



Head of School Newsletter

The latest GCCS news and announcements

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GCCS website

The busyness of the school year is in full effect. We have made it through the first third of the school year experiencing the daily blessings of God and a return to many of our familiar events and field trips. We continue to contend with the impacts of COVID cases and are thankful for our partnership with you as families and with the Health Department as we address cases one-at-a time. I sincerely appreciate your understanding and flexibility as we deal with contacts and quarantine.

This month, I want to celebrate a small cross-section of the gifts of our high school students as we witness them using their God-given gifts and talents to serve and glorify Him and share those gifts with those around them:

- The fall brought another successful season of high school sports: girls' and boys' cross country and girls' golf were state qualifiers. Our girls' volleyball and boys' soccer teams won conference championships.
- *Sense and Sensibility*, the CCHS play, produced three wonderful shows in mid-November showcasing the acting talents of many high school students.
- Our Veterans' Day assembly at CCHS provided an opportunity to hear from a 97-year-old WWII veteran who shared his testimony and story. I talked to him later that day, and he was very impressed with our students and how they listened to and respected what he shared with them.

We are grateful to God for our Christian community of faith and learning at GCCS. Thanks for being a part of it.

Eric P. Burgess
Head of School



Update on COVID Protocols and Questions

As we continue on with the 2021-2022 school year, we are mindful that COVID continues to impact our communities, churches, schools, and families. Thus far, we have been thankful to have in-person learning and, overall, fairly low numbers of positive cases. We know that there will continue to be impacts of COVID throughout the school year, and we wanted to share an update on a few items that we have been receiving questions about.

Morning Health Screening

It continues to be important for families to complete the [morning health checklist](#) each morning with your kids.

Recent COVID symptoms have been mostly cold-like symptoms (e.g., runny nose, stuffy head); please err on the side of caution when considering symptoms and don't assume it is a cold or allergies. Know that we have rapid antigen tests available in each school office that we can utilize if you have a question about a possible COVID case for your child. Contact your school office to schedule a time to test, if you want to have them checked.

Close Contact Quarantine Guidance

Our goal is to keep kids in school and to work with our families and the Kent County Health Department (KCHD) to get kids back to school once they have had COVID. KCHD provides a toolkit and regularly-updated guidance to schools which we follow to make determinations about close contact quarantine and return-to-school options. If there is a COVID-positive student at school, the school is responsible to look back 48 hours from the start of symptoms to consider close contacts at school.

Determinations on quarantine need to be made on a case-by-case basis as guidance varies based on an in-school close contact as opposed to an in-home close contact. Close contacts in a home situation or in an "outbreak" situation (three or more associated cases in school) are determined directly by the Health Department. Quarantine options may not be available

to students/staff identified in an outbreak within the educational setting. If an outbreak is identified in a school, KCHD will determine the risk level with the school on a case-by-case basis.

Update on KCHD Public Health Order

The Kent County Health Department recently communicated the following to school leaders:

"The public health order requiring facial covering use in PreK through 6th grade was written to expire 60 days after the vaccine is made available for 5 to 11 year olds. This means the order will expire during the Christmas - New Year holiday break and before kids return to school in Kent County on January 3rd. At that time, decisions about facial covering policies will belong to the school districts and to the leadership of the private and parochial schools."

Our plan after Christmas break at GCCS is to *not* require facial coverings at school for JK - 12th graders (except on school buses, as long as the CDC order for public transportation remains in effect). We will leave this decision up to our staff and families.

Also, as we have previously communicated regarding vaccines for COVID, GCCS believes that the decision to get a COVID vaccination is a family decision. The school will not require COVID vaccinations for attendance at school or for participation in school-related events.

As we have sought to do throughout the pandemic, GCCS will create a learning environment at school where students are safe and respecting the choices of each family and where students respect one another. We continue to work together as a community of faith and learning to partner with families in order to equip students to serve and glorify God with their lives.



Snow Day Protocols

Snow days are a reality of winter in Michigan. When weather conditions make travel difficult, GCCS may make the decision to close school.

As is historical practice at GCCS, if Grandville Public Schools close due to weather, GCCS will also be closed. We share several services with Grandville Public, including transportation and hot lunch. When school is closed due to weather, GCCS Child Care, at the elementary campus, will also be closed.

You will receive notifications of school closings via e-mail and text. In addition, you can also receive notifications from local television stations by going to their respective websites and selecting to receive school closing text alerts for GCCS.

Snow days are an opportunity for our students to rest, play in the snow, read, or craft. We believe that having a couple of snow days a year helps us get a little extra rest in a world that has become too busy. However, if we lose a number of school days due to weather, we know that it can impact learning. For that reason, GCCS implemented the following policy in 2019: **we will consider the first two snow days simply days of rest.** However,

once we hit the third snow day, we will be offering online learning opportunities to our students.

These will vary by grade-level and will be "asynchronous" (not happening at the same time), as families circumstances on snow days vary and schedules will not always line up.

We encourage our GCCS students to read on these days off, as reading is one of the most powerful ways to further their learning.

We will *not* cancel Winter Break (February 18-21, 2022) due to an accumulation of snow days as families make travel plans well in advance. We reserve the right to add days in June should we experience an excessive number of snow days in a given year.

If you have any questions or concerns about weather-related closings, please contact the Head of School or your building principal. We value your partnership as we continue to explore and implement ways to enhance great teaching and learning at GCCS.

GCCS Mission Statement:

"Equipping Students to Serve and Glorify God"



October 2021 Board Report

Each month, I share the GCCS Board Report with you. This report will allow you to know what I am communicating to the Board, as well as providing regular updates on the Strategic Plan implementation.

[You can view the October Board report here.](#)

