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GRACE CHRISTIAN SCHOOL

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BACK TO SCHOOL PLAN

2020-2021

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Back To School Plan 2020-2021

Grace Christian School

Overview

Grace Christian School (GCS) is a vibrant, private/Christian co-educational school in Charlottetown (PEI), offering a dynamic 21st-century liberal arts curriculum from Junior Kindergarten through Grade 12. GCS currently serves approximately 200 students.

Grace Christian School is committed to working collaboratively with the Chief Public Health Office (CPHO) and the Department of Education to reduce the risk of COVID-19 transmission and to provide all students with the opportunity to return to school safely on September 8, 2020.

The wellness and safety of all GCS stakeholders will remain a priority throughout the school year. While the following operational plan provides the parameters necessary for Grace Christian School to begin the school year, changes to this plan may occur based on directives given by the Chief Public Health Officer of Prince Edward Island.

Despite the new realities as a result of COVID-19, Grace Christian School will continue to develop high capacity leaders, thinkers, and innovators. We will provide authentic and engaging learning environments that foster mastery of learning, meaningful relationships, and global service.

Section One: Public Health Measures for Students, Staff, Parents, and Visitors

Student and Staff Wellness

Information will be provided to parents, students, and staff about signs of illness and the necessity to stay home when unwell. Due to serving a large international community, translators can be requested to clarify any information, if necessary. All information will be shared on our school social media pages and links to the PEI government website pertaining to COVID-19 will be shared throughout all communication platforms (email, My School Management, text messaging system, social media, website).

Symptoms of COVID-19 include:

- new or worsening cough
- shortness of breath or difficulty breathing
- fever
- chills
- sore throat
- runny nose, sneezing, congestion
- headache
- muscle aches
- unusual fatigue
- acute loss of sense of smell or taste

Grace Christian School will be equipped with thermometers to take temperatures of anyone showing signs of illness. School leadership will have access to these thermometers from the main school office.

If a GCS staff member becomes ill with COVID-19 symptoms during the day:

- they will put on a non-medical mask immediately
- notify the Head of School or Elementary School Director that they will need to leave
- leave the school property as soon as possible
- the staff member will call 811 to arrange testing
- the classroom/workspace the staff member was in will be cleaned before students are returned to the room

If a GCS student becomes ill with COVID-19 symptoms during the day:

- they will put on a non-medical mask immediately
- be taken to a supervised designated location (School Armoury)
- family will be contacted to pick the child up
- parents are to call 811 or their Health Care provider to arrange testing
- the areas the student occupied will be immediately cleaned

Pre-Screening of Students and Staff

On a weekly basis, administration will contact all parents via email to remind them of the need for students to remain home when ill. Signage will also be posted at each school entry for staff, students, parents, and visitors to self-screen and to serve as a reminder to stay home if they are unwell.

Administration will monitor staff and students for illness or COVID-19 symptoms throughout the school day. Staff will frequently screen themselves and monitor their students for illness or COVID-19 symptoms.

Staff must sign a declaration at the beginning of the school year that indicates that they are coming to school free of COVID-19 symptoms, have not travelled outside of regions as per the current CPHO guidelines and are not required to self-isolate.

Parents/guardians will report any symptoms of COVID-19 to the school and keep students with symptoms at home. Parents/guardians with students who have symptoms of COVID-19 are urged to call 811 for testing. Students will remain home until they are free of symptoms or, if required to test for COVID-19 under the direction of their healthcare provider, they will remain home until a negative test result is reported.

Any visitors to the school will be required to sign in each day, including a declaration indicating that they are entering the school visitor zone free of COVID-19 symptoms, have not travelled outside regions as per the current CPHO guidelines, and are not required to self-isolate. Visitors will not be permitted to enter the building without an appointment. Parents who are required to enter the school building to discuss school matters will be required to remain in the designated visitor zone until the main office staff provide further directions.

