they screen positive on arrival or if they become symptomatic over the course of the school day.

Collection

- Parents/legal guardians will be required to pick up their students no later than 30 minutes after being called by the school.
- Parents/guardians will be instructed to follow up with the student's health care provider. A clearance note will be required from the HCP before the student may return to school. If the HCP did not perform a Covid-19 test, the school will confer with the WCDOH to determine whether a Covid-19 test is indicated before the student or staff member is cleared to return.

Infected Individuals

Individuals that have tested positive will be required to isolate for the duration of their infectious period

Exposed Individuals

- Exposed individuals/ close contacts (students/faculty/staff) will be required to quarantine for the duration of their incubation period.
- The contact will be required to quarantine away from other family members.
- If a student/staff member is unable to quarantine away from other family members, no member of that family may attend school until they have been discharged from quarantine.

Appendix 11: Operational Activity

In anticipation of ongoing and evolving challenges associated with the COVID-19 pandemic, GISNY has developed different models for learning. These models are all based on the principle "Favor in-person learning over remote learning."

The first model, which we call our In-person Learning Model, describes a traditional school experience where students attend school five days a week. If conditions demand that we close our campus, GISNY will continue to default to our Distance/Blended Learning Model. As a third option, we have identified an alternative to this open-or-closed dichotomy, which we call our Hybrid Learning Model. This model acknowledges the critical role in-person interactions play in a child's learning while implementing physical distancing norms that reduce student density.

We have opted for our In-person model when reopening on September 1. However, even if the In-person-Learning Model is like teaching before the pandemic, we will have restrictions to avoid exchange between student cohorts, to avoid density of people and to limit potential contacts:

- After-school activities will remain limited. In grades 7-12 only vaccinated students can join an after-school activity. In grades 1-6 only students of the same cohort can join an after-school activity.
- Physical Education classes will take place outside as much as possible.
- The students will have their classes almost always in the same room and at the same desk.
- The classes will take place outdoors as often as practicable.
- In PreK and Kindergarten, we will continue our Nature Based Early Childhood Educational Program GISNY which is based on spending large parts of the day outside.
- Planning for any field trips is on hold except for grade 12. We will try to offer that trip to all vaccinated students.

We will make every effort to aid students who are prohibited to attend school:

- We will stream relevant classes online. Therefore, the students can participate from home.
- The student can actively participate via Internet during class time.
- We will upload all materials and blackboard pictures to our content management system.

During recess, the students must follow special procedures:

- All classes that have a separate entrance from the outside will use this to leave or enter the room.
- All others must follow specific signs on the floor.
- We will set up specific times when each class has its break.
- We will define specific areas on our huge school grounds where each class is supposed to spend recess.
- Students from each cohort have color coded 'pinnies' to ensure that students from different cohorts do not mix.

Attendance

We will continue to use WebUntis as our tool to keep attendance and document teacher/student interaction.

Safety Drills

GISNY will aim to fulfill all mandatory fire and safety drill requirements.

Appendix 12: Restart Operations

In preparation for the restarting of the school, GISNY has prepared signage and markings on the pavement to direct the various cohorts to their designated entrances to avoid any congestion as students enter the building. Three entrances will be used to access the building, each with its own designated grade levels for each entrance.

Closure triggers

GISNY will work closely with all authorities on this matter, e.g.

- if all schools in the Hudson Valley, or throughout New York State, are directed to close by the Governor, or
- if, we are advised to close for a period of time by the WCDOH , or
- if absentee rates (of students or staff) are such that they interfere with our school's normal functioning

We will close for the time frame recommended.

Plan for an Orderly Closure:

- GISNY has a plan for distance learning in place in the event that the school needs to pivot quickly from in-person schooling to remote learning which was successfully implemented before the summer.
- GISNY will communicate our plan to the school community and provide regular updates.

Appendix 13

Aftercare

GISNY will offer limited Aftercare to the extent possible.

SIGNAGE

Sign on parking lots / Parkplatzschilder

Welcome to GISNY



Masks must be worn!
Maskenpflicht!

Stay at least 6 feet apart!
Ein Mindestabstand von 2 m muss eingehalten werden!



Please **DO NOT** enter the school grounds if you, your child or anybody in your household are experiencing any of the following symptoms:
Betreten Sie bitte **NICHT** das Schulgelände, wenn Sie, ihr Kind oder jemand in ihrer Wohngemeinschaft die folgenden Symptome aufweisen:

| | | | | | | |
|--|--|---|--|---|--|---|
|  Cough |  Fever |  Chills |  Muscle pain |  Shortness of breath or difficulty breathing |  Sore throat |  New loss of taste or smell |
|--|--|---|--|---|--|---|

- Fever or chills
- Cough
- Shortness of breath
- Difficulty breathing
- Fatigue
- Muscle or body aches

- Headaches
- Nausea / Vomiting
- Diarrhea
- New loss of taste or smell
- Sore throat
- Congestion / runny nose

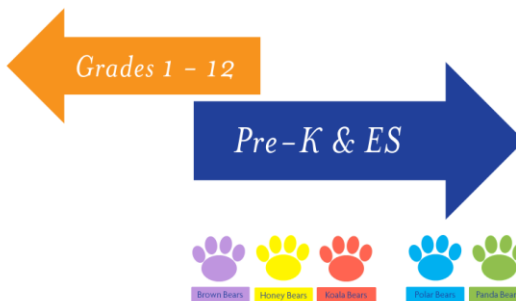
- Fieber / Schüttelfrost
- Husten
- Kurzatmigkeit
- Atemnot
- Müdigkeit
- Kopf- und Gliederschmerzen

- Muskelschmerzen
- Übelkeit / Erbrechen
- Durchfall
- Geschmacks- / Geruchsverlust
- Halsschmerzen
- Verstopfte Nase / Schnupfen

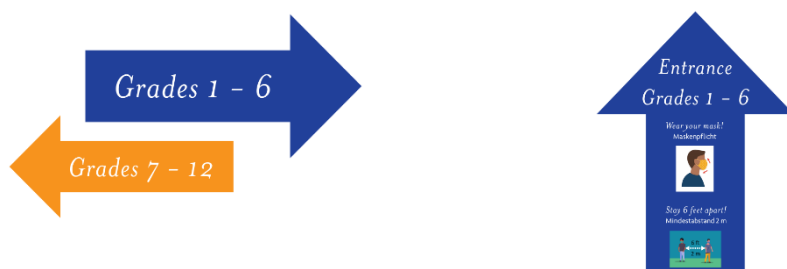
Visitors: Please call (914) 948 6513 before entering the school grounds!
Besucher: Bitte rufen Sie (914) 948 6513 an, bevor Sie das Schulgelände betreten!



Sign on Pre-K & ES playground gate / Schild am Pre-K & ES Spielplatztor



Signs on main entrance / Schilder am Haupteingang



Signs on second entrance / Schilder am zweiten Eingang

