

2020-2021 School Back to School Commonly Questions and Answers For Parents and Students Relating to COVID-19 (Updated Aug 7, 2020)

Parent/Student Questions

Q. What learning format will be utilized for the start of school?

A. The district plans for all students to attend school in person when school starts on August 17, with our regular attendance policies in place.

Q. Will there be an alternative digital learning option available if I do not want my child to attend?

A. No. Not unless your child is determined to need a different educational placement by law, such as a determination made by an IEP or 504 team, or they are under a directed medical quarantine. In those circumstances, alternative arrangements will be made on a case-by-case basis with the involvement of parents and the student.

Q. What if I choose to homeschool my student?

A. Homeschool or Exempt Schooling is allowable in NE by law. Parents/Legal Guardians may educate their child at home. Students ages 6-18 are required by law to be enrolled in school. (Section 79-1601 R.R.S.). In Nebraska, "homeschools" are referred to as exempt schools and are considered non-approved and non-accredited private schools.

How do I get started, what do I do first? Parents/Legal Guardians must file for exempt status (under Rule 13) with the Department of Education (NDE). By filing for exempt status, a parent is electing to have their child attend a school that does not meet the requirements for approval and accreditation in the state but remain in compliance with the mandatory school attendance law. The parent is also promising to comply with the state requirements for exempt schools, and that the information provided is true and accurate.

How do I file for an exemption? The preferred and quickest method of filing is to submit online through the Nebraska Exempt School Program at <https://exemptschool.education.ne.gov>. Instructions for submitting online are included on this website as well. If you cannot submit online, the forms and related information can be accessed from the Exempt School Program website at www.education.ne.gov/fos/exempt-schools/, under the "Forms for the 2020/21 School Year" banner; or by contacting the Exempt School Program Office.

Answers to frequently asked questions regarding home schooling in Nebraska can be found at https://cdn.education.ne.gov/wp-content/uploads/2020/05/ESP_FAQ.pdf.

Gordon-Rushville High School only accepts transfer credits from an accredited homeschool program, should a student desire to graduate from GRHS. Currently the only accredited on-line high school program in the state of Nebraska is the University of

Nebraska online high school.

Q. Will my child be counted absent if she/he is under a quarantine directed by a medical provider?

A. The school must be in receipt of a quarantine order from Panhandle Public Health District. This will be automatically generated by the health district, parents do not have to request this. Absences due to a quarantine order shall not be counted toward your child's chronic absenteeism limit if that documentation is provided.

Q. Will secondary students be required to wear masks?

A. Students in grades 9-12 are going to be strongly encouraged to wear masks during class, during passing periods, in lunch lines, and during any other times that social distancing is not possible when we are in the **green zone** on the Risk Dial. Students 9-12 are going to be required to wear masks when we are in the **yellow, orange** and **red** zones. Some discretion will be given to your child's principal and teachers based on unique circumstances that may arise. The only other exceptions will be those required by law. Masks **are** required in all school vehicles regardless of the zone we are in.

Q. Will pre-school and elementary students be required to wear masks?

A. Students in grades PK-2 will not be required to wear masks when the school year begins. Instead they will be eased into wearing masks over a period of time, and additional safety precautions will be implemented.

Students grade 3-8 are going to be strongly encouraged to wear masks in hallways, to the extent possible during class, and at other times that social distancing or group isolation is not possible when we are in the **green** zone. Students 3-8 are going to be required to wear masks when we are in the **yellow, orange** and **red** zones. Some discretion will be given to your child's principal and teachers based on unique circumstances that may arise. Masks **are** required in all school vehicles regardless of the zone we are in.

Q. Under what circumstances will students be exempted from wearing masks?

A. Exceptions may be made only as required by law, such as based upon the decisions of a student's IEP or 504 teams.

Q. What if my child does not qualify for an exemption and I don't want them to wear a mask?

A. Wearing masks is a rule adopted by the school board, similar to any other health and safety or dress code rules adopted by the board. Students who refuse to wear masks will face consequences consistent with the district's student discipline policies.

Q. Will a mask be provided by the school or can I select one for my child to wear?

A. The district has acquired five cloth masks for each student. However, parents may provide a mask for their children if they prefer. The masks must either be cloth or a multi-layered disposable mask and must follow the school's dress code.

Q. What if my child loses or forgets his or her mask? **A.** The school will have extra masks for students if they forget or lose theirs. We are currently planning on five masks per student. While we understand that students will forget or misplace their masks on occasion, we will work with students to learn personal responsibility for his/her masks.

Q. What if my student's mask becomes soiled? **A.** Again, we plan on having five masks per student, however masks can be easily laundered in a washing machine and air dried, or hand washed and air dried. Each school building has access to a washer and dryer, however we encourage students to launder his/her mask at home. [CDC guidance on washing cloth face coverings.](#)

Q. What does "cohort groups" mean for students?

A. Elementary students may be required to eat lunch in their classrooms, have specials taught in their classrooms, play and have PE exclusively with students from their classroom. Middle and High School students may at times be required to remain in a specific classroom(s) or group and may eat lunch with their classmates or a certain group only.

Q. Will staff be required to wear masks?

A. Staff will be strongly encouraged to wear a mask when we are in the **green** zone. When we are in the **yellow** and **orange** or **red** zones staff will be required to wear masks. Wearing a face shield instead of a mask or not wearing any face covering may be necessary at times. Staff will discuss with their building principal when these situations occur and make the proper adjustments.

