



GONZAGA MIDDLE SCHOOL

Changing Lives – Fulfilling Potential

GONZAGA MIDDLE

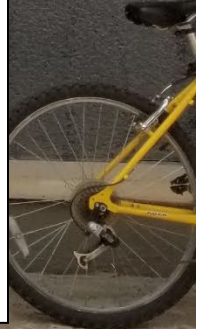
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AUTOMATIC
CAUTION
DOOR

WE SUPPORT
North Point Douglas

WELCOME BACK

Gonzaga Middle School
Return to School Plan
2021-22



Leading with Gratitude – Thank You

Thanks to the response of Manitobans to Public Health orders and the relatively high rate of vaccination, Manitoba Health has lowered the COVID Provincial Responses to Yellow (Caution) once again. We are able to safely return to classes with fewer restrictions than we were able to at the end of last year. Thank you again to everyone in the Gonzaga Middle School (GMS) community for your patience, care, support and flexibility during this time of challenge and change due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Thanks to the extra efforts of all staff, financial support from the Winnipeg Foundation and our regular donors, and the resilience shown by staff, students and families, we were again able to celebrate the graduating class and begin this year with a very enjoyable and safe summer camp program.

The whole GMS staff is eagerly looking forward to welcoming our new and returning students to classroom and after-school learning this September. We know from our experience with in-person learning during Provincial Orange (Restricted) precautions over most of last year, and then Provincial Red (Critical) precautions for a period at the end of the year (remote learning and the partial return to school in June) that the classroom and school environment provide the best learning opportunities and better address the developmental and practical learning needs of students. We are also getting ready to support our new graduates and continue supporting our older graduates as they begin and continue their high school journey.

We recognize that we all remain concerned about the re-opening of schools amid the pandemic but we are more confident than last year given the high rate of vaccination in the community and our experience over the last 18 months. As we prepare to welcome back students and support our graduates we hope for a more normal school year with the eventual return of field trips and extra-curricular sports and a goal of maximizing student learning. Nonetheless, **our priority remains the health and safety of the entire GMS community.** Our students, families and community cannot flourish if the virus transmission returns to higher levels. **Our goal is to protect every member of our community by minimizing the risk of virus transmission. This includes following the established health fundamentals and also encouraging all members of our community to get vaccinated as soon as possible.** Students entering Grade 6 will have to wait until the new year, or the age of vaccination get further reduced in Canada (this will likely happen sometime in the new year), to be vaccinated.

This Return to School Plan outlines the protocols and procedures for the 2021-22 school year with the dual goals of maximizing student learning and minimizing health risks in mind. We will continue to follow the guidance of Manitoba Public Health and Manitoba Education for up-to-date information and recommendations. Manitoba Education and Health have produced formal planning guides and resources for schools and parents (links to these are found later in this document and on our website). These have informed the development and execution of our plans throughout the pandemic and will continue to do so. This Return to School Plan will continue to be adapted and evolve in response to new knowledge, as it is practically implemented by teachers and staff, and in response to student and family needs and feedback. There may be questions not yet asked, responses not yet developed and additional information sought out and integrated which will impact our plan. Whatever

the challenges ahead, we are confident that together, we can support the well-being and learning of all GMS students and graduates.

Parents, guardians and care-givers will be essential in supporting the health and wellness of our students and staff. We thank you in advance for following the recommendations, self-screening protocols and guidance provided in this plan to ensure a safe environment for our community. We promise to update you with respect to changes in the plan and invite you to regularly visit our website for updates. Working together, supporting and caring for each other, we can help our students and graduates to continue making learning progress safely.

Tom Lussier
Executive Director and Principal

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Safety and Working Together

The goal at GMS is to maximize in-person attendance and learning while ensuring that health and safety measures are in place to minimize the risk of COVID-19 transmission.

