



**GERMANTOWN**  
**Municipal School District**  
*Inspiring Personal Excellence*

# **Virtual/Digital Learning**

# **Student Handbook**

**2020-2021**

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Visit us on the web at [www.gmsdk12.org](http://www.gmsdk12.org)

# Virtual Learning Handbook

On behalf of the Germantown Municipal School District, we would like to thank our faculties, staff, and community stakeholders for their patience and their participation in developing our plan for reopening schools. This new adventure in public education will continue to require collaboration and communication between parents, students, teachers, and school leaders. As we embark on this journey, we ask that everyone remains flexible as the district continues to respond to the most up-to-date guidance from state and local officials.

Germantown Municipal School District is committed to the safety of our students as our primary goal, and we will continue to offer high-quality instruction, using our current curricula and teaching staff. District and school leadership will continue to monitor and adjust plans accordingly. We will continue to seek feedback from stakeholders and ask that all involved be solutions-oriented in their communications.

GMSD began providing guidance and professional learning for staff in April during the original school closure to support a shift to virtual instruction for the remainder of the year and in anticipation of the need for virtual learning in the fall. GMSD partnered with Hanover Research to ensure our planning was based on the most recent research and best practices through a national lens. Several task forces have since been convened making use of input from nearly 4000 community members and nearly 500 members of staff as well as the direct participation of more than 110 individual district employees to address the myriad issues we anticipated in response to the crisis:

- The desire of the district was to accommodate in-person learning while providing 6 ft social distancing among students and teachers. In support of this desire, building and district leadership visited each school building and measured spaces to ensure proper distancing to support the possibility of returning to in-person learning
- The physical layout of our schools coupled with our student to teacher ratios allowed for a 5-day in-person option for students K-6. Unfortunately, spatial limitations and staffing ratios for middle and high schools could not support full in-person learning, prompting the creation of hybrid schedules.
- Our hybrid plan allows us to move immediately to distance learning if required or to phase in full traditional class settings with minimal disruptions.

- Virtual learning, whether in full or as part of a hybrid schedule, is necessitated both by our current situation and by the very real possibility of required quarantining of groups of students or additional extended school closures.
- Many of our teachers and district staff undertook product reviews to ensure our current instructional materials could be presented in either setting. Additional products have been purchased based on recommendations from teachers to support learning in both remote and in-person settings
- Teachers and building coaches have been working to ensure that virtual students will have access to additional supporting instruction through RTI<sup>2</sup>, including the writing of curriculum to support gifted students in middle schools
- Librarians have worked to increase student access to e-texts and to develop procedures for the borrowing of books to safeguard against virus transmission.
- Professional learning is currently in place and will continue to expand to support teachers' growth in facilitating virtual learning across grade levels.

In any event, GMSD has been preparing to deliver new learning to our students on a daily basis wherever their desks may be. Teachers will continue to build upon their abilities and knowledge to offer engaging instruction to all our students until such time as we can all safely return to classrooms. GMSD has long enjoyed and will continue to need the support of our community members to ensure students have the ability to persevere and the opportunity to succeed.

You are GMSD, and we are in this together.

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# Definitions

## Synchronous Learning

Synchronous learning happens in real-time. Students and teachers interact in a specific virtual place, through a specified online medium, at a scheduled time. Synchronous learning methods in Germantown Municipal School District may include Google Meet Hangouts, Zoom conferencing, large group and small group instruction, live chatting, live-streaming of lessons, or telephone calls. Schedules for synchronous learning will be posted in Schoology by each virtual teacher. Each teacher has the autonomy to create his or her own schedule for synchronous learning. *See teacher expectations for scheduling on page 8.*

### **What are the characteristics of synchronous learning?**

#### **Classroom Engagement**

Students and teachers are able to take part in active discussion, immediate feedback, and are able to build student-teacher relationships that can only be achieved through real-time interaction. As this will be the first online classroom for most of our GMSD students, personal contact will be pivotal in a successful transition from in-person learning to our virtual learning program.

#### **Dynamic Learning**

Synchronous learning allows for a more dynamic exploration of lesson topics, ideas, and concepts. Meeting in a live Zoom session, for instance, gives students the opportunity to ask questions and receive answers during instruction; to discuss and debate with classmates, and to collectively learn in new unexpected directions.

#### **Adhere to a Predetermined Schedule**

Many of our students will require the help of accessible and supportive instruction, which is best provided in a synchronous learning environment. To afford our students these opportunities, parents will need to follow a schedule of live-learning sessions that are provided by the teacher.

