2020-2021
REOPENING PLAN

Leadership ★ Honor ★ Courage
Overview
This addendum outlines our plan for the continued operation of Gerstell Academy in accordance with the Gerstell Academy Mission during the COVID-19 pandemic. The School’s plan includes policies that are intended to be temporary because we are hopeful that we will be able to return to a campus environment that will not necessitate these policies. That said, we are unable to predict how long these policies will be in effect. As with other policies in the Student and Parent Handbook, Gerstell Academy reserves the right to amend or remove these policies as circumstances warrant.

Learning Plan
Health and safety are the main considerations in formulating our learning plan. Gerstell Academy is offering classes in a mix of modalities. The School’s learning plans have been designed to accommodate our social distancing protocol and to minimize movement throughout the buildings. Special area teachers will be traveling to classrooms to minimize the movement of students in hallways. Physical Education classes will be conducted outside whenever possible.

Lower School
Our Lower School academic and leadership programs best meet the developmental needs of our students in person, therefore Lower School students will be on-campus five days a week. For students who are unable to attend school in-person, virtual options will be available on a case-by-case basis.

Middle School
The Middle School will be offering the following instructional models:

1. On-campus instruction will be offered four days a week. All Middle School students will participate in remote learning one day a week (Wednesdays) during full five-day weeks.
2. A hybrid model will be offered to families that includes both on-campus instruction two days a week and remote learning classes three days a week.
3. The third instructional model will allow students to participate in our remote learning program on a full-time basis, five days a week.

Upper School
The Upper School will offer two choices for students. Students are grouped by grade level for both options.

1. **Option 1** is a **HYBRID** model that allows students to attend in-person classes on campus and remote, synchronous classes.
2. **Option 2** is a **REMOTE** model that allows students to attend all classes through live, synchronous Zoom sessions.
Digital Learning Platforms
Gerstell Academy is committed to ensuring that all students have the ability to participate fully, make progress in their learning, and feel the strong sense of community that is essential to our Gerstell Academy Mission.

We have installed quality cameras and audio in many classrooms. These enhancements in technology will allow teachers to provide simultaneous instruction to students in the classroom and those who may need to engage in remote learning.

Zoom
A video connection platform that provides a virtual classroom (synchronous) learning environment.

Microsoft Office 365 (3rd - 12th grades)
A web-based version of Microsoft’s Office suite of productivity applications, including Word, Excel, and PowerPoint.

Microsoft Teams
Microsoft Teams is a unified communication and collaboration platform that combines persistent workplace chat, video meetings, file storage, and application integration.

Gerstell’s Portal
Parents and students are accustomed to accessing an array of information, including the school calendar, directory, schedules, homework, tests, quizzes, student assignments, daily homework, projects and more through the Gerstell portal. The grade book feature and class/course resources provide students and parents with an abundance of helpful information. We will continue to expand the array of online educational material through our resource boards. You may login to the portal through our website: www.gerstell.org

Other online resources such as Nearpod, Seesaw, Brainpop, and more will be used throughout the year.

College Guidance
The College Guidance Department is dedicated to providing the same standard of attention to all of our students in the college planning and application process as ever. Due to COVID-19 restrictions, we will hold all Student/Parent Forums, College Representative visits, College Guidance lessons in Advisories, and meetings with families virtually. Many colleges and universities are offering virtual visits to their campuses, as well as virtual college fairs. This information will be distributed to all students via email and the portal. When able we will hold individual meetings with students on campus, maintaining social distancing. On-campus or online, our department is prepared to carry out our mission to provide personal attention to students as they navigate the college application process.
Athletics
At this time, the Maryland Interscholastic Athletic Association (MIAA) and the Interscholastic Athletic Association of Maryland (IAAM) have postponed all fall athletic competitions and championships. This postponement applies to the MIAA and IAAM sponsored sports and impacts cross country, soccer, and volleyball. We will continue to monitor and adhere to the decisions made by the MIAA and the IAAM. These governing bodies will reconvene in mid-October to reevaluate and manage competitive options for the remainder of the 2020/2021 year. The Gerstell Academy Administration will continue to update our community on the status of athletics.

