



# **Houston Gateway Academy Charter Schools (HGA)’s Plan for On-Campus Instruction for the 2020-2021 School Year To Mitigate the Spread of COVID -19**

(Updated August 14, 2020)

HGA’s plan for the 2020-2021 school year has incorporated the Texas Education Agency (TEA)’s guidelines for in-school instruction and remote learning. Furthermore, guidelines, directives, parent survey responses, and recommendations from local health officials, state authorities, and HGA stakeholders were considered when putting this plan together. While it is not possible to eliminate all risk of furthering the spread of COVID-19, this plan also contains the steps that have been taken to reduce the risks to students, teachers, and staff.

## **2020-2021 School Calendar**

HGA’s first day both in school and online for all students, is Tuesday, September 8, 2020.

Teachers and staff will be returning August 17, with in-service training scheduled until September 4. These trainings will be offered through Zoom meetings from teachers’ individual classrooms. Additionally, HGA will begin the implementation of the After School Days (After School Program) on September 8, 2020 for students in grades 3-12 only. School hours for After School Days are from 7:45 am to 5 pm Monday through Thursday, and Fridays from 7:45 am to 2:30 pm.

Students from PK through second grade will follow the non-after school program day from 7:45 am to 3:25 pm Monday through Thursday, and Fridays from 7:45 am to 2:30 pm.

The last day of school for students will be Thursday, June 3, 2021, and graduation will take place Saturday, June 5.

Please see the latest updated calendar approved by HGA’s Board of Trustees that reflects all the information mentioned above.

## **Attendance and Enrollment**

1. Per Texas Education Code (TEC), §25.092, students must attend 90% of the days in which a course is offered (with some exceptions) in order to be awarded credit for the course and/or to be promoted to the next grade.



2. Student attendance may be earned through the delivery of virtual (online) instruction or on campus instruction.
3. A parent may request that their child be offered virtual instruction. If a parent who chooses virtual instruction wants their child to switch to an on-campus instructional setting, they can do so, but HGA will limit these transitions to occur only at the end of a grading period, every nine weeks.

## **Instructional Model For On Campus Instruction**

**HGA's plan and priority is to provide on-campus instruction to all students. We know that the most effective way for a child to learn is through on-campus instruction and our goal is to safely provide live instruction for all students, in all of our campuses.** The instructional model for on-campus instruction will remain the same as we will continue to emphasize the implementation and execution of HGA's lesson plans (100% aligned to TEKS) through HGA's Essential Elements of Instruction. However, a remote component of online instruction will be implemented for some parents who have requested virtual instruction for their children. This means that in some classrooms, we will have teachers implementing on campus and virtual instruction, educating students in their classrooms on campus, while at the same time educating some students virtually. The virtual component of instruction will be implemented through the software-learning management platform of Canvas. Additionally, the effective implementation of Canvas will be critically important in the event of a potential classroom or school closure due to positive COVID-19 cases.

**Other Considerations in Remote Learning** (This is applicable for on-campus students in the event of a potential school wide closure or if a student has to quarantine because of a positive COVID-19 result and/or showing symptoms)

1. HGA will provide **asynchronous** instruction (students doing/completing independent work and assignments at any time of the day, on their own) with many **synchronous** components (teacher and student virtually present at the same time with direct instruction through the computer) such as live instruction through Zoom Pro, where students will be required to be present at the same time virtually. The implementation of Canvas will allow teachers to quantifiably and measurably track attendance, participation, academic performance, engagement, and progress.
2. HGA's lesson plans are the blueprint and road map for all instruction (live or virtual). These lesson plans are fully aligned to TEKS (Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills) and are integrated into Canvas.



3. HGA grading policies for remote student work will be the same as for on campus assignments.
4. Scholars who receive virtual instruction will not be permitted to participate in on-campus classes, electives, or extra-curricular activities.

