



COVID Response: GALA Return to School Safety, Sanitization, and Closure Procedures

“Continuing to keep children physically out of school could have long-term detrimental effects on academic progress, mental and emotional well-being and behavior, according to recent studies and the American Academy of Pediatrics. Children rely on schools for academic and social development and in many underserved areas for basic needs including food and support for mental and emotional well-being. Additionally, the pandemic has up-ended the lives of all Ohioans, particularly children and parents, who rely on the structure of the school day for much needed daily routine (and childcare).” - [Ohio Department of Health. COVID-19 Health and Prevention Guidance for Ohio K-12 Schools](#)

GALA will rely on the [Ohio's Public Health Advisory System \(OPHAS\)](#) color-coded system in making school-wide decisions and recommendations from the Cuyahoga County Board of Health for evaluating and determining Return to School learning options for students. GALA's Return to School Plan has been revised as follows:

OPHAS Level 1 (Yellow) – Active Exposure and spread. – Along with a recommendation from the Cuyahoga County Board of Health that supports in-person school, GALA will provide two learning options: Hybrid and All Remote; while adhering to public health sanitation and social distancing measures as outlined in Ohio's School Reopening Guidance.

OPHAS Level 2 (Orange) – Increased exposure and spread. Exercise high degree of caution. – Along with a recommendation from the Cuyahoga County Board of Health that supports in-person school, GALA will provide two learning options: Hybrid and All Remote; while adhering to public health sanitation and social distancing measures as outlined in Ohio's School Reopening Guidance.

OPHAS Level 3 (Red) – Very high exposure and spread. Limit activities as much as possible. – Along with a recommendation from the Cuyahoga County Board of Health that supports in-person school, GALA will provide two learning options: In-person with an opt out option of Remote; while adhering to public health sanitation and social distancing measures as outlined in Ohio's School Reopening Guidance.

OPHAS Level 4 (Purple) – Severe exposure and spread. Only leave home for supplies and services. – GALA will provide an All Remote learning option for all students, with no in-person instruction provided during this period of time.

Keeping our GALA Families & Staff Safe

In an effort to mitigate the risk of COVID-19 and make our school building as safe as possible for students, families, & staff, we are implementing **new procedures that will be in place as we return to school in the Fall**. GALA will be following all of the mandates & recommendations for schools made by the [Centers for Disease Control \(CDC\) and Prevention](#), [Ohio Department of Health](#), and [Ohio Department of Education](#). These procedures are detailed below to provide staff

and families a picture of what a typical school day will look like. **Please read carefully and completely. Training for both parents and students will be provided, prior to school, during the first week of school, and ongoing. It will take all of us working together to stay safe. Note, this document is subject to revision as new information develops.**

1. **Symptoms of COVID-19** - As a reminder, symptoms of COVID-19 range from mild to severe and may appear 2 to 14 days after exposure to the virus. It is also possible to have COVID-19 and experience no symptoms (asymptomatic). You may have COVID-19 if you experience one or more of the following:
 - Fever or chills.
 - Cough.
 - Shortness of breath or difficulty breathing.
 - Fatigue.
 - Muscle or body aches.
 - Headache.
 - Loss of taste or smell.
 - Sore throat.
 - Congestion or runny nose.
 - Nausea or vomiting.
 - Diarrhea.

2. **Multiple Layers of Protection** - Aligned to the Health and Safety Guidance for Ohio K-12 Schools, GALA will be implementing a multi-layer approach for protection against the virus and reduce the spread. These layers include:
 - **Physical or social distancing** - Staff and students in the building must maintain 6 feet or more between each other in all school environments, including: classrooms, hallways, restrooms, cafeteria, drop-off and pick-up locations. Distancing will be reinforced with visual cues, such as floor markings and signs, reminders from staff, and eliminating large group events.
 - **Face covering** - All school staff are required to wear **masks**. All students must wear a face mask unless they are unable to do so for a health or developmental reason. **Face shields** that wrap around the face and extend below the chin can be used in addition to a mask, or as an alternative to a mask for individuals who have difficulty wearing a cloth face covering or when communication is impacted for teaching students, especially when teaching a foreign language. Masks are mandatory for all adults dropping off or picking up students or entering the building for any reason. [Moving Personal Protective Equipment Into the Community: Face Shields and Containment of COVID-19 | Infectious Diseases | JAMA](#) (April 29, 2020)
 - **Good hand hygiene** - All staff and students should **avoid touching** their mouth, nose and eyes. All staff and students will **wash their hands** for at least 20 seconds in all of the following instances:
 - Immediately upon entering the building
 - Anytime hands are dirty, including immediately after coughing or sneezing into hands
 - Before eating
 - After eating