## Asynchronous Learning

Asynchronous learning is developed on-demand. While your teacher will provide materials for reading, scheduled synchronous times for learning, assignments deadlines, and assessments,

students will be given some flexibility by classroom teachers to satisfy these requirements within a predetermined time frame. GMSD will seek to employ several methods of asynchronous online learning: self-guided lesson modules through our textbook companies or supplemental resources, pre-recorded lessons or streaming video content, virtual libraries, exchanges across discussion boards in Schoology, or live peer collaboration through Google Hangouts or Zoom meetings.

### **What are the advantages of asynchronous learning?**

#### **Parent Flexibility**

Learning activities can be accessed in a student's own time, (though clear expectations for deadlines will be communicated by our teachers). This complete-at-your-own-pace will help serve families who may be managing multiple students' virtual learning simultaneously.

#### **Student Pacing**

One of the most empowering features of asynchronous learning is the fact that student experience is catered to a student's natural pace. Our quick learners can choose to power through materials and units that come easily to them. Other students may choose to take more time to absorb new information and knowledge. This style of learning also gives parents and students time to review information and practice retention with their own children.

## **Virtual Learning**

**GMSD Virtual Learning Program** will engage students in full-time online learning activities led by an assigned teacher. Their programming will include a mixture of both synchronous and asynchronous methods. The virtual teacher will be listed as their teacher of record. This terminology will exclusively be applied to students who are opted into the full-time virtual program.

## **Distance Learning**

**Hybrid Distance Learning** will be used to describe online learning that occurs in the hybrid classroom--which may include a heavier reliance on asynchronous activities Monday through Thursday as in-person teachers will be simultaneously delivering classroom instruction to one of two cohorts of students Monday through Thursday. Some teachers *may* employ the use of

live-streaming from their in-person classrooms, but other tools for asynchronous learning will also be available.

**Distance Learning** will also be used in the event of an individual student or cohort of students and teachers that are asked to quarantine due to exposure of a positive COVID case or for individuals who are displaying symptoms. GMSD will give students and teachers the opportunity to attend classes by completing asynchronous assignments in Schoology.

## **PPE**

**Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)** refers to protective clothing, gloves, face shields, goggles, facemasks, and/or other equipment designed to protect the wearer from injury or the spread of infection or illness.

# Student Devices

All students in our full-time virtual learning program will be supplied with a device. If a student currently has a device from last year, that student will keep that device. If a student does NOT currently have a district-provided device please contact your student's homeschool.

PreK-3rd iPads will be provided.

4th and 5th Chromebooks will be provided.

6th - 8th iPads will be provided.

9th and 10th Chromebooks will be provided.

11th and 12th Macbooks will be provided.

Broken devices should be reported to the school's Student Technology Support personnel (STS). Parents will drop off a device for repairs and receive a replacement device by working with the assigned STS. Refer to the [GMSD Technology Department](#) webpage for the contact information of your school's STS.

In the event a student will be absent for an extended period due to illness or quarantine, the school will provide a device for the student to use at home. Parents should reach out to the school's STS to arrange a checkout of a school device. The student will still remain in the current teachers' class and complete assignments for that teacher(s). Sick or quarantined students will not switch to a virtual classroom. If they are capable of continuous learning, they can participate in their class(es) by checking Schoology daily and completing work.

# Attendance

**Student participation in instructional time will be confirmed by completing a task in our Learning Management System, Schoology, or through video conferencing.**

Teachers shall take attendance daily through our Student Information System, Skyward, when students are participating in remote instruction.

If a student is absent during remote instruction, the parent or guardian will email the attendance secretary at the school to inform them of the absence. An excused absence code will be added for students that are COVID-19 positive. Teachers will monitor students with several absences and reach out to the parent/guardian to check on the student. The Attendance Supervisor, School Counselors, or District Social Workers will reach out to the parent or legal guardian of students with ten or more absences not related to COVID-19.

All student attendance will be entered in our Student Information System. Any student that is receiving remote instruction will be coded with the new D, Distance Learning/Virtual Classrooms, code as required by the Tennessee Department of Education. Each afternoon, all student attendance will be sent for state reporting.

## Grading

**We will continue our current grading practices with the exception of the number of grades due will be equal to the number of weeks of learning. In the first quarter, the minimum number of grades will be five.**

**Please refer to the new policy approved on 8.25.20**

<https://meeting.boeconnect.net/Public/Organization/557>

<https://www.gmsdk12.org/Downloads/GMSD%20Student%20Handbook21.pdf>

## Honor Code

### Introduction

The administration, faculty, staff, and students of Germantown Municipal School District uphold the qualities of honesty, integrity, and truthfulness.

1. Students will not give or receive aid on quizzes, tests, lab reports, projects, exams, or any other assignments for which a teacher does not explicitly permit peer collaboration.
2. Students will not plagiarize any part of published materials, essays, or the work of another.

In cases where two students submit identical or nearly identical essays, both will be

penalized.

3. Students will not copy or allow any copied homework or other assignments.
4. Administration, faculty, and staff will uphold standards of honesty and integrity.

