



August 10, 2020

Dear GSA Boarding Parents:

As we get ever closer to the start of school, I want to update you on our fall opening.

This email begins with very important information about arrival and safety procedures for our boarding students. It also has information on how classes will work this year, as well as the opening of school schedule. I will send you another email in the next week that will include details of our health and safety protocols for the school day and information on student schedules. It also will tell you which group your child is in, Group A or Group B.

In addition to the health and safety procedures we will follow every day at school, we are implementing special procedures to keep our boarding students safe and well while at GSA.

Arrival on campus

All students coming from other countries or states other than Maine should arrive on campus no later than August 25.

All students must be tested for COVID-19 and receive a negative test result before they can arrive on campus. A record of the test and result must be given to GSA health staff.

Students will be quarantined in the dorm for 14-days prior to the start of school on September 8. Students will be tested again after their 14-day quarantine period is completed.

Residential students who have been staying in Hancock County must be tested two days before they are to come to campus, and receive a negative result, before they can they move into the dorm. During the time they are waiting for their test results, students must quarantine at home. During the quarantine period, daily health screenings will be implemented to help monitor the health and well-being of all residential students.

Residential students will quarantine in their dorm rooms. Meals during this 14-day quarantine period will be eaten in their rooms. Bathroom schedules will be developed to minimize interactions. Any student whose quarantine period is not complete by the start of school will participate in school orientation online until their quarantine is finished.

Post-quarantine

Students will be allowed access to campus for their classes, and at other times in small groups, while wearing masks, keeping at least six feet apart, and following all our health and safety procedures for the school day. It is our plan for all residential students to be initially assigned a

single room. Siblings may be assigned a shared room to keep family units together. Field trips off campus will be limited during the fall semester. No visitors will be allowed in the dormitories, nor should students visit other residential students in their dorm rooms. The Common Rooms will be open to small residential groups. Physical distancing and wearing face coverings will be required. Bathroom and laundry schedules will be established to minimize the risk of infection and to facilitate contact tracing should the need arise.

School breaks

If it is deemed necessary, GSA will provide on-campus boarding during fall school breaks, including the winter holiday break, so students can remain on campus in a safe and healthy environment until school resumes in January. We want to minimize the need for additional quarantine procedures upon their return.

How our hybrid model will work

Students will be put into one of two groups by advisory, Group A or Group B. This will allow us to keep our advisories intact while reducing the number of students on campus—and in any classroom—to approximately half of what it usually would be. Group A will have classes on campus Monday and Tuesday, with Group B working from home those days. Group B will have classes on campus Thursday and Friday, with Group A working from home. Each day will start with a short advisory period for attendance and other such things. Everyone will have a fully remote day on Wednesday, with a set schedule. This plan allows for good continuity (two days in a row in person).

Having everyone study remotely on Wednesdays is good practice in case we need to resume remote learning for everyone during the year (for example, if the public health situation in Hancock County requires it, or we have a confirmed case in our school population and are told by the CDC we should go remote for a few weeks). It also allows all the students in a class to be together virtually one day a week, and gives us a chance for a longer advising period and time for teachers to hold virtual office hours for students who need extra help.

Students who will study from home all the time will be assigned to a group. We will record the two days of in-person classes so they can view them, they will have their two days of at-home assignments and activities like all students, and they will participate on the Wednesday full remote day with their classmates.

Opening days schedule

Because there is so much more for everyone to learn about and get comfortable with this year, we have set aside more time to go over our new systems and protocols, both for faculty and staff, and for students. We will have five professional days for teachers and staff ahead of bringing students to campus. Besides the normal beginning-of-school work we do every year, we will use this time to increase facility with our new online learning platform, go over all our health and safety procedures, and work on expanding our curriculum to include elements addressing issues of racism and inequity in our country.

Initially, we will bring students to campus by grade, which will enable them to be with their entire class at least one day. We will distribute computers before the first full day of classes.

Students will be introduced to Canvas, our online learning platform, as well as have initial meetings with their teachers to get started on schoolwork. They also will be trained in our new health and safety procedures and protocols. Having a smaller number of students on campus will make it easier to practice following all those procedures and protocols. It also will allow us to see if any of them need to be modified. As we believe ninth-graders need extra orientation to prepare them for high school, we have set aside two days of orientation for them.

First week of school for students

Friday, Sept. 4: 9th grade only

Monday, Sept. 7: Labor Day - no school

Tuesday, Sept. 8: 12th grade only

Wednesday, Sept. 9: 11th grade only

Thursday, Sept. 10: 10th grade only

Friday, Sept. 11: 9th grade only

Begin hybrid model

Monday, Sept. 14: Group A on campus

Tuesday, Sept. 15: Group A on campus

Wednesday, Sept. 16: 100% remote for all

Thursday, Sept. 17: Group B on campus

Friday, Sept. 18: Group B on campus

Though getting school up and running is a much bigger task this year, I do believe we will, as always, find our rhythm. And we will monitor how things go and make adjustments as needed, whether large or small.

Timothy J. Seeley
Head of School