Q. What other steps is the district taking to make attending school safe?

A. Frequent hand-washing will be enforced in all buildings. The district will also increase the frequency of cleaning and disinfecting buildings. Visitors will be required to wear masks and parents will need to schedule appointments to meet with school staff.

Q. Will parents be notified if there is a case of COVID-19 in my child's school or classroom?

A. Should there be a positive case in your child's school or classroom, a uniform statement of risk will be communicated by the district via our messaging system. Individual communications from the school will not be sent, unless required by law and permitted by confidentiality laws. If COVID-19 is considered widespread in our community and contact tracing is determined to be necessary by our public health department, they will contact you. The school district will work closely with PPHD to maintain safety and the privacy of all students and staff.

Q. Will schools close and move to digital learning if one or more cases of COVID-19 is discovered among school students or staff?

A. Every effort will be made to keep schools open. One or more cases will not trigger an automatic closing of schools. The decision to close will be based on a number of factors and include consultation with our public health department and local medical providers.

Q. Will the district's after-school programs still be available?

A. At this time the elementary programs will be offered, but will not start until after Labor Day. This decision is subject to change at any time.

Q. What can I do as a parent to help prevent the spread of COVID-19 at school?

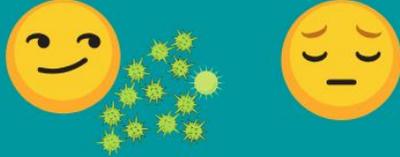
A. It is very important that you monitor your children's health and keep them home when they don't feel well, even if illness has not been confirmed by a medical provider. Symptoms of COVID-19 include fever, muscle aches, breathing difficulty, coughing, and diarrhea in children, though symptoms can vary widely and some children exhibit few, if any, symptoms. It is also important that you talk to your student positively about the importance of wearing a mask and other procedures we are undertaking to slow the spread of the coronavirus. We understand that masks are not everyone's favorite thing to wear, however the scientific research shows that wearing masks can and does slow the spread of COVID-19. Doing this one simple thing can help to keep us all healthy and safe.

Q. What if I have additional questions regarding COVID-19 and Gordon-Rushville Public Schools?

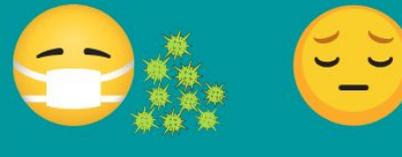
A. We have created a group email which will go to all Administrators. The address is covid19@grmustangs.org Please send your COVID-19 related questions to that email address and a reply will be sent. Of course, you can always contact your student(s)' building principal as well.

MASKS & CONTAGION RISK

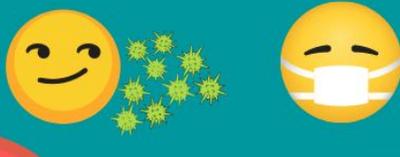
VERY HIGH



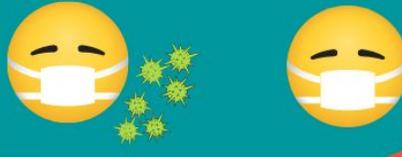
MEDIUM



HIGH



LOW



Wear your mask in public

The more of us that wear a mask, the better to stop the spread of the virus

VERY LOW



The mask keeps virus particles from spreading to others as you talk, cough, or sneeze

SUPER LOW



Keep your mask clean!

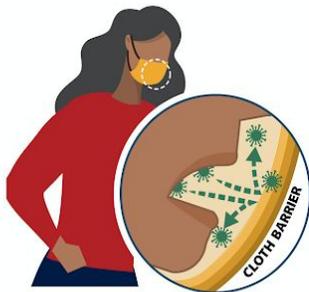
COVID-19 Unified Command
A PARTNERSHIP
Bichandle Public Health District
PARKHANDLE PUBLIC HEALTH DISTRICT (308)265-5764/347
SCOTT'S BLUFF COUNTY HEALTH DEPARTMENT (308)630-1515
TO SELF REPORT OR IF THERE ARE QUESTIONS PLEASE CALL BEFORE SEEING MEDICAL CARE

How to Safely Wear and Take Off a Cloth Face Covering

Accessible: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/prevent-getting-sick/diy-cloth-face-coverings.html>

WEAR YOUR FACE COVERING CORRECTLY

- Wash your hands before putting on your face covering
- Put it over your nose and mouth and secure it under your chin
- Try to fit it snugly against the sides of your face
- Make sure you can breathe easily
- Do not place a mask on a child younger than 2



USE THE FACE COVERING TO HELP PROTECT OTHERS

- Wear a face covering to help protect others in case you're infected but don't have symptoms
- Keep the covering on your face the entire time you're in public
- Don't put the covering around your neck or up on your forehead
- Don't touch the face covering, and, if you do, clean your hands

FOLLOW EVERYDAY HEALTH HABITS

- Stay at least 6 feet away from others
- Avoid contact with people who are sick
- Wash your hands often, with soap and water, for at least 20 seconds each time
- Use hand sanitizer if soap and water are not available



TAKE OFF YOUR CLOTH FACE COVERING CAREFULLY, WHEN YOU'RE HOME

- Untie the strings behind your head or stretch the ear loops
- Handle only by the ear loops or ties
- Fold outside corners together
- Place covering in the washing machine
- Wash your hands with soap and water



CS 316488A 06/10/2020

Cloth face coverings are not surgical masks or N-95 respirators, both of which should be saved for health care workers and other medical first responders.

For instructions on making a cloth face covering, see:

[cdc.gov/coronavirus](https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus)



Note: Plans may change as new guidance becomes available from the Nebraska Department of Education, the CDC, and state or local public health agencies.