At GMS we believe that, like good family relationships, all members of the community are important and connected through relationships built on trust and love. In keeping with Manitoba Education expectations and GMS' beliefs about what is best for student learning, **GMS expects all students to attend school for in-class learning this September. Our first day of classes is Tuesday, September 7th.** Our goal is to ensure that every student flourishes while taking all necessary precautions to minimize the spread of COVID-19. This means we aim to ensure each student's educational experience is uninterrupted, meets high expectations and as rich as possible. At the same time, we will also focus on ensuring that students are safe, and their mental health, physical well-being and education are supported. To accomplish all of that we all need to work together.

We are always learning. With humility, we recognize that the public health situation may change as we start school and during the school year. Thanks to the support of the Board and many benefactors, the staff team has been able to provide additional supports and programming as past circumstances and guidelines required. We are prepared to develop thoughtful and adaptable ways of proceeding again in response to the changing circumstances that may arise.

Safety Measures

Given the current Manitoba Health and Manitoba Education guidelines and our desire to meet or exceed these guidelines, GMS safety precautions will include:

- Vaccination: Staff and volunteers are fully vaccinated; students and families encouraged to be vaccinated as soon as possible
- Physical distancing: a return to normal use of the classroom spaces with masks worn, movement in school will be managed to minimize contact (in washrooms and hallways); maximum distancing in gym when eating
- Mandatory masks when on the bus or in the building
- Screening of staff and students each day (see below)
- Training and education of staff, volunteers and students specific to infection reduction, personal hygiene practices, cleaning and disinfection procedures
- Frequent hand sanitizing – when entering the building, when putting on and taking off masks, before and after eating, before and after using the washroom, after sneezing or wiping nose etc.
- Frequent cleaning and sanitation of high touch surfaces, desks, hand rails, washroom surfaces etc. during the day by staff and students
- Extra daily cleaning by cleaners
- Individual water bottles with no sharing
- Modified nutrition program rules (see below)
- Frequent whole building decontamination protocol (fogging with hydrogen peroxide based disinfectant)
- Maximized fresh air intake on all HVAC systems

- Limited visitors to school – by appointment as a rule

GMS is small enough that our entire student, staff and volunteer population is less than the maximum size of one Manitoba health recommended cohort.

Daily Screening

The health and well-being of students, staff, our family members and the community is paramount at GMS. **If a student or staff member is feeling ill, they are required to stay home. GMS is requesting that families self-screen daily** to ensure their child has none of the listed symptoms (not including pre-existing conditions that need to be reported to the school). **We will also screen students daily when they arrive at school.** Please use the COVID-19 Daily Checklist below for self screening before getting on the bus:



DO NOT ENTER IF:

- you've been in contact with someone who has had COVID-19
- you were in a high risk setting for COVID-19 in the past 14 days (e.g. on a plane or at an event)
- you've travelled outside Manitoba in the last 14 days



DO NOT ENTER IF YOU HAVE ANY ONE OF THE FOLLOWING SYMPTOMS:

- Fever/chills
- Cough
- Loss of taste or smell
- Sore throat/hoarse voice
- Shortness of breath
- Vomiting or diarrhea



DO NOT ENTER IF YOU HAVE ANY TWO OF THE FOLLOWING NEW SYMPTOMS:

- Runny Nose/Red Eyes
- Muscle Aches
- Fatigue
- Headache
- Nausea or loss of appetite
- Skin rash of unknown origin

manitoba.ca/covid19



**GONZAGA MIDDLE
SCHOOL**

Please remember to call the school if your child is staying home sick/isolating.

School Attendance, Classes and Alternate Learning Plans

Manitoba Education and GMS expect that students attend school for in-classroom instruction beginning in September. It is very important that students attend classes as much as possible when they are healthy. We are counting on students and families to ensure students are ready for the bus and attend daily when they are healthy. Please remember that our goal is to strive for 95% attendance as much as possible.

In the current plan, remote learning (from home) is not an option which can be requested. As long as Manitoba Education and Health maintain the current directives, only in these very exceptional cases, or when students are temporarily staying home/isolating due to illness (such as a cold or flu) will GMS make provision for remote learning. According to Manitoba Education and Public Health guidelines, “a chronic but stable cough, sneeze, runny nose or nasal congestion that is unchanged and related to a known medical condition such as asthma or allergies” are not reasons for staying home.