## The Honor Statement

Part of the reality of virtual learning is that you must accept an even greater responsibility for ensuring the integrity of your work. In a virtual setting, all tasks, activities, projects and assessments will be completed outside of the direct supervision of a teacher. As is the case in a traditional class, it is expected that the work you complete is completely and solely your own.

Violations of the honors code will result in the same consequences for virtual students as for traditional students, which are referenced in your [student handbook linked here](#).

## Key Terms

Cheating is defined as receiving, soliciting, or aiding in the collaboration of a graded assignment without the teacher's approval.

Common examples include:

- a. Copying homework or classwork assignments (directly or from a picture of the work)
- b. Possession of any electronic device other than a traditional calculator (when allowed) for ANY reason during a quiz, test, exam, or other assessment. (i.e. cell phones, smartwatches, or wearable technology).
- c. Attempting to obtain assistance or answers for a quiz, test, exam, or assignment from an adult or another student before, during, or after it has been given.
- d. Allowing another person to complete an assignment for you.
- e. Attempting to use a notecard or slip of paper with unauthorized information, programming additional information into a calculator, opening additional windows or browsers on a laptop to access additional information, or utilizing any other form of written/digital information that is not approved by the teacher for the assignment or assessment.

Plagiarism is defined as taking someone else’s work and attempting to pass it off as your own.

Common examples include:

- a. Quoting or paraphrasing a source of another’s words without proper citation and credit to the source of the information.
- b. Writing a paper for someone else or submitting a paper written by another individual.
- c. Using an electronic translator on a foreign language writing assessment.

*Please note that this list is not all-inclusive.*

## **Instruction**

### **Teacher expectations (subject to change):**

- Follow the district adopted curriculum and strive to stay on pace with those teaching in the buildings.
- Provide opportunities and activities that foster a classroom community with students.
- Provide synchronous learning activities on a daily basis for elementary students and a minimum of two days per week for students in 6-12.
- Keep the camera on so students can see your face during video calls.
- Small-Group and Differentiated instruction should be provided to all students weekly.
- In the case of teacher absence, virtual teachers will ensure that students have either pre-recorded lessons or will provide independent and meaningful learning opportunities for students.
- Attend faculty meetings and PD sessions as required by the district.
- Provide timely academic feedback to students on completed assignments and assessments.
- Notify parents of students’ progress: weekly reports/graded paper “folders”; interims; report cards.
- Schedule parent conferences as needed and/or meet virtually with parents as requested.
- Contact administrator(s) assigned to virtual school with any concerns or needs that might arise.
- Take daily attendance as required by Student Services and monitor excessive absences.
- Establish classroom rules, expectations, and procedures. Communicate those to students and parents.
- The virtual teacher may create his/her own daily schedule; however, the schedule should adhere to the time limits for each subject provided by the district.

## Student expectations:

- Attend scheduled meetings/lessons at the appropriate times daily.
- Come prepared (needed materials, charged device, completed homework if assigned).
- Check Schoology daily for new assignments or messages from staff. Students in grades 6-12 should check school email at least once a day.
- Dress as if you were attending school in a building.
- Virtual Classroom student backgrounds should be appropriate by means of not displaying anything offensive or distracting, including logos, other people, pets, etc.
- Actively participate in class discussions and activities (no side conversations).
- Students should keep their camera on during video calls. Concerns with that policy will be dealt with on a case by case basis.
- Video call chats should be used for academic conversations only and should mirror the expectations of the regular classroom.
- Students should ask for help or clarification when needed by using the chat function or other functions your teacher has directed you to.
- Submit assignments per teacher's directions on time.
- During instructional time, a student should not have any additional electronic devices in use (television, phone, video game, etc.)
- Adhere to classroom rules and expectations as well as the GMSD Acceptable Use of the Internet policy.
- Interact respectfully with teacher and fellow students during large group and breakout room learning activities.
- Take care of GMSD materials (device, textbooks, or other materials) that have been assigned to you.
- Participate in all GMSD/State benchmarks and assessments.

## Parent/Guardian expectations

- Ensure your child is on time for class.
- Provide a quiet space for your child's "classroom" that is free of distractions.
- Respect the virtual classroom environment as though it is the physical classroom space.
- Allow your child to develop independence by letting them ask questions during video calls.
- Please do not help or prompt your child with correct answers during instruction or assessments, as this will slow the learning process and give us incorrect data to drive the needed instruction for each student.
- Encourage *productive struggle* during the learning process by letting your child do their own work.
- Check Schoology daily for important dates, announcements, and weekly learning goals.