Personal Protective Equipment and Non-Medical Mask Use

Wearing a non-medical mask is an additional measure one should take to protect others around them, even when symptoms are not present. Wearing a non-medical mask is not a substitute for physical distancing and hand washing.

All students must have access to a personal non-medical mask on a daily basis. Parents are asked to provide a non-medical mask for their child. Should the student not have a non-medical mask the school will provide the student access to one. It is strongly recommended that all GCS staff and students in all grades wear non-medical masks on any occasion when different cohorts must interact and/or when physical distancing cannot be maintained.

Current evidence suggests that young children are not as likely to spread COVID-19 and are much more likely to be exposed to the virus from an adult or an older student. Therefore, all staff and students in grades 7 – 12 are required to wear a non-medical mask during classroom transitions, in the hallway, and when going to the washroom. Students will not be required to wear non-medical masks inside their classrooms during instruction, so long as measures to reduce the risk of transmission have been established. Students in Kindergarten through Grade 6 may choose to wear masks inside the school when physical distancing cannot be maintained.

A non-medical mask should also be worn by all staff and students during emergencies when it is safe to retrieve the non-medical mask before following emergency procedures.

All parents and visitors to Grace Christian School are required to wear masks inside the school.

Anyone wearing a non-medical mask must follow proper mask-wearing procedures: <https://www.princeedwardisland.ca/en/information/health-and-wellness/wearing-non-medical-masks-community>. Students in all grades will be educated on proper mask usage.

Hand Washing/Sanitizer Stations

Practicing good hygiene is an essential part of preventing the spread of COVID-19. The following precautions will be taken by staff and students:

- frequent hand washing for at least 20 seconds
- if hands are visibly soiled, hand washing requires soap and water
- cough/sneeze into your elbow or tissue and throw away
- avoid touching your eyes, nose and mouth with your hands
- use alcohol-based hand sanitizer if soap and water are not readily available

Hand sanitizer will be available at the following locations:

- All classrooms
- Hallways/water-filling stations
- Entrances/exits
- Main office
- Visitor zone/school atrium
- Other areas as needed (gymnasium, administration offices, staff room, etc.)

* Existing sinks within the school will remain as designated handwashing stations.

* Hand sanitizer will be used only when hand washing is not available.

* Hand washing will remain the preferred means of hand hygiene. Teachers will arrange for regular hand-washing and sanitizing breaks throughout the school day. These will be staggered and monitored.

Policy for Exclusion of Students, Parents and Visitors: Self-Isolation Illness/Exclusion Policy

Students and parents will be made aware and reminded on a regular basis (e.g. email, social media post), that if they travel outside of regions as per the current CPHO guidelines, they will be asked to declare this to school leadership. They will be required to follow the CPHO measures in place at the time (e.g. self-isolation).

Visitors, including parents, substitutes, specialists, consultants, delivery people, etc., will be limited. All visitors to the school who are permitted beyond the visitor zone will be asked to declare if they have traveled outside of regions as per the current CPHO guidelines within the last 14 days. If so, they will be denied entry and will be directed to follow the CPHO measures in place at the time (e.g. self-isolation). All visitors must enter through the main school doors to the “visitor zone” and will be required to complete the visitor log in the school office. All visitors are required to wear a non-medical mask.

Any individual who enters Grace Christian School (e.g. staff, students, parents, visitors) will be asked to self-monitor for symptoms of illness. Individuals who are experiencing any symptoms will be required to return home immediately or to remain at home. In addition, individuals who are concerned about possible COVID-19 exposure must report this to the Head of School or Elementary School Director and follow the direction of the CPHO. For individuals who display symptoms, please call 811 to arrange testing and remain home until results are confirmed. If the test results are negative for COVID-19, but the staff/student/parent/visitor remains ill and/or symptomatic, they should remain at home until symptoms are no longer present.

Protocols for COVID-19 Testing and Self-Isolation

The Chief Public Health Office will provide Grace Christian School with information when a staff or student has been required to self-isolate.