GMS has learned from experiences during the remote learning period over the last 18 months and is ready to move to alternate learning plans should Manitoba Education and Public Health orders require a change to our in-class learning plans. The three possible scenarios for learning include: **1. the current plan – in-class (face-to-face) learning with whole school cohort**, **2. In-class learning with smaller cohorts** (if directives indicate a decrease in the allowable group size), and **3. Limited-Use of School Facilities** – a hybrid of remote learning and small groups with no contact between cohorts (as we practiced again in June). GMS will move to a full remote learning model only if required by Manitoba Education and a Public Health Order.

Cura Personalis

GMS’ commitment to a holistic educational approach supports the intellectual, physical, spiritual, social and emotional growth and well-being of students. GMS’ philosophy of **care and concern for the whole person** (*cura personalis*) is part and parcel of our adaptive educational model that provides more support than traditional educational approaches. A trauma-informed approach to teaching and learning is a core element of our educational model and professional development. As we begin classes in September, lessons and teaching practices will be tailored to address and respond to the mental health and wellness of students. The Student Support Team and Administration Team work together to ensure additional supports are also made available to students (see below). The goal will be to help students heal, continue to learn how to manage their stress, build resilience and build stronger relationships among their peers, with the staff and broader community.

Communication

Throughout the pandemic GMS’ Student Support Team has regularly checked in on students and families. GMS will continue to communicate with families to ensure they are informed and engaged in the conversation about educational programming and services at GMS. This may be through telephone calls, in-person conversations, notes/updates sent home and updates posted on the front page of the website. **Please regularly check the**

website for updates. As the public health situation continues to shift throughout the year, GMS will provide ongoing updates regarding plans for instruction, programming, services and supports.

Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)

GMS will have PPE in the building including gloves, hand sanitizer, face shields (for staff and use in cleaning tasks), disinfectant wipes, and masks. Gloves are available for food preparation by staff and for cleaning activities.



Masks - Per Manitoba Health guidelines, masks will be mandatory for students, staff and all visitors when travelling on the bus and in the school building (except when not in close contact – for example in individual office spaces). GMS will provide reusable masks when they become available but a supply of disposable masks will be on hand if a reusable mask is not available. Reusable masks kept at school will be laundered regularly at school. Families may provide students with reusable masks as long as they fit appropriately and do not display any rude or objectionable images or messages (e.g., no skull and cross bones). Graduates who come to meet with staff will be required to wear masks and will be asked to sit either at one of tables in the Gym or on the bench in the lobby until a Student Support staff member meets them.

When a mask is used, hands must be sanitized before and after use. The mask needs to cover the mouth and nose (not as a chin warmer). It should be handled only using the strings behind the ear and should not be touched once in proper place.

Hand Sanitizer – is available upon entry, in classrooms and other school spaces.

Face Shields – reusable face shields may be used by staff in addition to masks when working closely with students. Face shields may also be used in dish washing/cleaning duties in the kitchen.

Hand Hygiene



GMS will promote increased hand hygiene for staff and students. This includes frequent hand washing and easy access to hand sanitizer. Frequent hand washing is important for everyone entering the school. Students and staff will wash their hands or use hand sanitizer when they enter the school, before and after eating, putting on or taking off masks, as well as regularly throughout the day. A schedule for class handwashing prior to eating and breaks will be used. Signage will be visible throughout the school reminding everyone about frequent hand washing and the use of hand sanitizer. Students will receive direct instruction on hand-washing.

Sanitizing Spaces/Surfaces



GMS will implement enhanced cleaning and disinfecting procedures. Increased cleaning of high-touch surfaces throughout the day (e.g. door handles, counters, light switches, hand railings and desks, tables and chairs). Bathroom surfaces will be cleaned frequently throughout the day. Cleaners will clean high touch surfaces thoroughly daily.

