

Dear Good Shepherd Community,

The Reopening Committee Task Force would like to update you on what we have been working on and the latest information from the Marin Public Health Department with Dr. Willis.

The press release from 7/15/2020 announced that Marin County Public Health and Marin County Office of Education recommend that local public, private, independent and parochial schools delay a full return to in-classroom learning until September 8. They strongly advocate for a gradual approach to include distance learning and small in-person groups. This recommendation is a result of an increase in COVID cases in youth and young adults. You can find more information on their website <https://coronavirus.marinhhs.org/covid-19-status-update-07152020>.

What does that mean for Good Shepherd?

We have already been working on how to safely return to in-person and small group instruction. We will follow the recommendations but might be constrained by the state imposing additional restrictions on returning to school. However, we are prepared to move forward in the safest model possible. Here are some things that we know at this point:

1. With the information released yesterday, and more to come, we anticipate starting in-person groups coming onto both campuses to pick up supplies, meet their teacher, and be trained in the distance learning model in the event that a classroom is closed due to a COVID-19 exposure. This process will begin around the time of our originally scheduled opening. We do not anticipate fully opening school until after Labor Day at this point. We are working on a detailed schedule to be released in the near future.
2. We are walking through the classrooms and preparing to allow as much space as possible to distance the students and teachers to promote the recommended social distancing.
3. We are decluttering classrooms and rearranging furniture to facilitate the distancing.
4. We are ordering fans for the windows to increase circulation and looking into air purifiers.
5. The cleaning protocol for the day and night custodial staff at both campuses are being streamlined and set up for an accountability system to ensure high touch areas have been sanitized and disinfected.
6. Cleaning protocols in the classrooms will also be followed.

7. We have ordered face shields for the teachers and we are testing child size shields for our students (as an option). We do anticipate having all students wear masks upon our return to school.
8. We plan to utilize outdoor spaces for classes, lunch, and breaks.
9. At this point, we are planning to have the students stay in the classrooms and have the enrichment teachers rotate instead of the students moving.
10. We are planning out the “flow” of the school to minimize crossing of different classes.
11. Hand washing will be emphasized and expected at several key points throughout the day. We have purchased 10 hand washing stations that will be strategically placed throughout both campuses.
12. We will be doing temperature checks daily and health screening before arriving at school.
13. Good Earth is no longer running their school hot lunch program. We will be utilizing another hot lunch program that will be released as soon as we work out the details. We liked that everything is packaged and the company is following food preparation guidelines. The packaging is compostable and many organic options available. We appreciate the feedback from the lunch survey which guided us in our decision.
14. Once we are back in school, we will have slightly staggered drop offs and pick up at the elementary campus. The preschool will be sending out detailed information separately for drop off/pick up guidelines.
15. We are setting up an isolation area in case a student feels unwell during school.
16. Each campus will have one staff member who works directly with public health regarding any information of possible infections.
17. Each child will have individual pencil boxes and materials instead of classroom sets of supplies.
18. Each teacher and classroom will be outfitted with a cleaning kit containing the approved disinfectants and wipes.
19. We are replacing the faucets and soap dispensers with touch free components.

What do we do now?

As hard as it is, be patient. We are in a private and independent school group that meets twice weekly with MCOE to discuss reopening. We are updating the GSLS website with new information as it comes in and posting resources for families. There is also a link that you can ask a specific question that goes directly to the task force. We will update the FAQ section as more questions come in.

Most importantly, the only way that we will get back to in-person school will be when the numbers come down and we are off the state watch list. Please do whatever you can to social distance, wear masks, and wash hands. We only have so much control here on campus and we will need your help when your children are at home to limit their outside exposure.

Lastly, the entire staff has been amazing during this time. We miss seeing our students and we are doing everything in our power to get ready for a safe return to school.

Kindest Regards,

Laura Fitzpatrick & Kristin Lorenz