Contact Tracing and Attendance

In order to facilitate contact tracing in the event of a staff/student/parent/visitor testing positive for COVID-19, the attendance records and sign-in logs will be used to track those who entered the building each day.

As an added measure, despite the promotion of physical distancing, all teachers will be required to complete a seating plan for each of their classes to help identify potential students who would be considered a close contact.

Parents are responsible to notify the school of the reason for their child's absence from school. Follow up, and documentation of this follow up, will be required if a student is absent for more than five consecutive days.

Any parents/visitors who enter the building will be required to complete the visitor log in the school office upon entry. The information gathered may be used for contact tracing if necessary.

Positive Cases

In the event of a positive case of COVID-19 among a student or staff, GCS will immediately provide all contact tracing information to the CPHO. The CPHO will be responsible for all contact tracing measures and schools will take direction from the CPHO.

Cohorts

Cohorts are established to better organize our students into smaller sub-groups that will facilitate easier contact tracing, as well as to mitigate unnecessary cross-contamination throughout the overall student body should a positive case of COVID-19 be identified.

With the entire student body returning to school in September, physical distancing with 2 meters/6 feet of separation will not always be possible. GCS will create cohorts of students and staff and will work to ensure that interactions between cohorts remain minimal.

Students and staff will be assigned to the following cohorts:

1. Kindergarten Cohort -
2. Primary Cohort (Grade 1 - 3)
3. Upper Elementary Cohort (Grade 4 - 6)
4. Junior High Cohort (Grade 7 - 9)
5. High School Cohort (Grade 10 - 12)

Within a physical school zone, students will be assigned washrooms, water bottle filling stations, lockers/hooks/cubbies, entrances/exits, sections of the playground, etc., and will use these designated spaces as much as possible.

When it is not possible for a staff person or a student to remain within a cohort the following measures will be practiced:

- Proper handwashing upon leaving one cohort and before entering another
- Maintain a record of which cohorts they visited each day (ex: class schedule)
- Wear a non-medical mask or personal protective equipment when physical distancing cannot occur.

Staggering of Transitions/Movement In, Out, and Within Buildings

The arrival and departure times for GCS staff and students will be staggered and various cohorts will enter and exit the school building using designated doors.

Elementary:

The elementary school day will begin at 8:45am. Parents are asked to stay inside their vehicle and to drop off their child in the drive-thru drop off zone only. Drop off for elementary students will begin at 8:35am, with students entering their designated doors. Staff will be available to support students in their routines and assist them into the school building.

Kindergarten students will enter and exit through the side Flex Room entrance located in the elementary wing of GCS, while elementary students in Grades 1 - 3 will enter and exit using the main entrance. The designated entrance and exit for Grades 4 - 6 is located at the far end of the elementary wing. Students will promptly place their backpack in their assigned location before entering their classroom. As an additional measure to minimize the risk of transmission, elementary students are encouraged to wear a non-medical mask when entering and exiting for the school day.

Throughout the school day, transitions of classes will be thoroughly scheduled to ensure that multiple classes are not occupying the same spaces as much as possible. When cohorts must

mix during transitions, it will be highly recommended that elementary students wear masks. All staff are required to wear their non-medical mask during transitions.

The elementary school day concludes at 2:45pm. Parents are asked to pick up their child promptly, once again using the drive-thru drop off/pick up zone.

Junior High & Senior High:

Our junior and senior high school day begins at 9:00am. Students are asked to arrive beginning at 8:50am. They will enter through the main school entrance, collect their belongings for morning classes from their locker, then proceed directly to their homeroom. The day will conclude at 3:00pm with students exiting the school building from various exits. As an additional measure to minimize the risk of transmission, junior and senior high school students are required to wear a non-medical mask when entering and exiting the building.

Please note that unless any parent needs to go into the school office or has a scheduled appointment, they must remain inside their vehicles. Parents with students in both the elementary and high school cohorts may drop off their children during the elementary drop off time, however they are required to use their designated entrances and to proceed directly to their cohort zone.