Classrooms, the gym and all common spaces will be frequently disinfected with a Health Canada approved hydrogen peroxide based fogging solution.



Administrative Controls



To minimize contact and reduce risk, entry to the building and movement throughout the school will be monitored and regulated. Use of washrooms will be monitored with a maximum of two students allowed at one time. Use of the school building will be limited to school based activities for the most part. We may host some other community events eventually if public health measures allow.

Entry and Exit and Flow of Traffic – students will be escorted from and to the bus by staff in small groups and encouraged to maintain physical distancing. Upon arrival a small group of physically distanced students will hand sanitize, remove outdoor footwear and place them in shelves, proceed to their locker and then to their assigned desk in the classroom. When leaving, students will be dismissed in small groups and follow a reverse process to entry. When travelling throughout the school, in hallways, stairways and general use areas all persons will physically distance and “stay to the right” and minimize contact with walls, lockers etc. Use of handrails is permitted to ensure physical safety; handrails will be

sanitized regularly throughout the day and students will be encouraged to hand sanitize upon arrival at new locations.

Visitors – Although we welcome parent involvement with our school community, current health guidelines instruct us to limit the number of non-essential visitors to the school. With the exception of regular volunteers and pre-arranged appointments visitors will not be allowed to enter the school. For pre-arranged appointments or meetings, parents and care-givers should contact the appropriate school personnel in advance to set a time for meeting and receive instructions for entry to the school. To drop off paperwork, payment or other materials, parents or care-givers will be met by school personnel at the door. Graduates who come to the school will be met by staff. All visitors or delivery personnel will be required to wear a mask.

School Building – the building is only to be used for school and Graduate Support program activities. External group use of the building at this time will be considered on a case by case basis and only if current Public Health orders allow.

Lockers – students will follow a strict process for accessing lockers to ensure physical distancing. Lockers will only be used for outerwear, back packs (where personal items will be stored for the duration of the school day) and gym uniforms. Other than the beginning or end of the school day the only time lockers will be accessed is for gym clothing. Personal devices such as cell phone should not be brought to school or used on buses, but if they are brought to school they either must remain off and in students back packs on buses and then handed in to the front office on arrival and picked up prior to departure.

Suspected or Confirmed COVID-19 Case Protocols

All staff and students who are feeling unwell and/or exhibiting symptoms of COVID-19 will remain home.

Illness - Should a staff member or student become unwell at school, the office will immediately be notified, and a designated staff member will attend to the person until they can leave the facility. If a student develops symptoms while at school or health concerns are noted from the screening process:

- Parents or emergency contacts will be contacted to pick up their child
- Students must be immediately separated and moved to the designated area for isolation while awaiting pick-up
- Staff will be trained and will follow protocols for the appropriate response to a student who is exhibiting COVID-19 symptoms
- Students will be monitored by a staff member when in isolation
- Staff members and students will perform hand hygiene prior to entering and exiting the isolation space
- Staff members will wear a medical mask, face shield, and gloves when accompanying the student in the isolation space
- If the student needs to leave the isolation space for any reason, the staff member will accompany the student out of the space.

- The isolation space and any other space contacted by the person who is ill will be thoroughly cleaned after use.

Anytime screening or symptoms consistent with COVID-19 raise concern, out of an abundance of caution, families must contact Health Links at 204-788-8200 and determine if they need to be tested or what follow-up will be required.

Testing - If the staff or student is required to undergo COVID-19 testing by Public Health:

- Any student or staff member waiting for results from a COVID-19 test is required to stay home and follow the instructions given by Public Health
- Following testing, the student/staff member must provide proof of a negative test result in order to return to school.

Confirmed Case - In the event that a case of COVID-19 is confirmed to be connected to a school setting:

- Public Health will provide additional guidance on the required actions
- Public Health is responsible for case management and contact follow-up of all COVID-19 cases, and/or determining the need for individual or public notifications
- One (1) confirmed case of COVID-19 in a school would be considered an outbreak
- Schools are expected to work with Public Health to ensure a prompt response to cases of COVID-19 that may be present in the school setting

GMS 2021-22 Program

Academic Excellence – Teaching and learning will return to near normal as we resume school in September.