- Check Skyward weekly to monitor your student’s academic progress.
- Be understanding of your teacher’s time. They may not be available to answer questions in real-time. Submit questions to teachers via email and allow ample time for them to respond when they are not teaching.
- Notify the attendance secretary and teacher if your child will be absent or miss part of the day’s instruction or is unexpectedly absent because of illness or doctor’s appointment.
- Provide technical support to your child as needed for logging onto various platforms that are needed. See *Parent Support Communications Flowchart* below.



Here is a listing of some of the common questions that parents may have during virtual learning. They are organized by the most appropriate point of contact for a quick response. Each school also keeps a Let's Talk Response Center that will help you make contact with the appropriate person.

Classroom Teacher	ITC Instructional Tech Coach	STS Student Tech Support	School Attendance Secretary	School Administrator
Location of materials in Schoology	Username/Password support or password resets	Trouble printing from a device	Student needs to be absent for part of or all of any virtual learning session.	Issues unresolved by an ITC, STS, or Classroom teacher.
Online Learning materials (level of , amount of, etc.)	Zoom support	Broken screen/cracked screen	Doctor's appointments, dentist, and other excused absences.	Suspected or confirmed COVID cases.
Clarification about class schedule and or links to Zoom or Google Hangouts meetings	Access to any instructional tool (online textbook, Nearpod, TechBook, etc.)  Skyward support (parent or student)  Schoology support (parent of student)  Google Suite (document storage or access)  Clever or ClassLink single sign on platforms	Lost or damaged device, charger, keyboards  Frozen computer  Adding apps in your iPad App Portal  Loss of connectivity or WiFi issues  Username/Password support or password resets  Student Gmail accounts		Issues or concerns that require confidentiality

### Privacy Guidelines for Parents/Guardians

**To maintain a positive, productive learning environment and assure confidentiality for students and teachers during distance learning, all parents/guardians are asked to follow the following privacy guidelines:**

- Zoom and Google Meet virtual sessions are designed for students. To prevent disruptions to the learning environment, parents/guardians should not actively

participate in live sessions, although parents/guardians may assist their child with technology and should remain nearby.

- Do not video record, audio record, photograph, live stream, or transmit in any other way any part of a Zoom or Google Meet virtual session, including not posting on any social media platform.
- Any confidential or personally identifiable information related to students participating during Zoom or Google Meet virtual sessions should not be collected, discussed or shared.
- Parents/guardians should not engage with students during Zoom or Google Meet virtual sessions. If you need to speak with your child during a live session, first mute your child's microphone.
- Parents/guardians should email your child's principal with any questions or concerns regarding privacy or virtual classroom expectations.

Thank you for your support and cooperation in ensuring that distance learning is a positive, productive, and enjoyable experience for all participants.

**Teachers reserve the right to mute, turn off the camera, or remove participants from a video call if the learning environment is disrupted.**

## Curriculum/Programs Glossary

Parent Schoology support, including how to log into your child's account, can be found on our [Parent Academy Page](#).

### **Accelerated Reader**

Independent check-in for independent reading

The teacher will set a goal with each student

Quiz at the completion of reading book

### **Alexandria**

Library Check Out software

**Carnegie Learning** - Mathematics curriculum for middle school mathematics

Includes printed workbook, eBook, and online materials

Used in combination with **MATHia**

**Classlink**- Single Sign On (SSO) platform used to roster and sign in to online textbooks and other curricular tools

**Clever**- Similar to Classlink (see previous), but used for only a few applications.

**Dreambox**- Online Math program

Independent

Practice for math learned during the day/week

**Discovery Education**- Science Curriculum

Online lessons

**Eureka Math**- Adopted math curriculum for grades K-5. Like its ELA counterpart, student engagement is supported by consumable workbooks received by each student. Virtual students will maintain the same pacing and complete the same tasks, activities, and assessments as their in-class counterparts as a result of teacher-led instruction via Zoom or Google Hangout.

**Flocabulary** - Included with Nearpod, vocabulary using educational hip-hop songs and videos Teacher-led via Google Hangouts/Zoom

**Gallopade**- Social Studies Grades 3-5

Printed Workbooks to be sent home

Online resources

**Go Noodle** - Physical Activity videos for elementary students

**In Sync** - an online platform that supports both *Wit & Wisdom* (ELA) and *Eureka* (Math) instruction for grades K-5. Contains activities and recorded lessons to supplement traditional instruction

**Lexia**- Online Reading program

Independent

Practice for Reading skills

**MATHia**-An adaptive learning software created by Carnegie Learning.

Accompanies Carnegie Learning Middle School Math Solutions

MATHia will also be used in Middle School Intervention Programs

**Nearpod**- An instructional delivery platform focused on increasing student engagement. Nearpod allows teachers to lead lessons which include individual or small group responses or other engagement techniques to enhance student learning

**Newsela**- Articles for students to make real-life connections  
Will be assigned by teacher  
Supports Science, Social Studies, ELA and SEL

**Quaver Music** - Digital Music curriculum for elementary

**Saxon**- Adopted phonics instruction supplement for grades K-2. Phonics instruction is accounted for within the daily lesson structure and will be teacher-led via Zoom or Google Hangout.

