

Gardner Public Schools



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Dear Gardner Public School Community,

Welcome to the 2020-2021 school year! This year, the start is unlike any that we have ever had. We would like to thank you for your patience and understanding as we navigate through these difficult times. To ensure health and safety for all, Gardner Public Schools has developed detailed health and safety protocols, which can be found on the district's website, www.gardnerk12.org. If you cannot access the protocol online, please ask the school nurse to send them home with your child. Here are some of the important highlights of these protocols as we prepare for some staff and students to be back in the buildings on 9/15.

The first protocol is **Face Mask/Face Covering Protocol for staff and students**. All staff and students are required to arrive at the bus/school wearing a clean mask or cloth face covering each day. The mask should cover the nose and mouth and fit snugly around the face and chin with no visible gaps. Masks with exhalation vents and gaiter or bandana style masks are not acceptable masks. If your child's mask should become soiled or need to be replaced during the day, the school will have replacement masks if needed. If possible, please send in a replacement mask that your child is used to and comfortable in. Staff or students that have a condition that inhibits their ability to wear a mask should speak with the school nurse of their building.

The second protocol, **COVID-19 Screening for Staff and Students**, states that all staff and caregivers of students are required to check the following list for symptoms of COVID-19 each morning. If staff or students have any of the following symptoms, do not report to school. Call the nurse to report the symptoms and receive guidance on what steps to take.

- ☐ Fever (100.0° Fahrenheit or higher), chills, or shaking chills
- ☐ Cough (not due to other known cause, such as chronic cough)
- ☐ Difficulty breathing or shortness of breath
- ☐ New loss of taste or smell
- ☐ Sore throat
- ☐ Headache *when in combination with other symptoms*
- ☐ Muscle aches or body aches
- ☐ Nausea, vomiting, or diarrhea
- ☐ Fatigue, when in combination with other symptoms
- ☐ Nasal congestion or runny nose (not due to other known causes, such as allergies) *when in combination with other symptoms*

If your child has any of the above symptoms during the school day, he/ she will be brought to the medical waiting room. The nurse will then call you to request that you come in to dismiss your child. Your child will not be able to return to the classroom or be sent home on the bus if any of the symptoms are present. Upon dismissal, you will receive guidance from the school nurse, which may include calling your provider and/or having your child tested for COVID-19. That guidance must be followed in order for your child to return to school. For more detailed information on these types of scenarios, please review the **Gardner Public Schools Protocols for responding to COVID-19 scenarios in school, on the bus, or in community settings** on the district's website.

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An additional protocol is regarding handwashing and alcohol based hand sanitizer use. One of the most important measures we can take is hand hygiene to reduce the spread of any infectious diseases. Alcohol based hand sanitizer will be used throughout the school day to keep hands clean at times when washing with soap and water is not possible. If you DO NOT want your child to use alcohol based hand sanitizer, please put in writing your request to the school nurse of your child's building so that the nurse can notify the teacher of this request.

The protocols include a lot of information and may seem overwhelming. If you have any questions or concerns regarding any of this information, please contact your school nurse. The protocols are in place to decrease the risk of transmission of COVID-19 as much as possible. Please understand that as guidance changes we may need to change the protocols as well. We appreciate your partnership in following these protocols and keeping communication open as we work together to provide the safest return possible!

Sincerely,

The Gardner Public School Health Services Team

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