Curriculum - The full Manitoba Education curriculum will be delivered and all students will be expected to engage fully in all academic programming during the 2021-22 school year. GMS will work with families to provide assurance that their children will return to safe classrooms. GMS will follow the usual daily schedule for classes and after-school programming to maximize enriched learning and allow for a focus on mental and physical health and well being. Physical Education, Music and after school activities will follow safety protocols. GMS will ensure that movement is integrated into daily learning and will utilize the opportunity to conduct classes and activities outside, weather permitting. Proper footwear (non-marking soles for the gym) will be expected. After-school programming will also allow extra-time for recovery learning. Students who are ill or isolating due to illness will be supported through a blended learning approach – combining live-stream direct teaching/remote learning with paper learning packages.

Technology - Students will be provided with a laptop to support teaching and learning at school. Laptops will be stored in charging carts when not in use. Students will follow strict classroom procedures when retrieving and returning laptops to the charging carts. Students will be required to clean their laptop frequently and sanitize their hands before and after use.

Recovery Learning - The GMS teaching team collaboratively addresses the learning needs of all students. All students will have their literacy and numeracy learning addressed as needed according to where they are on the learning continuums as they re-enter school. In

collaboration with the Student Support Team, plans have been made to assess and address students' academic, social and emotional needs. Undoubtedly there will be some additional needs that surface as classes begin in the fall and through the subsequent months. Subject specific recovery learning will also be assessed. Our Student Support Team and teachers will collaboratively provide assessment and additional supports as needed.

Physical Education, Lunch hour Movement Break and After-Class Activities – Equipment will be sanitized frequently. GMS will deliver Phys. Ed. outdoors whenever possible but will also plan classes indoors. Sports or activities that involve movement will be allowed but with some restrictions. GMS will follow the decision of the MCS sports conference regarding inter-school sports. Participation in the Junior Jets Hockey Academy is likely to go forward this year. Students will change for Phys. Ed when indoors. After-school programming will continue to provide students with enrichment learning activities.

Music Program – General music theory, keyboards, guitar, ukulele and percussion learning opportunities will be provided with physical distancing in mind. Instruments will be sanitized between uses. Singing with physical distancing and adequate ventilation will be allowed at this time.

Daily Schedule – GMS will follow the usual updated daily schedule of 8:00 am to **4:45 pm** Monday to Thursday and 8:00 am to 3:30 pm on Friday.

Transportation - GMS will continue to provide bussing through Tony's Transport to bring students to and from school. **Students will be required to wear masks. Students will be assigned seats with students from the same household in the same seat as much as possible. Students must stay seated in the designated seats.** Drivers will be wearing a mask also and will fully sanitize buses before and after each trip. If parents/guardians are wanting to transport their child to and from school they should contact the Student Support Director to make arrangements. The Student Support Team will be in touch with families regarding bus pick-up and drop off times prior to the start of school. **Families and students must make every effort to be on time for the bus (Tony's will be providing an app this year which will let families know when the bus will arrive!).** The Student Support Team may not be available for late pick-up and drop-off depending on current risk of COVID-19.

Classroom and School Library Books - Students will be allowed to choose books from the library and classroom collections. Teachers will supervise the selection process to ensure students sanitize their hands before and after book selection.

Nutrition Program – GMS will continue with its Nutrition Program, providing students breakfast, lunch and two snacks. "Family-style" meal distribution will be replaced by delivery by staff only. Any food preparation and contact surfaces, dishes, pots and utensils will be sanitized after every use. Breakfast and lunch will be served by staff on re-usable dishes in the lunchroom with extra tables being used in the lunchroom to increase physical distancing. Snacks will be served individually in the classrooms. There will be no sharing of food or snacks allowed at any time.