**See Saw**- A digital portfolio for elementary students that teachers use to collect and archive student work. May also be used to collect digital assignments and communicate with parents.

**Schoology**- Learning Management System where all school information, instruction, assignments, attendance, and updates are housed.  
Each parent/student will have a log in  
Log In everyday  
Complete schedule/items  
Check Calendar for class meeting times

**Symbaloo**- A collection of bookmarks to frequently used websites. Each elementary school has a Symbaloo page with helpful links for families

**Smart Music**  
Middle and High School digital music program

**Studies Weekly: Science and Social Studies**- Grades K-2  
Newspaper accessed online with teacher given code housed in Schoology  
Online resources, games, learning activities  
Teacher-led via Google Hangouts/Zoom

**Wit & Wisdom**  
Literacy curriculum for grades K-5. Students will receive consumable workbooks for each unit of instruction. Virtual students will maintain the same pacing and complete

the same tasks, activities, and assessments as their in-class counterparts as a result of teacher-led instruction via Zoom or Google Hangout.

## Curriculum

The Germantown Municipal School District has made the adoption of blended learning materials a vital component of the textbook adoption process prior to the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic. The adoption process ensures that vetted, rigorous materials are in the hands of our teachers and students. At this point, all core subjects currently have a blended curriculum of both physical and digital components for K-12. In addition to adopted materials, GMSD has sought out other software components to complete the robust nature of digital learning in other areas, such as Career and Technical Education at Houston High School. Please contact your teacher if you have any questions about the materials being used in your student's virtual learning.

## Library books

Each school will communicate with parents and students about checking out library books. Library book checkout is not expected to start until after labor day. We will use Alexandria to put books on hold. More information on how to access this system will be sent by the schools. The media specialist will let you know when books are ready to be picked up at the front desk.

## Special Supports

### Students with Individual Education Plans (IEP)

Parents may choose to have students participate in virtual learning. Families should keep in mind the following recommendation made by the Tennessee Department of Education:

*“Vulnerable student populations should be prioritized when considering reopening school for in-person learning environments. In-person learning provides the opportunities for teachers to increase the intensity of support, provide frequent checks for understanding, and alter learning supports continuously. Distance learning will not allow for this level of support to learning”.*

Keeping this recommendation in mind, virtual learning is most appropriate for students who receive the majority of their core academic instruction in the general education setting. For students who receive the majority of their services in the special education classroom and the

family opts for virtual, support may include learning packets, task boxes, office hours with a special education teacher, and digital curriculums. In-person services for related services such as occupational and physical therapy, may be considered even under the virtual option.

If your student has an IEP, the school team will call an IEP meeting to discuss what supports could be available while choosing the virtual option. If you, your student, or your virtual teacher has a concern regarding your child's progress or need during the year, an addendum meeting can be called by contacting your home school's Exceptional Student Education clerical.

### **ESE Clericals:**

Dogwood- Mary Katherine Parcels (901) 756-2310 mary.parsels@gmsdk12.org

Farmington- Linda Stevens (901) 756-2320 linda.stevens@gmsdk12.org

Forest Hill Elementary - Melissa Berry (901) 730-8520 melissa.berry@gmsdk12.org

Riverdale- Laura Sheehan (901) 756-2300 laura.sheehan@gmsdk12.org

HMS- Debra Roberts (901) 756-2366 debra.roberts@gmsdk12.org

HHS - Teresa Marie Griffith (901) 756-2370 teresa.griffith@gmsdk12.org

### **Difference between Homebound services and Virtual**

#### *Homebound*

Homebound services are provided to PreK-12 students who are unable to attend school for a physical and/or mental health condition for a designated period of time. For students on an IEP, the team will meet every 30 days to consider if homebound services continue to be required or if a student is ready to return to school. A student could return to school at any time the doctor and IEP team recommended the change.

#### *Virtual*

Parents who choose the virtual option are committing to a semester-long decision.

### **Students with 504 Plans**

If your student has a 504 plan, the school team may call a 504 meeting to discuss what accommodations are available while choosing the virtual option. If you, your student, or your virtual teacher has a concern regarding your child's progress or accommodations, a meeting may be scheduled. Please contact your child's school 504 coordinator to schedule a meeting.

## ELL

All students, new to GMSD, will be given a Home Language Survey. If the answer to any question is a language other than English the student will be referred to the ESL teacher for ESL screening. If the school is not in session or the student is in the virtual program, the teacher will follow the provisional screening process located [here](#). All potential ESL students should be screened in person with the WIDA screen within 30 days of enrollment after August 17, 2020. If students are virtual, the ESL teacher will make an appointment to screen the student at school before the end of the 30 day period.