Parents and Visitors:

All non-staff and non-student personnel will be required to enter and exit the school via the main entrance. They must remain in this visitor zone until given further instructions from the main office staff or individual with whom they have a scheduled appointment. No more than 3 visitors will be allowed to enter the visitor zone in the school atrium at a given time and are required to wear a non-medical mask and practice physical distancing. All other parents and visitors must remain outdoors until space in the visitor zone becomes available.

Parents will be asked to minimize/eliminate the need to visit the school during the day.

Unless physically not possible, deliveries will be left at the visitor zone for the custodian (or relevant personnel) to receive and distribute.

When GCS students and staff transition between classrooms, minimal contact between cohorts will occur. Staff will monitor transitions to support reasonable physical distancing among students. Intentional scheduling of classes and designated classrooms will reduce the use of multiple classroom areas between cohorts. Directional markings and signage will clearly identify traffic flow patterns.

Section Two: Public Health Measures for Facilities

Custodian/Cleaner - Enhanced Cleaning and Disinfection of Shared Areas and Surfaces

Products used for enhanced cleaning purposes will include LaLema Twist and Mixx Oranet. LaLema Twist and Mixx Aliquat (200 ppm) will be used on all food prep and eating surfaces for disinfecting purposes, and LaLema Twist and Mixx Hyperquat (400 ppm) on all other surfaces.

Cleaning products will remove visible soil and/or dirt from surfaces, while disinfecting products are used to destroy bacteria and viruses. The cleaning process will be completed prior to the disinfection process.

Cleaning of Common Areas

All frequently touched surfaces within the commonly used areas of the school will be cleaned and disinfected frequently throughout the day by custodial and support staff. This includes door handles, handrails, light switches, bathrooms, photocopiers, etc.

Cleaning of Classrooms

All classrooms being used will be thoroughly cleaned and disinfected at the end of each school day.

Every classroom will have access to materials for students to clean/disinfect their desk/table space at different intervals throughout the day. Students will be instructed on how to do this appropriately.

In some cases, classrooms will host students from different cohorts. In these cases, each class will be provided with appropriate cleaning and disinfecting materials for students to clean/disinfect their desk/table space prior to leaving the classroom. Time will be allotted for students to clean/disinfect the classroom at the end of class time to prepare for the following class to enter.

Classroom Physical Configuration

Each classroom throughout Grace Christian School will be arranged to maximize the use of space and to promote physical distancing when possible. This will include rearranging desks and tables to increase the space between students, reducing the number of students within group settings, and the use of live-edge surfaces around the perimeter of some classrooms. When small group instruction is necessary, staff will be required to wear their personal, non-

medical masks. Students in grades 7 – 12 are required to wear non-medical masks during collaborative learning when physical distancing cannot be maintained.

Furniture

When possible, GCS students will have individual desks and chairs. All desks, tables, and chairs will be assigned to students to minimize contact points. Seating plans will be prepared for each classroom and updated throughout the school year.

GCS will ensure only necessary materials and furniture are located within classrooms. To maximize physical learning space, all unnecessary items and clutter will be removed. This will provide additional space for physical distancing and ensure ease of proper cleaning protocols.

Classroom Technology

Each individual elementary student will be assigned a Chromebook which will remain inside their classroom. Students will be instructed on how to thoroughly clean and disinfect their Chromebook.

All students in Grade 7 - 12 will be required to bring their own personal laptop, iPad, and/or Chromebook to school each day. These devices will not be shared between students. Students are encouraged to clean and disinfect their devices daily.

School-owned digital devices (laptops, Chromebooks, tablets etc.) are to be disinfected after a student uses the device and at the end of the school day.

Water Fountains/Water Filling Stations

Water fountains will remain closed; however, water filling stations will be open, and students will be strongly encouraged to bring a water bottle from home. Increased cleaning will occur at water filling stations throughout the school day.

