

Pandemic Planning: Information & Guidance for State Charter Schools

SEPTEMBER 21, 2020

**State Charter Schools Commission
of Georgia**



Contents

.....	1
Introduction.....	3
General Information	4
Community Spread	5
Communication Resources.....	6
Instructional Models.....	6
Recommended Processes and Procedures	6
Legal Compliance	7
Facilities Resources	9
Meals and Transportation.....	9
Other Resources	9

Introduction

State charter schools, like all local school districts, have flexibility to implement a pandemic plan that best suits the needs of their individual communities. Through broad flexibility waivers, state charter schools can already implement many of the recommended practices, such as modifying school calendars, instructional time and methods.

As the oversight body to state charter schools, the SCSC has an obligation to ensure that each school's plan aligns with state and federal requirements. **NOTE: Any device or service required to access your school's instructional program MUST be provided at no cost to students. Schools may not require students to pay insurance or other fees to access required remote or distance instructional models. Schools may request that parents agree to pay reasonable insurance deductibles in the event that equipment is damaged, lost or stolen.**

This document is intended to consolidate resources and information for state charter schools as they develop and adapt pandemic plans for the 2020-2021 school year. It contains links to guidance and information from the Georgia Department of Education (GaDOE); U.S. Department of Education (US Ed); Georgia Department of Public Health (GaDPH); the Center for Disease Control (CDC), and other sources. It is updated weekly, as needed, to reflect the most current guidance and information available.

Newly incorporated information is indicated by red print.

General Information

- On August 31, 2020, Governor Brian Kemp extended the Public Health State of Emergency through October 10, 2020. On September 15, 2020, by **EXECUTIVE ORDER**, Governor Kemp provided additional guidance in response to COVID-19. This guidance is effective through September 30, 2020 (11:59 p.m.).

Community Spread

- The level of community spread shall be determined by your local health department. Pandemic plans should respond to circumstances requiring temporary school closure, enhanced mitigation measures, and preventative practices.

From the Centers for Disease Control & Prevention (CDC)

- Updated CDC Guidance: [FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS](#) (September 18, 2020)
- Updated CDC Guidance: [TOOLKIT FOR SCHOOLS](#) (August 4, 2020).

From the Georgia Department of Public Health

- The GaDPH, in alignment with federal guidance, developed the [GUIDANCE FOR GEORGIA K-12 SCHOOLS AND SCHOOL-BASED PROGRAMS](#) to replace the “Georgia’s Path to K-12 Recovery” document. Schools can still use the Path to Recovery document for guidance. [MOVING FORWARD, THE GADPH WILL DISSEMINATE ALL PUBLIC HEALTH DIRECTIVES.](#)
 - The GaDPH released [COVID-19 CASE REPORTING GUIDANCE](#), which includes detailed instructions for complying with the [GUIDANCE FOR GEORGIA K-12 SCHOOLS AND SCHOOL-BASED PROGRAMS](#) COVID-19 reporting requirements.
 - On September 2, 2020, the GaDOE released [FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS \(FAQS\)](#) regarding COVID-19 reporting requirement. The responses were derived directly from the GaDPH.
- The GaDPH issued a list of Public Health Directors, including contact information. You can access the list [HERE](#).
- Visit the GaDPH website for daily updates to the [COVID-19 STATUS REPORT](#), and additional guidance including:
 - [GUIDANCE ON MANAGING ESSENTIAL ITEM PICK-UP](#); and,
 - [FACE COVERING RECOMMENDATIONS](#).
- [RETURN TO SCHOOL GUIDANCE AFTER COVID-19 ILLNESS OR EXPOSURE](#)

Communication Resources

- The Georgia School Boards Association developed a [**PANDEMIC RECOVERY CONSIDERATIONS, RE-ENTRY AND RE-OPENING OF SCHOOLS**](#) guidance document, which assists schools in developing effective communication plans.

Instructional Models

State charter schools have broad flexibility to establish their instructional models, in-person reporting schedules, track remote/virtual attendance, and set their academic calendars. Review the following additional rules and resources as you develop a pandemic plan for your school:

- On September 10, 2020, the GaDOE provided updated guidance on. [**STUDENT ATTENDANCE AND VIRTUAL LEARNING.**](#)
- [**GADOE STUDENT ATTENDANCE AND VIRTUAL/DISTANCE/REMOTE LEARNING FAQ**](#) (June 26, 2020)
- FTE Count: [**SBOE RULE 160-5-1-.07**](#)
- State Board of Education June 18 [**RESOLUTION**](#) exempting LEAs from minimum instructional time, school day, and school year requirements, *upon submission of an amended school calendar.*
- [**CONNECTIVITY AND DEVICES RESTART GUIDANCE**](#)
- [**DIGITAL LEARNING PLANNING: INFORMATION FOR GEORGIA PUBLIC SCHOOL DISTRICTS**](#)
- [**DISTANCE LEARNING AND PROFESSIONAL LEARNING**](#) (UPDATED 7/22)
- The Privacy & Technical Assistance Center (PTAC) released [**GUIDANCE**](#) on protecting student privacy while using online educational services.