### ELL Teacher Training:

- All teachers are required to attend WIDA Standards training and ILP training. The training will occur during inservice week. Teachers who miss this training will need to schedule a make-up training time with their school's ESL teacher.
- Additional ESL training materials will be available in Schoology

### ELL Instruction:

- Whether in-person or online, all ELLs with a WIDA score of 3.4 or below will receive a minimum of 5 hours of ESL services a week. Students with a WIDA score of 3.5 or above can receive tailored instructional time.
- ESL teachers will provide synchronous ESL classes using Schoology and online chats to ensure the ELs practice their listening and speaking skills.
- ESL teachers will schedule weekly one-on-one video chats with all ELL newcomers to provide additional language support.
- ESL teachers should collaborate with core content teachers to ensure online lessons are accessible to ELLs.
- All accommodation for online learning and in-person learning will be documented in the student's ILP.

## Substitutes

Teachers will post assignments in either See-Saw ( elementary) or Schoology (upper elementary, middle school, and high school) for students to continue or maintain learning. Instructional Technology Coaches and Lead teachers will help monitor during a long absence and support the substitute teacher in accessing the teacher's online materials. To mitigate

disruptions in synchronous learning, students and parents may be sent an alternate zoom link in order to video conference with a substitute teacher. Your child's school will do everything in their power to keep the students on track and keep learning disruptions to a minimum.

# Hybrid Model Safety Precautions

## Social Distancing Methods Will Vary by School Location

- Each school footprint is different and principals will share what can be expected at each school.
- Example school solutions may include:
- Teachers rotating to student classrooms

Students could spend time in another part of the building completing virtual assignments with supervision. These students will also have time in their homeroom focusing on the core subject areas; ELA, Math, Social Studies, and Science.

Recess, RTI, and other supplemental activities might occur while students are out of the regular classroom.

Depending on the final numbers of virtual/in-person students scheduling is subject to be modified by each school.

Each school will have a different solution to scheduling for students. Elementary school students will remain with their homeroom groups as they do during a normal school year. Our goal is to keep small group cohorts together as much as possible and for the teachers to move instead of students whenever possible. When it is not possible to keep the students stationary or together, we will ensure distancing measures and other protocols are followed.

We have asked our parents to commit to a semester-long decision whether choosing full-time virtual learning or our in-person hybrid model to meet both the needs of staffing and social distancing guidelines. We will monitor and adjust our plans as the guidance from the Health Department, CDC, and the TN Department of Education allow us to. We understand this is a fluid situation and we will revisit our plans prior to the second semester.

If parents have concerns at any time they should reach out to the teacher first, then schedule a teacher conference. If there are still concerns the parent should reach out the school administration. Finally, if the issue is not resolved, please reach out to the District Office.

## PPE Staff & Students

Students and staff will be required to wear a mask or facial covering while on campus. Parents will need to provide a mask or facial covering for their students.

Exceptions for students and staff are outlined in the guidance from the Tennessee Health Department. According to the Tennessee Health Department:

- Unless a student has trouble breathing or is unable to remove a cloth face-covering without assistance, all middle school and high school students should always wear a cloth face covering while in the school building. Middle and high school students may remove their cloth face covering when outdoors so long as social distancing can be maintained.
- Unless a student has trouble breathing or is unable to remove a cloth face-covering without assistance or is sleeping, all elementary students should wear a cloth face covering while in the school building.
- Elementary students may remove their cloth face covering when outdoors.
- Students who continuously play with, suck on or chew their face covering should be excused from wearing one, as should students who will not tolerate a face covering.
- Preschool children under age 2 years should not wear cloth face coverings.
- Individuals should not wear masks while eating or drinking. Lunchtime should be restructured to allow children to eat lunch in their classrooms or outdoor spaces, rather than the cafeteria.
- People who are deaf or hard of hearing—or those who care for or interact with a person who is hearing impaired—may be unable to wear cloth face coverings if they rely on lipreading to communicate. In this situation, consider using a clear face covering. If a clear face covering isn't available, consider whether you can use written communication, use closed captioning, or decrease background noise to make communication possible while wearing a cloth face covering that blocks your lips.
- Some students, such as those with intellectual and developmental disabilities, mental health conditions, or other sensory sensitivities, may have challenges wearing a cloth face covering. They should consult with their healthcare provider for advice about wearing cloth face coverings.

Principals are granted authority to waive the mask requirement for legitimate educational, safety, or health-related reasons for students, staff, and visitors on campus. Teachers will also have the ability to provide mask breaks when students are socially distanced, and staff will have the ability to wear face shields when providing phonics lessons, speech, or other

therapies. Exceptions for staff with disabilities and other health impairments will be made. Any adult visitor entering the campus will be required to wear a mask or facial covering.