Water bottles – The water fountain is turned off. Students will be provided with personalized water bottles filled in the kitchen by staff that will be used all day and then sanitized at the end of the day.

Assemblies and Other Gatherings– given GMS’ small size, assemblies will take place in the gym with appropriate physical distancing measures in place and masks being worn.

Field Trips – Field trips, especially those involving land-based learning, and others where the venue allows physical distancing will be encouraged. Families will be informed for permission as usual in advance of any trip that is approved by the Administrative Team. Overnight field trips (camp) are not allowed by Public Health but this may be reviewed as the year progresses.

Social-Emotional Supports and Wellness

At GMS we are all working together to take care of each other. Classroom teachers are mindful of students’ health and wellness throughout the day. The Student Support Team work to address individual wellness needs as required. The philosophy of *cura personalis* – individual care and concern for the whole person requires GMS to be mindful of the social-emotional and mental wellness of students and staff as a key element of our way of proceeding.

Trauma-Informed and Sensitive Practice – GMS has implemented trauma-informed and sensitive practices to support students, staff and their families. For staff, an emphasis on personal well-being and stress reduction will be a feature of our professional dialogue this year. For students, regular journaling, art therapy, individual counselling and other approaches to address trauma are facilitated by the Student Support Team. Participation in Project 11 programming also supports the work done by the Student Support Team to work with students and staff to address student and family needs.

Counselling – GMS will have counselling support available for students and staff if and when it is needed.

Addressing Fears and Anxieties – The Student Support Team will work in collaboration with teachers and the administrative team to help address anxiety, fears, and concerns surrounding COVID-19 and attending school.

Holistic Supports – GMS’ adaptive and transformative school model focuses on removing barriers to students’ education. GMS has been fortunate to be able to continue to adapt its model as need to address individual student needs to minimize stress and respond to the impact of trauma.

Graduate Support Program

The Graduate Support Team – The Graduate and Student Support Director, the Student Support and Community Outreach Worker and Student and Graduate Support Assistant will follow the protocols as outlined by each individual high school when school resumes in September. All GMS staff will be required to wear masks and practice social distancing when interacting with graduates.

Graduates at GMS – The Graduate Support Team may, on occasion, meet with GMS graduates at the school for scheduled meetings. Graduates will not be permitted to drop in for unscheduled visits. Graduates will be required to wear a mask, sanitize and follow strict procedures when in the school. Graduates will be accompanied by a staff member at all times and will not have contact with middle school students if at all possible. Meetings of groups of graduates may take place outside of school time or in other locations that allow for social distancing.



Looking Ahead

At GMS we are grateful for the sense of community, support and hope that emerged and has been sustained through the pandemic. The story of GMS' response to the pandemic is a remarkable one that reflects the dynamic power of community engagement and support which has allowed the GMS team to care deeply, support graciously, connect strategically and look ahead with hope.

We anticipate the 2021-22 school year ahead will again be a challenging one that will require the whole GMS team, board and community to focus on student and staff safety, social-emotional mental health and general well-being – while also focussing on student continued learning progress. This plan recognizes the dynamic evolving nature of the pandemic requires flexibility and resilience to provide the learning and wellness supports that will best meet the needs of GMS students and staff.

GMS will continue to do whatever it takes to keep everyone in our community safe and to strengthen the relationships within the community so that we can continue move forward together down whatever path lies ahead in the upcoming school year.



Resources and References

*Here are the links to resources from Manitoba education and other sources that parents and students might find helpful:

Restoring Safe Schools: A Guide for Parents, Caregivers and Students (August 24, 2021)

https://manitoba.ca/asset_library/en/covid/k12-GuideForParents-aug2021.pdf

Manitoba Education COVID-19 Information Portal

<https://www.edu.gov.mb.ca/k12/covid/index.html>

Government of Canada COVID-19 Guidance for Schools Kindergarten to Grade 12

<https://www.canada.ca/en/public-health/services/diseases/2019-novel-coronavirus-infection/health-professionals/guidance-schools-childcare-programs.html>