- Before using the restroom (hand sanitizer)
 - After using the restroom
 - Frequently throughout the day
 - To supplement handwashing, GALA will provide **hand sanitizer** (60% to 90% alcohol based) in high traffic areas, including entrances, classrooms, and bathrooms. Students will use hand sanitizer every time they enter and exit a room (staff will administer the sanitizer to reduce touching).
 - **Communication** - GALA will hang **signs and posters** to serve as reminders of the importance of **multiple layers of protection**, with an emphasis on hand hygiene and washing, and ways to prevent the spread of germs.
4. **General Operations** - GALA recognizes the great impact certain modifications can have in maximizing the health and safety of everyone in the building, by doing the following:
- **Propping internal doors open** wherever and whenever possible to minimize touching of surfaces.
 - Elimination of the front office reception waiting area and requiring **all visitors to call ahead**. Visitors to the school may be limited as deemed appropriate by GALA.
 - Installing a plastic partition at the front office reception area.
 - Having **all meetings virtually, unless it is necessary to meet in person**.
 - All in-person meetings must follow physical/social distancing guidelines.
 - GALA will review floor plans and remove or **reconfigure seats, furniture and workstations** as needed to preserve recommended physical distancing in accordance with the Ohio Department of Health and local health guidelines.
 - GALA will reconfigure workstations so employees **do not face each other or establish partitions** if facing each other cannot be avoided.
 - GALA will review floor plans and class schedules to institute **traffic flow in the hallways and stairways**.
 - GALA will serve **breakfast, lunch, and snack to students in their classrooms**.
 - Students should bring labeled water bottles, snacks, lunch, and change of clothes.
 - **No water fountains are available on site. Water dispensers will be available in all classrooms**. Students without water bottles will be provided with paper cups and only staff with gloves will be permitted to give students water. Donations of water bottles will be graciously accepted.
5. **Sanitization** - Cleaning and sanitization will be an active process throughout the day at GALA, between student groups, in high traffic areas, and with frequently touched surfaces.
- All common surfaces will be cleaned and sanitized between uses.
 - A deep clean will be performed two times per week and as needed.
 - Classrooms, all bathrooms and other common spaces will be properly disinfected on a frequent and regular basis.
6. **Entrance screening** - GALA will conduct daily health checks prior to anyone entering the building, and entrance will be limited to staff and students only. A staggered arrival and departure schedule with time between student groups will be enforced for drop off and pick up.
- All students arriving by car must remain in their car to complete entrance screening.

- A **daily entrance screening questionnaire** will be administered to all staff and adults dropping off students before entrance to the building is granted. If any question is answered “yes”, that person and/or student will not be allowed to enter the building:
 1. Has anyone in the household had a fever above 100.4 or above in the last 24 hours?
 2. Has anyone in the household had a cough, shortness of breath, or fever?
 3. Have you been in contact with an asymptomatic or sick individual?
 4. Has the staff member or student taken any ibuprofen, acetaminophen, or any other fever reducing medication in the last 24 hours?
 5. Do you or does your student have a cough? Shortness of breath? Fever?
 - After passing the daily screening questionnaire, all staff and students entering the building will have their **temperature checked**. Individuals who have a temperature of 100.4 degrees or higher, will not be allowed to enter the building.
 - After passing entrance screening, all adults and children must immediately proceed to **wash their hands before doing anything else**. Good handwashing technique will be reinforced with younger children who may need additional support.
- 7. Grouping, Activities and Transitions** - GALA will be strategic and intentional in grouping staff and students, activities, and transitions throughout the school day to minimize spread and exposure to germs and maximize the health and safety of all. The following measures will be put in place:
- Classes will be divided in half to create small groups to reduce the number of students in one classroom. Requests for certain students to be grouped together or apart will be accommodated as determined by the school’s discretion.
 - GALA will not have more than **15 students** in a room and will ensure **36 square feet** of usable space is available for all individuals in the classroom.
 - Student grouping will remain the same until the end of December 2020. New groups may be formed at the start of school in January 2021.
 - All activities will occur in small groups and include **non-contact games and activities**.
 - All classroom activity stations will meet social distance requirements and will be sanitized before a new group utilizes the station.
 - All staff and students must **avoid sharing materials**, unless items are thoroughly cleaned in-between uses.
 - Students will receive **all instruction in one classroom** to avoid transitions throughout the school building. Additionally, GALA will serve breakfast, lunch, and snacks to students in their classrooms. Students are not permitted to share food.
 - Teachers will be dedicated to only one consistent group of students, and only teach one group of students on any day.
 - Administrative and support staff will not enter classrooms without an urgent need to do so.
- 8. Pick-up Procedure** - GALA will have a schedule and procedure for dismissal at the end of the school day that must be followed.
- Parents/guardians are not permitted in the building. Students will be escorted to the parent/guardian at the entrance or to their car.

