

# SAFE RETURN: REOPENING PLAN

Summer 2020

**GreatHearts®**  
CLASSICAL EDUCATION. REVOLUTIONARY SCHOOLS.™



**DEAR FAMILIES AND COLLEAGUES,**

I hope this letter finds you well and enjoying your summer. As we approach August, we want to share with you our plan to reopen our academies in the fall.

Over the last two months, our school management team has worked relentlessly to design an approach that balances the safety of our students and staff with the return to a learning environment that allows our students to thrive. The team included academy leaders, health professionals, technologists, and instructional experts.

As a first step, the team listened to parents, teachers and support staff, and consulted with national experts.

Following this deep dive, we designed our plan to maintain a healthy building environment, to provide flexibility for families not ready to return, and to prepare for future contingencies. Our plan is built to adjust to evolving conditions regarding COVID-19 and we will update you further over the summer as appropriate.

All of our plans are informed by and consistent with current state and national public health guidelines, and our plans will evolve if guidelines and orders are adjusted. While we know most families plan to return to campus, attendance policies in Texas and Arizona continue to allow your children to attend from home via remote learning. We are maintaining the remote learning access we provided this past spring.

Please review the six-point plan that follows and do not hesitate to reach out to your school headmaster with any questions or feedback.

We are deeply grateful for you—all our families and staff—for all the resilience and resolve you have shown in recent months. We look forward to the new school year.

**JAY HEILER**

*Co-founder, Chairman  
Great Hearts America*

**WADE DYKE**

*Chief Executive Officer  
Great Hearts America*

## NATIONAL & STATE GUIDANCE



The most recent CDC guidelines on opening schools sorts its recommendations according to the degree of community spread. In the case of no community spread, the CDC recommends that schools intensify cleaning and disinfection strategies, actively monitor students and staff for absenteeism, limit large group gatherings to only essential activities, and require sick students and staff to stay home.

In the case of moderate community spread, school leaders are also asked to consider social distancing strategies for classrooms and movement in buildings and to accommodate the needs of students and families at high risk. When a school has a confirmed case, the CDC recommends that the school closes for a short period of time.

All levels and sources of guidance are consistent in recommending individual screenings, social distancing, and enhanced sanitizing procedures as the main prevention strategies. They also emphasize the need to have a comprehensive incident response plan and a set of dual contingency plans in place: one for students and faculty who need to stay at home for long periods of time and another to be enacted in the event of a full-school shutdown.

Continued shutdown of schools can negatively impact student health, and disruptions to instructional time can have a severe impact on a child's ability to learn. Prolonged closures can cause stress and anxiety due to the loss of peer interaction and disrupted routines. Risks are amplified in marginalized communities. The longer at-risk children are out of school, the less likely they are to return.

### Sources

1. Interim Guidance for Administrators of US K-12 Schools and Child Care Programs to Plan, Prepare, and Respond to Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19), Center for Disease Control
2. Coronavirus (COVID-19) Guidance for Schools, National Association of Independent Schools
3. Roadmap for Reopening Schools, Arizona Department of Education

# SIX-POINT REOPENING PLAN

Throughout these challenging times, we have kept our students and staff safe and healthy while continuing to provide engaging educational content. Our decisions have been based on the most up-to-date public health guidance and data, best practices for remote education, and a commitment to our unique mission as classical schools. Uniting physical health and intellectual development into one seamless goal keeps with our vision of educating the entire student. As we look towards reopening our schools in August, those two goals remain united as our north star.

Over the last two months, a team of school health professionals, academy leaders, and instructional experts has engaged in a process of listening to parents, teachers, and support staff as well as consulting with other charter school operators and public school districts. Informed by this research, we have developed a comprehensive, six-point plan designed to keep our students, faculty, and staff healthy, provide flexibility for families unable to return, and plan for future contingencies. The plan is consistent with state and national public health guidelines with two design principles:

1. Healthy student formation requires unstructured time with their peers outside of class.
2. Human contact is essential to the human experience and will be allowed in the proper contexts.