Recommended Processes and Procedures

- [**GEORGIA'S PATH TO RECOVERY FOR K-12 SCHOOLS**](#)
- [**FACILITIES, EQUIPMENT, AND TRANSPORTATION**](#) (UPDATED 7/10)
- [**STUDENT ATTENDANCE AND VIRTUAL/DISTANCE/REMOTE LEARNING FAQ**](#)
- [**MENTAL HEALTH WELLNESS RESTART GUIDANCE.**](#) (UPDATED 9/10)

Legal Compliance

To ensure legally compliant operations, schools should review the following policies and legal requirements.

Subject	Resources
Infectious Disease	SBOE Rule 160-1-3.03
Staff and Student Attendance Policies	<p>SBOE Rule 160-5-1-.10 SBOE Rule 160-4-2-.31 (Hospital Homebound Services)</p>
Enrollment and Registration Procedures	<p>O.C.G.A § 20-2-771 (The statute allows the responsible official of any school or facility to grant a 30-calendar day waiver of the certification of immunization requirement for a justified reason.)</p> <p>GaDPH Rule 511-2-2-.02</p> <p>NOTE: GaDPH postponed implementation of the high school meningococcal conjugate vaccine booster requirement from July 1, 2020, to July 1, 2021. Parent letters are available in ENGLISH and SPANISH.</p>
Students and Staff with Disabilities	<p>Section 504, ADA, and IDEA policies Reasonable Accommodations Mask Requirements</p>
Required Legal Notices	<p>Family Medical Leave Act (FMLA)</p> <p>Families First Coronavirus Response Act (FFRCA) NOTE: Public employers and government entities, including state charter schools, must display THIS POSTER.</p> <p>U.S. Dept. of Labor GUIDANCE for implementation of emergency paid leave, sick leave and FFCRA leave.</p>
Other Legal Requirements	<p>Occupational Health and Safety Act (OSHA) National Labor Relations Act (NLRA)</p> <p>Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA)</p>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>WHAT YOU SHOULD KNOW ABOUT THE ADA, THE REHABILITATION ACT, AND COVID-19</u> • <u>PANDEMIC PREPAREDNESS IN THE WORKPLACE AND THE AMERICANS WITH DISABILITIES ACT</u> <p>Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA)</p> <p>SBOE Rule 160-1-3-.03</p> <p>U.S. Dept. of Education guidance on FERPA compliance during COVID-19:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>MARCH 2020 FAQs</u> • <u>MARCH 30, 2020 WEBINAR</u> <p>Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA).</p>
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Additional Resources

- [FACT SHEET: ADDRESSING THE RISK OF COVID 19 IN SCHOOLS WHILE PROTECTING THE CIVIL RIGHTS OF STUDENTS \(MARCH 16, 2020\)](#)
- [SUPPLEMENTAL FACT SHEET ADDRESSING THE RISK OF COVID 19 IN PRESCHOOL, ELEMENTARY AND SECONDARY SCHOOLS WHILE SERVING CHILDREN WITH DISABILITIES \(MARCH 21, 2020\)](#)
- [SUPPORTING STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES WITH DISTANCE LEARNING \(APRIL 2020\)](#)
- [WHAT YOU SHOULD KNOW ABOUT THE ADA, THE REHABILITATION ACT, AND COVID-19](#)
- [PANDEMIC PREPAREDNESS IN THE WORKPLACE AND THE AMERICANS WITH DISABILITIES ACT](#)
- [SETTING A NEW COURSE: A LEGAL GUIDE TO OPERATING SCHOOLS IN THE PANDEMIC ERA](#)

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- The GaDOE disseminated the following guidance on emergency teacher recruitment and retention during the COVID-19 pandemic on August 7, 2020: **ENSURING A STRONG TEACHER WORKFORCE**

Facilities Resources

- **FACILITIES, EQUIPMENT, AND TRANSPORTATION**
- **PPE SUPPLIERS LIST**
- GaDOE released **GUIDANCE** related to “In-person Reporting and Staff Safety.”

Meals and Transportation

- **PREPARING AND SERVING SCHOOL MEALS**
- **FACILITIES, EQUIPMENT, AND TRANSPORTATION**
- **CDC REOPENING GUIDANCE FOR CLEANING AND DISINFECTING PUBLIC SPACES, WORKPLACES, BUSINESSES, SCHOOLS, AND HOMES.**
- **CDC GUIDANCE FOR THE CLEANING AND DISINFECTION FOR NON-EMERGENCY TRANSPORT VEHICLES .**

Other Resources

- The Georgia Department of Behavioral Health & Developmental Disabilities launched the Georgia Covid-19 Emotional Support Line. The phone number is 866-399-8938. Additional details and resources are listed on the **FLYER**.
- Georgia High School Association (GHSA) updated its **CORONAVIRUS STATEMENT**. In addition, see the GHSA **GUIDANCE FOR ACCLIMATIZATION AND PRACTICE WITH RECOMMENDATIONS AND/OR RESTRICTIONS**. (June 22, 2020)
- Please see the following new resources relevant to special education and related services:
 - **GADOE GUIDANCE ON RESTART AND IMPLEMENTATION FOR IDEA**
 - **SPECIAL EDUCATION DISTRICT SUPPORTS AND COVID-19 RESOURCES**