



Dear GDS Community,

As we welcome everyone back, I've noticed that Spartan Spirit that brings the campus to life. We're all learning to "smize" (to smile with our eyes) while wearing our masks.

While getting adjusted to our new campus life, we'll be providing progress reports and updates about any changes we make as we go through these first couple of weeks. Don't forget you can always visit our [reopening webpage](#) for any updates or information regarding our plans.

UPDATES:

Masks

To be as safe as we can, gaiter style masks are not acceptable for Lower, Middle and Upper School students, Faculty and Staff. A recent study out of Duke University suggests that not all face coverings are equally effective at preventing the spread of Covid-19. The neck gaiter performed the worst in the study, actually producing more particles than speaking with no face covering at all. [Click here](#) for the article.

Daily Self Evaluation

Each of us should ask ourselves these 3 questions before coming on campus everyday. This includes GDS Faculty, Staff, Administrators, all students, parents, coaches, volunteers, substitute teachers, and outside vendors.

1. *Have you had close contact (within 6 feet, mask or no mask, for at least 10 minutes) in the last 14 days with someone diagnosed with COVID-19, or has any health department or health care provider been in contact with you and advised you to quarantine?*

- Yes** | You should not be at school. Please contact the school and follow our return to school policy.
- No** | You can be at school if you are not experiencing symptoms.

2. *Do you have any of these symptoms?*

- Fever
- Chills
- Shortness of breath or difficulty breathing
- New cough
- New loss of taste or smell

If you have any of these symptoms, you should go home, stay away from other people and family members & should call your healthcare provider.

3. *Since you were last at school, have you been diagnosed with COVID-19?*

- Yes
- No

If you are diagnosed with COVID-19 based on a test, your symptoms, or do not get a COVID-19 test but have had symptoms, you should not be at school and should stay at home until you meet the guidelines within our return to school policy.

TRENDING QUESTIONS:

If you only send the cohort group of the infected person home, how will you deal with siblings who may be infected and bring it to their cohort groups?

If an entire cohort group is being sent home then it has been determined that there is a cluster (2 or more positive cases) in that cohort. In this example, a sibling of someone in the cohort who is not positive will not be sent home.

How do you reduce transmission during lunch, when masks are off? How do I order lunch?

Middle and Upper school students will be asked to wash their hands and wipe down tables before and after lunch. While eating lunch, students will be asked to remain physically distanced from other students, and students will be encouraged to eat outside in designated areas as much as possible.

LS students have quiet lunch with an audio book or educational video to help keep talking at a minimum and when they are finished they clean up and put on a new mask.

Lunch can be ordered from Sparty's at Gaston Day by completing the Google Form located on [Sparty's dining webpage](#). Orders are due by the date noted at the top of the form.

How will interactive activities like science labs, band, and art classes work?

Classes that typically have shared supplies (like art or engineering) will use individual supplies when possible. For items that must be shared, there is a procedure for cleaning these items and sanitizing hands between use. Science labs will often be scheduled across multiple days with a group of students completing the lab while the other group of students works on an alternative assignment. Materials will be sanitized between groups. For band and chorus, students will be distanced farther away from each other and continue to wear masks when indoors. A majority of the musical activities will be moved outdoors to areas around campus with shade.

How do you make sure 11th and 12th grade students that have the option to leave campus for free period, and leave together, that they are socially distanced.

Students are asked to practice physical distancing while on campus, but unfortunately, this is hard to monitor when students leave the campus. We encourage all families to have a conversation with their students about the purpose and importance of physical distancing and to set expectations for their student to follow then they are not on campus.

How do you separate Lower School students on the playground?

The playground is sectioned with flexible construction fencing and extra tall cones. Grade levels have assigned times to a designated playground section, woods section or front field location for recess.

What has to happen to close campus and go completely virtual?

Either the Governor or the Gaston County health department would mandate a campus closure for good reasons or Gaston Day in consultation with the health department would determine that cases were spreading between cohort groups and placing the entire school population at risk.

Gaston Day has worked hard to create an environment that will be safe and our leadership team and will continue to monitor changes with state and local government, our local health department, and the CDC. The most important thing we can do as a school community is stay healthy.

If you have any questions or concerns, please do not hesitate to reach out to me at rrankin@gastoday.org

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Richard E. Rankin". The signature is written in black ink and is positioned above the typed name.

Richard Rankin, Jr.
Anderson Davis Warlick Head of School