



THE GARDEN SCHOOL



We continue to navigate the challenges of operating our school during this unprecedented pandemic. Our ultimate goal is to remain on campus as much as conditions permit. This is an ever changing situation, and safety measures are subject to change according to state or county mandates or recommendations. As a community, it is incumbent upon us to work together throughout the school year to mitigate community risk and exposure. We are confident that together our community can meet the challenges that lie ahead.

The values that guide us:

We believe...

- In protecting the health and safety of our students, faculty and staff, and taking steps to minimize the risk of COVID-19
- In upholding our mission statement which reads: "We recognize and celebrate a child's truest self. We provide a nurturing community that reveres their capacity to think, care, and act with integrity and confidence"
- In creating a plan that allows us to remain open and on-campus for the 2021-2022 school year
- In a commitment to a quality pedagogical education for all students whether on campus or distance learning (if needed)
- In utilizing the guidelines from the CDC, Cobb & Douglas Public Health, AAP and Governor of Georgia to inform our COVID policy



SAFETY FACTORS

In our effort to stay on our physical campus during the 2021-2022 school year and protect the health and safety of our students, faculty and staff, we will be focusing on mitigating spread with the help of 8 recommended safety factors:

- Designation of small groups (classes/pods) that will stay together
- Distancing Desks 3 ft apart
- Regular hand-washing
- Staggered bathroom visits
- Surface/high touch point cleaning throughout campus
- Cloth masks (please refer to page 3)
- Personal supplies and materials for each grades student



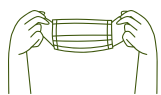
HOW PARENTS CONTRIBUTE TO SAFETY

For everyone's safety, we ask that the guidelines of the CDC be followed by families. Here are the things that will be important for families to do throughout the year:

- Keep your child at home when any symptoms arise; return to school when symptom -free for 24 hours without fever suppressants
- Monitor your child's personal health and self-quarantine if exposed to COVID-19 or symptoms develop
- Inform the school if someone in your family has tested positive for COVID-19, develops symptoms, or is quarantining



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FACE COVERINGS & DISTANCING

First and foremost, as a forest school, we have the utilization of a 13 acre campus, and we will continue to optimize outdoor instruction.

In combination with the predominant use of outdoor classrooms, TGS will follow guidelines by the CDC and Cobb & Douglas Public Health regarding the use of face coverings at school. The CDC has recently changed the survey of data points to community level statistics. Based on this information, we are updating our mask guidance in our grades program to mask-optional and updating our COVID protocol. Please read on below for more detailed information.

As of Friday, February 25th the CDC has moved to community based guidelines at the county level. CDC's "Covid-19 community level" metrics are based on three pieces of data in a community (county):

- new Covid-19 hospitalizations
- hospital capacity
- new Covid-19 cases

The CDC's website includes a county-by-county tracker. As of today, Cobb County is listed at Medium risk level. Per the CDC, with that designation, the school will move to 'voluntary' masks inside the building starting one week after we return to school, that is, March 7. We reserve the right to return to indoor masking if at any time, new data returns a High risk level for Cobb County. Please be clear that this change affects Grades children only, as the Early Childhood program has always been 'masks voluntary'. Parents who wish their child to continue to be masked indoors, please contact your child's teacher. You can monitor the Cobb status page on the CDC Website: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/your-health/covid-by-county.html>.



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FACE COVERINGS & DISTANCING CONTINUED

The Joyful Beginnings and Kindergarten classes will be considered separate groups and will not mix with each other or with the grades classes. At this time, our Early Childhood program is not required to wear masks or physically distance during play. On a sunny day, our Early Childhood programs spend 50-75% of the day outside.

Outdoor instruction where our students can naturally social distance with ample ventilation will be maximized in Grades 1-8.

We respectfully reserve the right to require mask wearing when unsafe, unforeseen circumstances arise that affect the health and safety of students and staff. Some weather conditions require us to revert to the safety of the school building, such as high winds, thunder/lightning, heavy continuous rain, and extreme heat or cold. In those circumstances, the six foot social distancing requirement may not be attainable.

These precautions will help us continue to operate in-person and on campus for as much of the school year as conditions permit.



DROP OFF/PICK UP

Faculty, staff, and students participate in a daily morning health screening to as they arrive on campus. As students arrive in the carpool line they are asked to affirm that they are symptom free, given a temperature check. Classes will be separated starting at drop-off to maintain consistent class groups, and Joyful Beginnings will start the day on the toddler playground or inside their classroom. At the end of the school day students will maintain their respective groups, and a carpool line will be utilized for dismissal.



HANDWASHING

One of the fundamental things we can all do is ensure regular, consistent hand-washing practices. We will continue with scheduled times during the day when classes wash their hands, and instruct students to wash hands for the full 20 seconds. We have also built outdoor hand-washing stations throughout the campus.

Hand sanitizer will be made available for when we are out and about on campus and cannot easily access a hand washing station.



CLEANING

We have cleaning practices in place for high-touch surfaces throughout campus. Staggered visits to the restrooms will be utilized to maintain social distancing and reduce the likelihood of cross contamination.



CAMPUS ACTIVITIES

Gatherings on campus such as assemblies, performances, and festivals are currently only for enrolled families and have organized to allow for families to participate in their respective pods. We believe these are an important aspect of the TGS community, and we continue to evaluate different options for incorporating them into our schedule. While events look different for our community during COVID than they have in the past, we will still honor those traditions. Meetings for faculty, parents and staff will have the option to take place outside or online.



MONITORING HEALTH ON CAMPUS

We have a designated area on campus for students or faculty exhibiting symptoms during a school day. Students will wait in this area while parents are contacted and pick-up from school is arranged. The Garden School will follow-up with each family and proceed according to county health guidelines.



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SCHOOL CLOSURE / REMOTE LEARNING

It is our goal to remain open and on campus. For positive cases, we will follow the protocols and recommendations as outlined by Cobb & Douglas Public Health. Per the CDPH:

- The student with COVID-19 is asked to isolate/quarantine
- The school will notify CDPH as required
- Families and students who were in close contact will be notified
 - A close contact means: closer than 6 feet for longer than 15 minutes
- All close contacts will be asked to quarantine
- Georgia DPH has a very handy quarantine calculator that can help you determine the specific protocol for your circumstances:
<https://dph.georgia.gov/covid-quarantine-calculator>

Should a positive case occur on campus, TGS will work with CDPH to determine next steps. Certain classes/groups may be required to revert to remote learning for a period of time, and families should be prepared for this possibility. Our intention is to maintain in person learning for all groups/classes that are not affected, thereby minimizing the disruption to students, families, and the greater school community.

Remote learning remains a possibility if conditions in our state or county warrant a modification of our in-person learning model, and we ask for your understanding should these situations arise.



We appreciate all families in our community, and thank you for working with us to create a safe and successful school year!