- A staggered dismissal schedule with time between departing student groups will be enforced for pick up (and drop off).

9. Exposure to COVID - The measures below are in accordance with guidance provided by the CDC and Ohio Department of Health. GALA will follow this guidance in the event any person in the building is identified with symptoms of COVID or exposure to COVID in the building is confirmed.

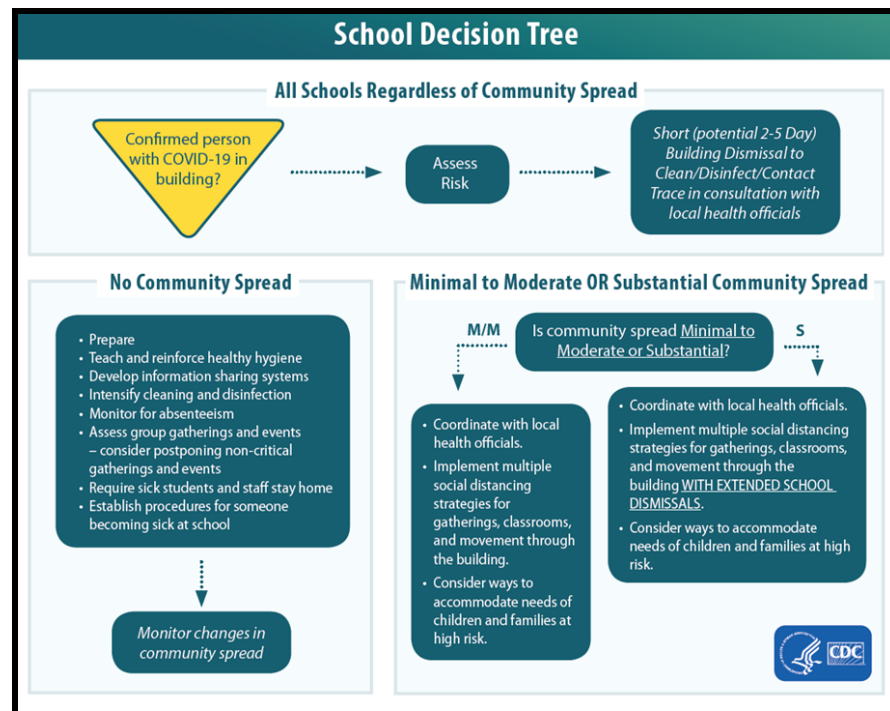
- GALA will monitor daily absences of students and staff for **trends**.
- If a student or staff begins to **show symptoms or has a temperature above 100.4°F while at school**, they must **immediately be separated** from other students and staff, **given a face covering**, and monitored by a staff member wearing appropriate **personal protective equipment (PPE)** and maintaining physical distance when possible.
 - The space where an individual waits before he or she goes home will be **separate** from the nurse's office and other areas students are likely to visit.
 - Areas of the building that were occupied by a person exhibiting symptoms will be thoroughly **sanitized**.
 - School personnel **must refer** those displaying symptoms of COVID-19 to an appropriate **health care professional or testing sites**.
 - **Local health departments will be contacted** in the case of positive or suspected COVID-19 cases. Local health professionals can help to identify potentially infected or exposed individuals and assist with appropriate notifications.
 - **Individuals who potentially have been exposed should follow quarantine and other recommendations** from local public health officials and their medical provider.
- Staff, support workers, and students who have **suspected or confirmed COVID-19 cannot return to school until they meet CDC criteria** for return to work/school, and GALA will be prepared with appropriate plans for absences.
- Sick leave and absence policies **will not penalize staff or students for staying home when symptomatic or in quarantine or isolation**.
- Anyone that has close contact with someone with COVID-19 should stay home for 14 days after exposure.
- Anyone that tested positive for COVID-19 or think they have it, and had symptoms can **end quarantine after**:
 - 24 hours with no fever without the use of fever-reducing medications; and
 - Respiratory symptoms have improved (e.g. cough, shortness of breath); and
 - 10 days since symptoms first appeared
 - Source: [When You Can be Around Others After You Had or Likely Had COVID-19](#)
- Anyone tested positive for COVID-19, but did not have symptoms can **end quarantine**:
 - If you continue to have no symptoms, you can be with others after 10 days have passed since the test
 - Depending on your healthcare provider's advice and availability of testing, you might get tested to see if you still have COVID-19. If you will be tested,

you can be around others after you receive two negative test results in a row, at least 24 hours apart.