\*Updated August 25, 2020

## **Health Checks**

GMSD will partner with families to complete daily at-home symptom screening for all students. Schools will monitor that parents are completing symptom screenings via an online check-in system. GMSD will also provide parent training on how to conduct at-home symptom screenings. The procedure will require parents to take their child's temperature at home daily and answer the CDC recommended symptom questions.

All GMSD staff will complete an onsite symptom screening each day as a part of their normal check-in procedure. Any adult visitor entering the campus will be required to complete an onsite symptom screening which will include a temperature reading.

GMSD has purchased rapid scan thermometers to be kept on each hallway, grade level, high traffic area, etc. These thermometers will be used on a case-by-case basis to check for temperatures of 100.4 or greater. Students or staff with fevers or observable symptoms of COVID-19 will be sent to a designated, supervised area separate from others until they are able to leave the facility. Normal health policies and procedures will be followed.

Schools will work with parents to provide flexibility in attendance if students have been exposed to COVID-19 or if they are showing any symptoms. Distance learning activities for those students will be available in lieu of being counted absent if the student is well enough to complete them. GMSD wants families to practice necessary precautions and are ready to work with parents to keep all of our students healthy.

## **Positive COVID-19 Cases in the Schools**

In all cases of either suspected or confirmed cases of COVID-19, FERPA and HIPAA protection laws will be followed by all staff. Due to the privacy issues governed by law, the identity of the person cannot be shared. It is, however, important that parents report confirmed COVID-19 cases to the school so that proper protocols can be enacted.

Standard health procedural letters will be sent to notify parents if students or staff have come in direct contact with individuals who tested positive for COVID-19. On a case-by-case basis, situations may occur in which an entire class, cohort, or school building will transition to distance learning to allow for quarantine. These decisions will be made in partnership with the Shelby County Health Department (SCHD).

If a student or staff member tests positive for COVID, all close contacts will receive letters via text and email through our rapid notification system requesting them to transition to distance learning.

According to the Tennessee Department of Health, a close contact is defined as anyone who was within 6 feet of an infected person for at least 10 minutes starting from 48 hours before the person began feeling sick until the time the patient was isolated.

This will include all students and staff who were in a classroom with an individual who has tested positive for COVID-19. The SCHD will also assist our team if there are any questions that arise in determining the lengths of time and/or action.

Germantown Municipal School District has also worked to develop several form letters that cover a variety of situations, such as but not limited to; a positive case that has come in contact with your child or a positive case in the building that we do not believe came into contact with your child for the aforementioned criteria.

We will protect the identity of reported cases, per HIPAA and FERPA laws, but will simultaneously operate under full transparency with parents about the occurrence of positive COVID cases. Out of an abundance of caution, any cases in the building will be reported to all families so that they can continue vigilance in their daily health checks and immediately transition to distance learning if symptoms should occur. A positive case in the building will also trigger enhanced cleaning of the building with special attention to the affected areas where a student or staff member may have traveled.

There will also be instances in which an entire building may transition to distance learning. In those cases, we would work with the SCHD to determine if there is community spread present at any school(s). According to the CDC, community spread means people have been infected with the virus in an area, including some who are not sure how or where they became infected. Each health department determines community spread differently based on local conditions. We will work with our local agency.

Above all, we are asking parents to partner with us to monitor for any symptoms and to keep their children at home when sick. Germantown Municipal School District is ready to transition any student to distance learning if their parents feel self-quarantine measures are needed. Our attendance procedure has been adjusted to make this easier on parents.

Our in-person teachers will be practicing a flipped-classroom model in which we are asking them to post their lessons on Schoology each day. We've been working with many teachers at both the high school and middle schools to develop these procedures and to create examples. Many teachers are attending our PD opportunities this summer. With the amount of students that may need to transition to temporary distance learning, for both exposure in school, exposure at home, or possible symptoms, we are preparing our teachers to be ready at any time to offer their coursework virtually. Additionally, students who are distance learning three days a week will be completing the same work on their distance days as their peers who are in person-learning. We believe that maintaining this flipped classroom at all grade levels will give our teachers and our parents the flexibility to toggle easily and quickly between in-person and distance learning, and advance the curriculum forward all five days.

We are ready to work with parents to keep the students who participate in our in-person option safe and healthy. We are working with our teachers to place all of their daily lessons in Schoology, giving both students and teachers the flexibility to toggle between distance learning and in-person quickly and efficiently.

## **Building Sanitization and Cleaning Procedures**

Increased cleaning efforts have been outlined with our custodial service provider, SKB, to include multiple daily cleanings of common areas and increased efforts in each classroom.