Recess / P.E.
We plan to hold recess and physical education classes throughout the day. These classes will be outdoors whenever possible. Students will not change clothes for P.E. Social distancing protocols will be followed throughout class.

To start the school year, students will not change clothes for P.E. We hope to make the locker rooms available for students to change for P.E. following properly socially distancing protocols sometime later in the fall.

Life on Campus

New School Locations
Gerstell Academy has relocated the Middle and Upper Schools. The Middle School is now located primarily in Robert E. Smith Hall (RESH) and the Upper School is conveniently located in the Paterakis Athletic Center (PAC). Administration for the Middle School is located on the 2nd floor of the RESH. Middle School students will be dropped off in front of the Carolyn B. Smith Hall (CBSH) and proceed to the quad where they will enter the RESH through a dedicated "entrance only" door.

Upper School Administration is located at the entrance of the PAC. Direct school phone numbers for the Middle and Upper Schools have remained the same.

The Director of Athletics has moved to an office directly across from the entrance to the Deborah Paterakis Gymnasium.

The main reception area for the school is located on the first floor of the RESH. A complete directory of school locations will be posted on the portal for your convenience.

Visitor Policy
In order to maintain safety protocols, we will be restricting visitors from entering our buildings. Parents, friends, family members, and non-essential visitors will not be allowed on campus, except for student drop-off and pick-up. Unfortunately, we will not be able to utilize in-person parent volunteers at this time. Our Admissions team will be conducting virtual open houses throughout the year but may, from time to time, invite a visitor to campus to tour the outside of the building and grounds only. Essential visitors will also undergo a temperature check and complete a health history screenings.
Carpool
Gerstell Academy has altered our morning carpool times to be as follows:

- Middle School: Carpool begins at 7:30 a.m. / Classes begin at 7:50 a.m.
- Upper School: Carpool begins at 7:45 a.m. / Classes begin at 8:10 a.m.
- Lower School: Carpool begins at 8:00 a.m. / Classes begin at 8:30 a.m.

Generally, the President and Administration will greet all Middle and Upper School students as they arrive each morning. Cars will enter campus via the north driveway and bear left at the stop sign. Middle School students are to be dropped off at Carolyn B. Smith Hall (CBSH). Upper School students are to be dropped off at the Paterakis Athletic Center (PAC). All students’ temperatures will be checked upon arrival.

Generally, the President and Administration will greet all Lower School students as they arrive each morning. Arrival for Lower School begins at 8:00 a.m. and concludes at 8:25 a.m. Lower Cars will enter through the North Gate, turn left, and circle the campus in single file until arriving at the front of Robert E. Smith Hall (RESH). Upper School parents may be entering at the same time as some Lower School parents are exiting. Please be aware that our North Gate entrance will have two-way traffic.

Transportation
Gerstell Academy will offer bus transportation to our families that are interested in this service. Special equipment will be used to sanitize the buses on a regular basis and social distancing protocols will always be followed. Masks must be worn by the drivers and students.

Lunch
All students should bring their own lunch until further notice. Students will eat in their classrooms or in outdoor spaces, weather permitting. Students are reminded to not share personal items such as food, water bottles, plates, cups, utensils, etc. We will be eliminating the use of water fountains until further notice. We encourage our students and staff to bring their own reusable water bottles to school. Touchless water bottle filling stations will be available for use throughout the day. Community members will be permitted to remove their masks during lunch. Social distancing protocols will be followed at all times.

Field Trips
Gerstell Academy has cancelled all field trips at this time.

