

SAFE RETURN TO IN-PERSON INSTRUCTION AND CONTINUITY OF SERVICES PLAN (RIPICS)

Great Hearts Texas maintains its commitment to quality classical education, with the health and safety of our students and staff as a top priority. The following Safe Return Policy promotes the health and safety of our students and staff as we continue to see cases of COVID-19 in our school community.

Health and Safety of Students and Staff

- Parents will be reminded to continue to screen their child for symptoms of contagious illnesses including COVID-19 and not send students to school when they are exhibiting symptoms. Faculty and students should follow Great Hearts Texas' [Attendance Guidelines](#) for illness. Faculty and students should stay home if they are ill.

Social Distancing

- In accordance with TEA guidelines, Great Hearts Texas will no longer require social distancing as a result of classrooms, multi-purpose rooms, and lunch rooms will remain at full capacity.

Test-confirmed Positive COVID-19:

- Students and faculty that are test-confirmed positive for COVID-19 must stay home for 5 days from onset of symptoms, or if asymptomatic, for 5 days from positive test. They may return after 5 days if fever free for 24 hours and other symptoms have improved.
- Positive cases of COVID-19 are no longer to local health authorities by the district.

Close Contacts:

- Close contacts are no longer required to quarantine. If a parent chooses to keep their student at home due to being a close contact, that absence will be treated like any other "parent ill excuse" absence.

Face Masks:

- In accordance with Governor Abbot's Executive Order [GA-36](#), masks are optional for everyone on campus.
- Any student or staff member who wishes to wear a mask will be supported in doing so. Masks must continue to comply with our current uniform policy.

Maintaining a healthy environment:

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- Current air filtration systems put in place at the beginning of 20-21 school year will continue, which [have been shown](#) to have a positive impact on student attendance.
- Each classroom and restroom will be disinfected at the end of each school day using a disinfectant that is COVID-19-approved by the EPA.
- All high touch areas will be disinfected at the end of each school day. High-touch areas may include but are not limited to backs and arms of chairs, desk tops, door handles, stair rails.
- Cleaning supplies are available in each classroom and common area to periodically clean high-touch areas in classrooms during the school day in an effort to maximize room to room cleanliness.
- Efforts to ensure proper handwashing and respiratory hygiene will continue, providing both students and staff instruction at the beginning of the school year as well as providing hand washing opportunities and frequent use of hand sanitizer.

Accommodations for children with special needs:

- Students who have disabilities will receive the needed accommodations to ensure their safety while they are on campus or attending any campus-related events.
- Parents of students with special health needs, especially those who are immunocompromised, should contact their campus nurse or email our Director of Health at Kristen.vonberg@greatheartstxschools.org.

Testing:

- Rapid COVID-19 testing is widely available throughout Texas. Please visit [Texas DSHS](#) for testing locations and resources.

Campus visitors:

- Anyone who is ill should stay at home and wait to visit campus when symptoms improve and they are fever free for 24 hours.

Vaccines:

- Per [Gov. Abbott's order](#), Great Hearts cannot require students or staff to get vaccinated. The State of Texas has not added the COVID-19 vaccination to the required immunization list for students. Further, Great Hearts cannot require students or staff to report vaccination status.
- COVID-19 vaccines are widely available and are approved for all ages. You can find a vaccine by going to www.vaccines.gov.

Coordination with state and local health officials:

Great Hearts will remain in communication with local health and state officials concerning and changes or safety updates pertaining to COVID-19. These changes will be updated (when appropriate) and included in updates to Great Hearts stakeholders.

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These guidelines are subject to change in the event that local COVID-19 cases increase, or at the direction of state and local authorities. Modifications to these guidelines may be made at the discretion of individual campus covid response teams as conditions warrant.

Great Hearts' health services are one facet of the continuity of services to students that we provide, which also includes our commitment to meeting the academic, social, emotional, mental health, and nutritional needs of our scholars.

For questions or comments, please contact info@greatheartstxschools.org.

COVID-19 Point of Contact:

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Updated 8/18/23 by Kristen VonBerg, RN, Great Hearts Texas Director of Health Services.