On Tuesday, August 25th, the GMSD School Board meeting, the school board approved 6 additional day porters (1 for each school). These jobs are now posted and will be hired as soon as possible. Their primary job responsibility will be to both clean and assist the plant manager in monitoring the increased cleaning effort protocols and ensure that their building is in alignment with district standards.

GMSD has purchased Clorox Total 360 Cleaning Systems for each school. Their primary purpose is to be able to treat and disinfect a large area in a short amount of time. Our plant managers have been trained in their usage. These systems will be used immediately in any area where there has been a positive COVID case reported. They will also be used as a preventative measure and will supplement our cleaning program as needed.

All school HVAC systems have been upgraded with High-MERV filters. The MERV-13 filters are considered an industry standard in reducing particles and bacteria in the air. Our HVAC systems also have the ability to circulate fresh air in programmed bursts through the building. GMSD has programmed fresh air in short, frequent bursts, in order to increase fresh outside air into circulation.

GMSD is purchasing additional cleaning supply kits for teachers to be kept in the classroom. Each teacher should have received disinfectant spray bottles. Plant managers will refill these as needed.

Each school is developing a handwashing/hand sanitizing schedule that ensures all students are taking regular breaks to wash their hands throughout the day. Restrooms will be regularly checked for necessary materials. Hand sanitizing stations have been placed throughout each building.

## **Common Spaces (Cafeteria & Recess)**

Until recommendations become more relaxed, common spaces at the schools will be limited. This includes the cafeteria. GMSD is working with our new food service provider to serve lunch in classrooms. Each school will post procedures for lunch, recess, and breakfast on their website and communicate this plan with parents. Parents should make sure that any allergies or other dietary concerns are addressed in their students' health plan and or with school nurse/administration. Information from the health plan will be provided to the teacher, and students will be accommodated.

Recess and other outdoor activities will resume as they are an important part of the health and social wellness of students. Schools are developing plans to allow for a social distancing recess plan. Facial coverings must be worn by students in a playground setting. Alternative ways for students to socially distance without facial coverings in their small cohort groups and play in non-playground areas are also being created by each school.

## **After School Activities, Arts, & Athletics**

After school activities, athletics, and fine arts are an important part of the social-emotional well-being of students. GMSD has prioritized that these activities can continue if protocols and safety guidelines are being observed. Athletics will resume according to TSSAA guidelines.

While there may be interruptions in aspects of these programs, students will be able to participate in many aspects that are allowable.

## **R.E.A.C.H.**

For many working parents, our partnership with the City of Germantown Parks and Rec Department R.E.A.C.H. Program is essential. R.E.A.C.H. will be permitted to provide this service on our campus and will follow all school procedures and safety measures. Questions about R.E.A.C.H. need to be directed to Germantown Parks and Recreation. As of July 22, 2020, the City of Germantown has said they will offer REACH for before and aftercare at our elementary schools. REACH staff will have to follow the same protocols and processes as GMSD. If you have more specific questions about REACH, please go to <https://www.germantown-tn.gov/services/parks-and-recreation/programs-and-events/reach> and/or you can reach out to Ms. Veda Sargent at [vsargent@germantown-tn.gov](mailto:vsargent@germantown-tn.gov).

## **Transportation**

Our transportation provider, Durham, has provided information about their safety procedures on buses. Parents can view that information here. GMSD encourages students who do not need to ride the bus to find alternative ways (such as carpooling) to and from school to decrease the number of students riding the buses as much as possible. The hybrid scheduling at the middle and high school will greatly reduce numbers on buses serving Riverdale, Houston Middle, and Houston High. At this time, GMSD does not plan to run extra routes for elementary students.

## **Restricted Guest Access**

Until further notice, no guests or parents will be admitted on campuses. Each school will be working with PTOs and parents to provide an alternative plan for parent volunteers and engagement.

Important meetings such as IEP and 504 meetings, and parent-teacher conferences will take place either virtually or in the front office conference spaces when virtual meetings are not possible.

Parents or delivery services will not be allowed to deliver outside food or birthday treats until guidelines become relaxed.

After reviewing this handbook, please print the acknowledgement page, parent and student sign and upload to skyward or send into school with your child.

References:

**GMSD Policy**

Use of Internet 4.406

[https://tsbanet-my.sharepoint.com/:w:/g/personal/policy\\_tsba\\_net/EarNgLrdDeBGnfanjTl18O8B-SxYM8xK5M4xXfTwjDrWog?rttime=c762Z6VK2Eg](https://tsbanet-my.sharepoint.com/:w:/g/personal/policy_tsba_net/EarNgLrdDeBGnfanjTl18O8B-SxYM8xK5M4xXfTwjDrWog?rttime=c762Z6VK2Eg)

**GMSD Student Handbook**

<https://www.gmsdk12.org/studenthandbook.aspx>