Dress Code Adjustments
We are slightly relaxing the dress code this year due to the fact that the students will not be able to change their clothes for P.E. The rules of the dress code remain in effect with the following modifications:

- **Lower School**: Pre-K and Kindergarten students only may wear Velcro-strap style sneakers.
• **Middle School:** Students will be allowed to wear khaki shorts to school during the warmer months to start the school year. Only shorts purchased from Flynn & O’Hara Uniforms are acceptable. Please visit [www.flynnohara.com](http://www.flynnohara.com) to purchase uniforms. Students may wear all white sneakers during the school day. Students are also welcomed to bring their regular sneakers in a separate bag on days they have P.E.

• **Upper School:** A blazer and tie is not required at this time. Athletic shoes (any color) may be worn with white socks.

**Harford Heights Child Care**
Harford Heights Child Care, Inc. will be offering after school care only. There will be no morning child care. You may register and obtain more information on child care options by visiting our website - [https://www.gerstell.org/campus-life/harford-heights-before--after-school-care](https://www.gerstell.org/campus-life/harford-heights-before--after-school-care)

**Health and Safety**
The health and safety of our students, faculty, and staff remain our top priority. While much of our attention is focused on guarding against COVID-19, we are also mindful of the mental health and social-emotional state of our students. Mr. Dan Gourley, our new School Counselor, will work closely with teachers and administrators to support our students.

Gerstell Academy continues to implement practices and protocols that support our priority in maintaining a safe and healthy campus environment. We will continue to follow the latest guidelines set forth by the Centers for Disease Controls and Prevention (CDC), The Maryland Department of Health (MDH), the Carroll County Health Department, and the American Academy of Pediatrics. We thank you for your partnership as we incorporate best practices based on growing scientific knowledge.

**Temperature Checks**
Please be sure to check your student’s temperature before leaving home. All students arriving on campus will receive a temperature screening check. Students who arrive in carpool will be screened before drivers depart campus. If a student’s temperature is 100.4 degrees or higher, the student will be required to return home.

**Screening Protocol**
All members of the Gerstell Academy community must complete our daily morning COVID-19 Symptom Questionnaire before arriving to school each day. A link to the questionnaire will be delivered each weekday to our parents to complete on behalf of their student via a text message.

- Parent clicks on the link and completes the questionnaire with their student.
- Parent receives a second text message that will indicate if the student should come to school or stay home. If the student does not “pass” the morning symptom check and is asked to stay home, Gerstell will be notified and our School Nurse, will contact the family later that morning. If the student “passes,” please proceed to campus.
Social Distancing
Students will be separated in classrooms, keeping six feet between each other as much as possible. Additional time between classes has been built into the schedule to allow students to travel safely throughout campus. All students, faculty, and staff should remain six feet apart from one another at all times.

Masks
Students, faculty, and staff are expected to purchase their own masks. Face masks must be worn at all times. When outside, a mask is required when social distancing cannot be maintained. While students can use decorative fabric and show creativity, masks may not have messaging, political content, or a design that draws undue attention or distracts. Masks must cover the nose and mouth, and they must fit the student comfortably, so that students do not have to adjust the mask frequently. Students will be permitted supervised breaks from mask wearing, as health experts recognize that structured breaks improve compliance and provide relief.

Cohorting Protocol
Gerstell has established student cohort groups as much as possible. In our Lower School, students will remain in the same classrooms for most of the day. These cohorts will travel together to participate in P.E. classes and recess, not mixing with other groups.

Our Upper School students will be on campus with grade level cohorts. It is important to note that student schedules may vary according to course choices and ability level.

Sanitizing
Hands must be sanitized before entering a building. Campus sanitizing stations are located at each building’s entrance. It is recommended that students have their own sanitizing bottles to clip on their backpacks for easy access. Sanitizing solutions will also be placed in every classroom and office.

Hand Washing and Cleaning Practices
To limit transmission through hand contact, teachers will be directing students to wash and/or sanitize their hands frequently. Community members are encouraged to regularly wash their hands with warm soapy water for a minimum of 20 seconds.