Signage

Main entrance signage will be posted outlining common messaging, as well as being visible throughout the school building. Such signs include the symptoms of COVID-19, physical distancing reminders, self-screening questions, proper hand-washing procedures, and important school protocols. Other signage will identify cohort zones, the visitor zone, traffic patterns, physical distancing markers, etc.

Emergency Protocols

All students and staff must carry a personal, non-medical mask with them daily and will be required to wear their mask during emergency situations when a reasonable degree of physical distancing cannot be maintained. This would include:

- lockdown
- fire drills
- evacuation drill
- any other unforeseen situation

Section Three: Programming, Extra-curricular, and Co-curricular Activities

All GCS students will be returning to school in September 2020 and will have the opportunity to participate in all content areas. The public health measures shared in this document will allow for reduced risk of transmission within the classrooms and across all programming. Specific programs and activities will practice more specific guidelines as indicated below.

Physical Education

Physical Education will be scheduled as per usual for all GCS students; however, minimal use of shared equipment will help reduce the risk of transmission of COVID-19. When possible, physical education classes will be held outdoors. When necessary, staggered times for dismissal will allow for minimal interactions between students across different cohorts. A sanitation station will be set up outside the gym area and physical distancing between students will be reinforced when possible. Students should hand wash/sanitize before they enter the gym area and whenever they leave.

The Physical Education and Health Association of Canada documentation will be referred to for guiding principles related to Physical Education (PE) during COVID-19.

Music

Music will continue to be taught in the music room or, when available, inside the chapel area to allow for additional space. Physical distancing will be practiced, and minimal instruments will be shared. Any equipment that is shared will be cleaned/sanitized between classes. Instrumental programs will operate under the same restrictions. When possible, small ensembles, solos, or quartets will be encouraged over large performing groups. Singing is not permitted unless individuals maintain a distance of 3.5m/12ft.

Library

Library classes will continue by following the PEI Provincial Library guidelines https://www.princeedwardisland.ca/sites/default/files/publications/pls-policy_manual.pdf. All resources returned will be quarantined for 72 hours. Library space must be cleaned between cohorts on a scheduled basis.

Athletics Program & School Intramurals

School sports and intramural programs will be “paused” during school start up. PEISAA will determine when school sports will resume. The ability to effectively conduct intramurals and school sports will be dependent upon CPHO guidelines. Athletic Directors and the PEISAA will develop a plan for the fall season. Initial emphasis will be placed on student participation, individual skill building, and fitness while always following safe COVID-19 protocol for the specific activity. When intramural activities are organized, cohorts will be used.

Student Committees

Activities developed and organized by Student Council will be delivered within cohorts. Virtual challenges could be strongly encouraged.

After/During School Field Trips

Off campus activities involving student travel will be dependent upon the CPHO guidelines at the time. Any travel that may result in a requirement to self-isolate for any period of time will not be permitted. There will be no off-Island student travel at this time.

Considerations for student travel on-Island will consider the benefit of the outcome as compared to the risk associated with participation. Should it be determined that such trips will proceed, all guidelines associated with transportation will be followed. (See Section Seven)

Organized and Multiple Gatherings Within a School

Planned events that typically take place at the school (e.g. Meet the Teacher, School Concerts, etc.) will follow the current CPHO Guidelines for large organized and multiple gatherings at that given time. Many events will be delivered virtually when possible to minimize the risk of transmission.

School-Based Fundraising

Due to the risks associated with COVID-19, GCS will deliver virtual fund-raisers and/or online events only. All monetary transactions are recommended to take place electronically.

Section Four: Student Breaks

Duty and Supervision

Staff will supervise students within their own cohort, when possible.

Playgrounds

Dismissal for outside recess will be done by individual teachers on a staggered, scheduled basis. Designated doorways will be used for each cohort when entering and exiting the building. The end of recess will also be done on a staggered, schedule basis.

