

Dear GMCS Families,

Thank you so much for all the kind words of support to the GMCS staff during this time. It really means a lot to know that we have your support.

Our first day of school will be Monday, August 31.

Many have reached out to us with questions regarding the virtual learning this school year and here are the answers. Below these questions and answers, we explain our synchronous learning model in more detail.

**How will I know which days my child is attending in person learning?**

Teachers will be contacting their students next week with information. This should allow families time to make appropriate childcare arrangements if needed. Though children will be attending virtually throughout the school day, it is important to have an adult nearby to monitor and support them if needed.

**Will my child be tied to the computer all day?**

No. For attendance purposes your child will need to log into the platform by 8:30, just as students attending in person will need to be at school by 8:30. Students online will need to engage in lessons with the teacher so that the teacher can modify instruction to meet their needs, just as they will be doing with students attending in person. Teachers will be building in movement/brain breaks into their day for virtual and in person learners. During down times (lunch, recess, restroom breaks) students will be able to put the computer aside and partake of those activities on their own. Our goal is to incorporate virtual learners into the typical school day as much as possible so that we can provide them with the same opportunities as their peers.

**How will I know my child's classroom schedule?**

Teachers will be providing each student with a schedule for the school day. As a family you can build off of this schedule to create a "school day schedule at home".

**My child receives Special Education services at school, how will these be provided?**

All Special Education services will be provided as written in your child's Individualized Education Plan (IEP) whether virtually or in person. For students attending in person, the Special Education Department will make every effort to ensure your child receives in person instruction on the days they are at school. Additional instruction beyond that will be conducted virtually. Students attending virtually everyday will have a scheduled time to attend their service throughout the week. Please feel free to contact Mrs. Black with further questions.

### **Why can't my child attend at their own pace/time like we did in the spring?**

Our distance learning in March through May was emergency learning and not ideal. We relied on you to help with the lessons. We understand how it puts a lot of stress on you. With our live streaming this year, the teachers are available all day to your child as if they are in person. They will be teaching the lessons and engaging with the children in person and remotely, at the same time. This will take the pressure of "teaching" off you and put it back into the hands of our teachers. Our assistants will also be available to the children throughout the day.

*We understand how difficult this situation has been for our families, and appreciate your continued support and flexibility. Please keep in mind that as a school, we are exploring this new method and structure of instructing, just as you are. We appreciate your patience as we work through it together. Do not be surprised if further changes and alterations have to be made as we move forward.*

### **Synchronous Learning Experience**

Synchronous learning will look different than what our emergency online learning looked like in the spring. Spring was what would be considered more of an emergency model. In that model, students learned the content independently through use of videos and notes. Synchronous learning is a format that allows students and teachers to still engage and interact daily, whether they are in person or virtual. Students are expected to join their teachers during the whole group or small group lessons. Teachers will then stay live to be available to assist the students with any questions that may arise while they are working. Students should be engaged and working for the length of the school day. *This does not mean that they must be seated and watching the computer for the entire 6-hour day.* For example, students may leave the computer running and work at a desk or on the floor nearby and check in with the teacher as they need assistance after their

teacher has provided the lessons. Our goal is to have engagement on the student's part and have the benefit of allowing the teachers to assist them in real-time. This is going to be new for everyone involved, but it will be a fantastic way for students to continue to engage with their peers and all their teachers.

While preparing schedules for the upcoming start of school, we had to carefully consider how to best meet the educational needs of every child, both in the classroom and at home virtually. In order to do this, the schedules will look different than what students may be accustomed to. However, this will allow students to remain in blended homerooms for non-academic subjects as well as if we are able to fully return to our school campus in the future. Below you see the different layouts and explanations for schedules. These are simply examples, do not take these to be the exact days your child may/may not come to school. *Also remember, nothing is set in stone given that we must change and update our plans as we receive further information from the State for both academic expectations as well as health and safety needs of the building.*

## **K-2**

Kindergarten and Lower Elementary classrooms are self-contained classrooms. Students will be divided into two groups based on the number of students enrolled in each classroom for in person learning. One group will come to school on Mondays and Tuesdays and the other on Thursdays and Fridays. ALL students will learn virtually on Wednesdays. Each day, the teacher will have a set schedule for lesson times. All students, whether they are attending in person or virtually, will be listening to the lessons and interacting with their teachers in real time. When their grade appropriate lesson is over, your child can practice the activity or choose another activity, which would be provided by the teacher.

Kindergarten students will attend a variety of lessons and activities with their teachers and peers throughout the day. At the conclusion of the lesson, teachers will provide students, virtual and in person, activity options to complete for a period of time until the next lesson starts. Some of these activities may include small group/individual lesson time with the teacher or assistant, group centers or individual activities. The adult present with virtual learners will be essential for supporting teacher expectations of new school routines and behavior.

First and second grade classrooms will follow a similar setup. Consider the following example: If your child is a first grade student in Mr. Stare's room, your child would participate in the first grade ELA lesson and then when finished, Mr. Stare would give the child instructions on what to do next until it was time for the math lesson. He/she would not need to attend the second-grade lessons that were taking place that day. We are even looking into an on-screen timer to let the students know they are expected "back" in the classroom for the next lesson.

### **Third and Fourth Grade**

Third and fourth grade students will alternate days in which they are on campus. This will allow each teacher to either focus on students who are all on campus or students who are all at home. This arrangement provides a format in which the teacher can more easily and readily support each group of students because they are not teaching in four different locations including the various classrooms and those students learning at home. This plan takes into account that students will not be able to physically travel to the different classrooms. Consider the following example: Third grade students may come on Mondays and Tuesdays to receive instruction from within the building. While they are learning in person, fourth grade students will receive instruction from the comforts of home. This would then reverse for Thursdays and Fridays. ALL students will receive virtual instruction on Wednesdays.

### **Fifth and Sixth Grade**

Fifth and sixth grade will be alternating by grade levels within homerooms. Again, this setup will allow teachers to focus specifically on one grade level's students at a time in fewer physical locations. Consider the following example: Mrs. Sauter's 5<sup>th</sup> grade may come to school on Mondays and Tuesdays, while Mrs. Gulden's 5<sup>th</sup> grade learns from home. Mrs. Gulden's 6<sup>th</sup> grade will be in person, while Mrs. Sauter's 6<sup>th</sup> grade learns from home. This would then reverse for the next set of learning days, Thursdays and Fridays. ALL students will receive virtual instruction on Wednesdays.

*Please be patient as we continue to find the absolute best ways to support your student regardless of where they are learning. Thank you!*