## **PREVENT: PRACTICES TO PREVENT THE VIRUS FROM ENTERING HGA SCHOOLS**

### **Screening**

1. HGA teachers and staff will be monitored for the following COVID-19 symptoms:

- Feeling feverish or a measured temperature greater than or equal to 100.0 degrees Fahrenheit
- Loss of taste or smell
- Cough
- Difficulty breathing
- Headache
- Chills
- Sore throat
- Shaking or exaggerated shivering
- Significant muscle pain or ache
- Diarrhea
- Congestion or runny nose
- Nausea or vomiting

The screening will include a temperature check for teachers, staff and students entering campuses. Teachers and staff must inform HGA (immediate supervisors) if they themselves have COVID-19 symptoms or are lab confirmed with COVID-19 and if so, they must remain off campus until they meet the criteria for re-entry as noted below. Additionally, they must inform HGA (immediate supervisors) if they have had close contact with an individual who is lab-confirmed with COVID-19, and if so, must remain off campus until the 14-day incubation period has passed.

2. Parents must ensure they do not send a child to school if the child has COVID-19 symptoms (as listed in this document) or is lab-confirmed with COVID-19, and instead should opt to receive remote instruction until the below conditions for re-entry are met. Parents may also opt to have their students receive remote instruction if their child has had



close contact with an individual who is lab-confirmed with COVID-19 until the 14-day incubation period has passed. HGA staff will also screen students for COVID-19 as needed.

3. HGA (front desk personnel) will screen to determine if visitors have had close contact with an individual who is lab-confirmed with COVID-19, and if so, they must remain off campus until the 14-day incubation period has passed. When practical, screening questions could be supplemented with temperature checks of adults.

### **Individuals Confirmed or Suspected with COVID-19**

Any employee who has tested positive or has been in direct exposure of someone that has tested positive for COVID-19 must notify his/her supervisor and will not be allowed to return until the employee meets the conditions for re-entry below:

- (a) 14 days of quarantine AND
- (b) a negative test result within 72 hours from the time the employee is scheduled to return to work.

The same two conditions must be met if a student has tested positive or has been in direct exposure of someone that has tested positive for COVID-19.

### **Identifying Possible COVID-19 Cases on a Campus**

- HGA staff will immediately separate any student who shows COVID-19 symptoms in a designated isolation area (one at each campus), while at school, until the student can be picked up by a parent or guardian.
- HGA staff will clean/disinfect the areas used by the individual who shows COVID-19 symptoms while at school (student, teacher, or staff) as soon as is feasible.
- Students who report feeling feverish should be given an immediate temperature check to determine if they are symptomatic for COVID-19.

## **RESPOND: PRACTICES TO RESPOND TO A LAB-CONFIRMED CASE IN SCHOOL**

### **Required Actions**

1. If an individual who has been at an HGA campus/building is lab-confirmed to have COVID-19, HGA will notify its local health department and/or CDC, in accordance with applicable federal, state and local laws and regulations, including confidentiality



requirements of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA).

2. HGA will close off areas that are heavily used by the individual with the lab-confirmed case (student, teacher, or staff) until the non-porous surfaces in those areas can be disinfected, unless more than 7 days have already passed since that person was on campus.

3. **Consistent with school notification requirements for other communicable diseases, and consistent with legal confidentiality requirements, HGA will notify all teachers, staff, and families of all students in a school (specific campus) if a lab-confirmed COVID-19 case is identified among students, teachers or staff who participate in any on campus activities.**

## **MITIGATE: PRACTICES TO MITIGATE THE LIKELIHOOD OF COVID-19 SPREAD INSIDE HGA SCHOOLS**

### **Health and Hygiene Practices: General**

1. All HGA campuses have hand sanitizer at each entrance and in all classrooms. Additionally, all HGA bathrooms are equipped with hand soap.
2. Students, teachers, staff, and campus visitors will be encouraged to sanitize and/or wash hands frequently (for at least 20 seconds at least two times each day), in addition to being encouraged to wash hands after using the restroom and before eating. HGA staff will also teach students good handwashing techniques.
3. HGA will institute more frequent cleaning practices, including additional cleaning by janitorial staff, as well as provide the opportunity for children to clean their own spaces before and after they are used, in ways that are safe and developmentally appropriate.
4. HGA will provide additional cleaning and disinfecting of surfaces that are touched in common throughout the day. This includes objects such as door handles, common tables/desks, shared supplies such as art supplies, and high touch devices such as shared laptops or tablets.
5. HGA will ensure cleaning products are stored safely, including storing harmful products where children cannot access them, and ensuring that harmful cleaning products are not used near children.
6. HGA has posted CDC printed resources (English and Spanish) in all campuses, including posters that promote protective measures and can serve as helpful reminders of best practices.
7. On the first day students attend school on campus, all HGA campuses will provide instruction to students on appropriate hygiene practices and other mitigation practices adopted by HGA. Additionally, constant reminders of these practices will be implemented.