## 2020-2021 REOPENING

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Prevention

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Social  
Distancing

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## 1

## PREVENTION

Screening begins at home by being aware of common symptoms and situations related to COVID-19. If the answer to any of the following questions is “yes,” a family must inform the school and keep a student home.

- *Are you experiencing any of the following symptoms: fever, shortness of breath, cough, chills, muscle pain, sore throat, or a recent loss of taste or smell?*
- *Have you come in contact with someone who has tested positive for COVID 19?*
- *Have you traveled out of the country in the last 14 days?*

For at least the first quarter of the school year, all students, faculty, staff, and visitors will be screened upon arrival using instant temperature checks. Anyone with a temperature of 100.0° or greater will be asked to return home. During the day, symptomatic students will be sent to the school nurse for evaluation.

Campus tours and classroom visits will be temporarily suspended.

Following CDC guidelines, we are increasing the amount of routine and nightly cleaning, with a focus on high-touch surfaces and common areas utilizing electrostatic sprayers capable of continual disinfecting.

Classroom and building entrances will have available hand sanitizer.

We will comply with all state and local requirements for mandatory face coverings. Beyond those requirements, any individual may choose to wear one. All visitors with a need to move beyond the front office will be required to wear a face covering.

Hospital grade MERV 13 HVAC filters will be installed at all campuses.

All students, faculty, and staff will wash their hands or use hand sanitizer when entering the building or a classroom and before and after lunch and snack.

2

## SOCIAL DISTANCING



The spacing in between desks will be increased as much as the classroom space allows, and with limited exceptions desks will all face forward.

Students will be kept in the same class group as much as possible throughout the day. The number of rooms a student is in throughout the day will be limited.

Bell schedules will be staggered to reduce the number of students in the hallway by 30-50%.

Lunch periods will be staggered to keep lunch room occupancy at 50%.

Drop-off and pick-up procedures will be structured to limit the size of student groups.

Athletics teams and performing arts groups will continue to practice and compete with temperature checks prior to practices and events.

Clubs and field trips will be suspended for the first quarter.



3

## INCIDENT RESPONSE



Each campus will have a response team that will work with a network-wide incident command center to identify and respond to primary or secondary COVID-19 exposure.

Following CDC guidelines, if a student or employee has tested positive for COVID-19, we will work with state and local health authorities to determine the proper course of action, which may include a temporary school closure to allow for a deep cleaning and sanitizing of the entire building as well as community testing.

If a student or employee is experiencing a fever, we will follow CDC guidance on the number of days to keep them home. Students will be given work to complete from home during such an absence.

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## SUPPORTING STUDENTS



The fourth quarter of last school year was challenging for students, families, and teachers. We are very proud of the work our schools did to provide high-quality lessons and educational activities in a remote environment. To provide support in transitioning from remote learning back to the physical classroom, teachers across the network are taking the following steps.

- Every academy will have summer coordination meetings with teachers to identify and plan for curricular coverage gaps.
- Students will be assessed at the start of the school year to determine where extra academic support and remediation are needed.
- Academies will increase the amount of student tutoring and support for students.



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## REMOTE LEARNING OPTIONS



We want all families to be able to come back in the way most comfortable for them. Attendance policies in Texas and Arizona still allow students to attend from home if you are concerned about sending your child back to the school building.

You may choose for your child to participate in the network-wide Great Hearts Distance Learning program at any point. A full slate of courses will be taught remotely by teachers from around the network using the Google Classroom platform.

Your child will remain formally enrolled in your respective school while participating in Great Hearts Distance Learning; a student may exit the program and return to the classroom at the start of the next academic quarter.

Great Hearts can provide families access to technology necessary to participate in this voluntary program.

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## CONTINGENCY PLANNING



In the event that school closure is required, students will participate in a complete, well-designed program of digitally-delivered remote learning.

To prepare for such a contingency all students will be given a Google Classroom account at the start of the year, and parents will be asked to sign consent forms for Google Classroom and Zoom.

During remote learning, live video instruction with direct teacher contact will occur every day of the week. Assessments and assignments will be graded and frequent feedback given to ensure student mastery and accountability.

Great Hearts can provide families access to technology necessary to participate in remote learning.