- If you develop symptoms after testing positive, follow the guidance above for “I think or know I had COVID, and I had symptoms.”
- [When You Can be Around Others After You Had or Likely Had COVID-19](#)

10. Response to COVID Outbreak - GALA will be prepared for COVID-19 outbreaks in our local community and for individual exposure events that may occur in our facility, regardless of the level of community transmission.

- The following [school decision tree](#) can be used to help schools determine **which set of mitigation strategies** may be most appropriate for their current situation.



- **When a confirmed case has entered GALA**, GALA will follow the recommended CDC procedures, regardless of the level of community spread:
 - Once learning of a COVID-19 case in someone who has been in the school, immediately **notify local health officials**. These officials will help administrators determine a course of action.
 - **Immediate initial dismissal of students and most staff for 2-5 days** if an infected person has been in the school building. This initial **short-term** dismissal allows time for the local health officials to **gain a better understanding of the COVID-19 situation impacting the school**. This allows the local health officials to help the school **determine appropriate next steps**, including whether an extended dismissal duration is needed.

- Local health officials' **recommendations for the scope and duration of school dismissals will be made on a case-by-case basis** using the most up-to-date information about COVID-19 and the specific cases in the community.
- During school dismissals, also **cancel extracurricular group activities, school-based afterschool programs.**
- **Communicating with staff, parents, and students when a confirmed case has entered GALA.**
 - Coordinate with local health officials to **communicate dismissal decisions and the possible COVID-19 exposure.** Ensure the message communicated counters potential [stigma](#) and discrimination and maintain **confidentiality of the student or staff member** as required by the ADA and FERPA.
- **Clean and disinfect thoroughly.**
 - Close off areas used by the individuals with COVID-19 and wait as long as practical before beginning cleaning and disinfection to minimize potential for exposure to respiratory droplets. If possible, wait up to 24 hours before beginning cleaning and disinfection.
 - Open outside doors and windows to increase air circulation in the area.
 - Cleaning staff should clean and disinfect all areas used by the ill persons, focusing especially on frequently touched surfaces. If surfaces are dirty, they should be cleaned using a detergent or soap and water prior to disinfection. A list of products that are EPA-approved for use against the virus that causes COVID-19 is available [here](#). Diluted household bleach solutions will be effective against coronaviruses when properly diluted. Prepare a bleach solution by mixing: 5 tablespoons (1/3rd cup) bleach per gallon of water or 4 teaspoons bleach per quart of water
- **Extended dismissal (longer than two weeks)** - GALA may implement temporary extended school dismissal/closure procedures. Temporarily dismissing school is a strategy to stop or slow the further spread of COVID-19.
 - During school dismissals (after cleaning and disinfection), schools may stay open for staff members (unless ill) while students stay home.
 - Keeping facilities open: a) allows teachers to develop and deliver lessons and materials remotely, thus maintaining continuity of teaching and learning; and b) allows other staff members to continue to provide services and help with additional response efforts. Decisions on which, if any, staff should be allowed in the school should be made in collaboration with local health officials.
- School administrators should work in close collaboration and coordination with local health officials to make dismissal and large event cancellation decisions. **Schools are not expected to make decisions about dismissal or canceling events on their own.** School dismissals and event cancellations may be extended if advised by local health officials. The nature of these actions (e.g., geographic scope, duration) may change as the local outbreak situation evolves.

- Administrators should seek **guidance from local health officials to determine when students and staff should return to schools and what additional steps are needed for the school community**. In addition, students and staff who are well but are taking care of or share a home with someone with a case of COVID-19 should follow instructions from local health officials to determine when to return to school.

11. Continuing Education - GALA will continue education and related support for students in the event of a coronavirus outbreak and during an extended dismissal from the school building.

- Ensure **continuity of education**. Review continuity plans, including plans for the continuity of teaching and learning. Implement e-learning plans, including digital and distance learning options as feasible and appropriate.
- Ensure **continuity of meal programs**. Consider ways to distribute food to students, including options such as “grab-and-go” bagged lunches or meal delivery.
- Consider alternatives for **providing essential medical and social services** for students.