8. Student desks in all HGA classrooms will have Plexiglass (clear plastic) dividers.
9. In order to mitigate and prevent potential spread of the Corona virus, most scholars will not be transitioning to other classrooms (from period to period) during the school day. Campus principals will consider certain exceptions.
10. Students will be allowed to bring their own personal water bottles from home and use our newly installed water dispensers to fill them up during the day. Disposable cups are also available.

### **Health and Hygiene Practices: Masks**

1. For the purposes of this document, masks include non-medical grade disposable face masks, cloth face coverings (over the nose and mouth).
2. Students must bring to school their own personal masks. However, all HGA campuses will have disposable face masks available, if needed.
3. All HGA campuses/buildings are required to comply with the governor's executive order regarding the wearing of masks. This is mandatory for all staff, all students, and/or anybody allowed to enter HGA campuses and buildings.
4. It may be impractical for students to wear masks while participating in some non-athletic or other extracurricular activities. When it is impractical for students to wear masks during those activities, HGA will require students, teachers, staff, and visitors to wear masks when entering and exiting facilities and practice areas and when not actively engaging in those activities. HGA will allow students who are actively exercising to remove masks, as long as they maintain at least six feet of distance from other students, teachers, and staff who are not wearing masks. However, HGA will require students, teachers, and staff to wear masks as they arrange themselves in positions that will allow them to maintain safe distancing.

### **Breakfast, Lunch and Dinner**

All staff members involved with child nutrition will use Personal Protective Equipment while performing their responsibilities. Additionally, they have been trained to follow all health and hygiene regulations. Other precautions taken to ensure the safety of all students and staff:

- No outside food (meal) deliveries from parents will be accepted.
- Students can bring their own food from home, but they will not be allowed to use schools' microwaves.
- Visitors will not be allowed to enter classrooms and other eating areas during breakfast or lunch.



- According to the plans of each HGA campus, students will be eating in various locations throughout campus buildings in order to maximize social distancing practices.
- Floor markers have been placed along serving lines to promote and facilitate social distancing.
- Servicing items will be disposable and students will not be allowed to access any self-serve items.
- Students will be required to wash their hands with soap before and after eating.

## **Use of Non-Classroom Spaces**

1. When feasible and appropriate (for example, in physical education classes as weather permits), it is preferable for students to gather outside, rather than inside, because of likely reduced risk of virus spread outdoors.
2. HGA will continue to offer extracurricular activities at the discretion of campus principals and consistent with the guidance in this document.
3. All parent sessions (Empowered Parent Coalition) will be conducted online (virtually).
4. Each HGA campus has specific entry, transition protocols, and dismissal procedures designated to reduce large group gatherings (of students and/or adults) in close proximity. Principals at each campus will present and explain these plans to their staff and parents.
5. Assemblies and other activities that bring large groupings of students and/or teachers and staff together are prohibited.
6. HGA will reduce in-person staff meetings or other opportunities for adults to congregate in close settings. When those meetings are necessary and cannot be done via electronic means, everyone must follow the mask protocols in this guidance and remain at least 6 feet apart where feasible.

## **Visits to Schools**

1. Parents and other adults can visit HGA schools, as permitted by each campus. However, parents will not be permitted to eat with their children at any of our campuses.
2. During visits, parents and other visitors must follow virus prevention and mitigation requirements of the school. This includes the screening outlined on pages 3 and 4 of this document.
3. HGA will restrict visits in schools to only those essential to school operations.