Grace Christian School will identify and assign multiple separate play areas to maintain low student-playground ratios during each outside recess time. Classes will remain in their designated play area with their cohort.

Children and staff are required to wash/sanitize their hands before and after the outdoor play time.

Lunch

All students will wash their hands or sanitize prior to eating. Students at the elementary level will remain in their classrooms for lunch, while students in junior and senior high will remain inside their homeroom for lunch. Staggered dismissals will reduce crowding at lockers to acquire their lunches. Designated outdoor space will be provided for specified cohorts in Grades 7 - 12.

Any vendors delivering food will drop off food in the visitor zone. Food orders will be collected in advance and delivered to the individual classrooms for students that eat inside their individual classrooms.

Microwaves will be permitted for cohort usage and must be cleaned daily by teachers.

Washrooms

When possible, GCS will assign cohorts to separate bathrooms. If a student needs to use the washroom and the maximum occupancy of that washroom has been reached the student must wait outside the washroom. No more than 2 individuals will be permitted to enter the washroom at a given time. Students in grades 7 – 12, as well as all staff, are required to wear a mask when in the hallways and washroom.

Signs will be posted for handwashing in all washrooms. Students will return to class immediately following each washroom break. Teachers will only allow one student per class to leave at a time to use the washroom.

There will be increased cleaning and disinfecting done in the washrooms by custodial and support staff.

Section Five: School Supplies and Student Belongings

Shared Materials (individually shared, classroom shared)

The sharing of materials will be kept to a minimum. In the event that materials must be shared by many in a classroom, effort will be made to disinfect the shared materials prior to use by the next group. Students will be required to wash/sanitize their hands following each activity.

Kindergarten students who often rely on play-based learning materials that are shared between various students will follow the same measures; however, transitions will be supervised and play areas assigned.

Lockers/Storage Sites

When possible, student personal belongings will be stored inside classrooms or transported between classrooms with a backpack. When this is not possible, access will be within cohorts and supervised. All students in grades 7 – 12 are required to wear a non-medical mask while at their lockers.

Elementary

Access to storage hooks will be supervised and staggered when possible. Students will remain within their cohorts when accessing these sites and times will be staggered when possible. Proper hand hygiene will be practiced.

Junior High/High School

Banks of lockers will be assigned to the various cohorts. Proper hand hygiene will be emphasized and access to lockers will be limited and staggered as much as possible. Contact points for lockers and cubbies will be cleaned and disinfected throughout the day.

Section Six: Transportation

Should travel be required to support athletic programming throughout the school year, parents will be encouraged to drive their child to the event. If necessary, GCS will use their school bus to transport students and coaches (less than 30 individuals) and physical distancing will be practiced. All individuals travelling will be required to wear a non-medical mask during travel. This includes the driver. Throughout travel, staff will monitor for any symptoms of illness.

Section Seven: Student Services

Student Transfer Requests

Student transfer requests will continue to be monitored on an individual basis and follow all current guidelines set by the CPHO.

International Registrations

International registrations will continue to be monitored on an individual basis and follow all current guidelines set by the CPHO.

Educational Assistants (EA)

The sharing of EAs is common practice in schools. This will still be necessary in order to meet all students' needs. Schools should limit the number of cohorts that EAs work in during the day. Good handwashing practices will be used when transitioning from room to room or student to student.

Section Eight: Summary of Guiding Principles

The wellness and safety of all GCS stakeholders will remain a priority throughout the school year. To reduce the risk of transmission of COVID-19, the following actions will be promoted across all things school-related:

- Pre-screening of students and staff
- Promotion of physical distancing
- Enhanced cleaning and disinfecting protocols
- Contact tracing mechanisms
- Students/staff in cohorts with reduced interactions between cohorts
- Staggering of transitions/movement in, out, and within school areas

With the support of the Chief Public Health Office and the Department of Education, we look forward to welcoming students back to school full time in September 2020.