We will be cleaning and disinfecting more frequently throughout the day and in the evenings, using EPA-approved, antimicrobial technology. We have acquired sprayers, which allows us to disperse disinfectant more effectively and across larger areas; these sprayers will be used to clean buses, classrooms, offices, and other areas as needed.

Signage
Signage has been placed inside the buildings and throughout the campus for the safety of our community. Students, faculty, and staff should adhere to the directional signage displayed at all times. Signs have also been placed throughout our buildings to help everyone follow health protocols, including physical distancing, mask wearing, and handwashing techniques. We will reinforce these messages with frequent spoken reminders.
Building Upgrades
We have upgraded to touchless operation in our restrooms and in most areas of our campus. Paper towel dispensers and hardware are now touchless. The HVAC units are equipped with the highest rated filters possible. These filters are intended to trap the vast majority of airborne particles. Our systems are designed to re-circulate air frequently throughout the day. These air filtration methods, coupled with appropriate mask usage and physical distancing, support our priority in maintaining a safe and healthy campus environment.

Lockers
Lockers and UPSU’s will be utilized and all social distancing protocols will be observed. Athletic lockers located in the Paterakis Athletic Center will not be used until further notice.

Sharing Objects
The sharing of school supplies, books, food, or any personal items is prohibited. When sharing of some objects may be necessary, we have established cleaning protocols that will be followed.

Symptom Monitoring and Reporting
Students, faculty, and staff will be expected to self-monitor their health condition and report any COVID-19-like symptoms to our School Nurse.

Testing
Students, faculty, and staff may be subject to periodic COVID-19 testing, as needed.

Isolation and Quarantine
Students, faculty, and staff who test positive for COVID-19, are symptomatic, or were in close contact with those who test positive for COVID-19 may be subject to isolation and quarantine protocols. (The CDC defines “close contact” as “any individual who was within 6 feet of an infected person for at least 15 minutes, starting from two days before illness onset...until the time the patient is isolated.”) The School will act in accordance with regulations set forth by the Maryland Department of Health and Carroll County Department of Health. Please follow the link below or visit our website to learn more about the specific guidelines that will be followed. https://gerstell.myschoolpp.com/ftpimages/1177/download/download_5102803.pdf
Centers for Disease and Control Prevention – Decision AID Flow Chart

Reporting to School Community

The underpinnings of our approach to reporting will be transparency and clarity. If a student or employee tests positive for COVID-19, the School Nurse, once notified, will consult with the Carroll County Department of Health and the Maryland Department of Health to consider next steps, including isolating and/or quarantining of those infected or exposed. Our Re-entry Committee and Administration will meet frequently and will provide detailed updates to families about school activity, specifically related to the pandemic from changing protocols to any positive cases.

Our protocols will be updated from time to time based on evolving guidance and directives from the Maryland Department of Health and the CDC. We will notify you of these updates and will post them on our website (www.gerstell.org). Failure to adhere to these protocols will be considered a violation of the School’s policy.

Please note that our understanding of COVID-19 is incomplete. Scientists around the world are doing their best to learn more about how to minimize and stop the spread of the Coronavirus. Gerstell Academy has put a tremendous amount of health and safety protocols in place. That
said, we cannot eliminate risk. We are partners in preventing the spread of Covid-19 within our community. We are asking our families to be diligent about following the recommendations outlined in this plan and by the Centers for Disease and Control, the Maryland Health Department, and the American Pediatric Association. We thank you for helping to keep our community safe and healthy.

For accurate, updated information about COVID-19, please visit:
- Maryland Department of Health: https://health.maryland.gov/pages/home.aspx
- Carroll County Department of Health: https://cchd.maryland.gov/
- Centers for Disease Control and Prevention: https://www.cdc.gov/

Centers for Disease and Control Resources


✓ How to Wear Masks

✓ How to protect yourself and others:

✓ What is social distancing?

✓ Symptoms of Coronavirus