



August 1, 2020

Dear Gersh Academy Community,

Gersh Academy is committed to reopening our schools in a manner that provides for the safety, health, and security of both students and staff. The Gersh Academy School Re-opening Planning Team comprised of school administration, directors and the executive leadership with parent input, has worked diligently to review the requirements and guidance we have received from various entities such as the CDC, State Education Department, and the Department Of Health. Gersh Academy seeks to both comply with state expectations and maintain the needs of all of our students. The following is our Re-Opening Plan.

For your information, to stay up to date about COVID-2019, its treatment, and prevention, please visit the following websites:

- CDC's dedicated COVID-2019 website at: <https://www.cdc.gov/nCoV>
- New York State DOH dedicated COVID-2019 website at: <https://coronavirus.health.ny.gov/home>
- Washington State DOH dedicated COVID-2019 website at: <https://www.doh.wa.gov/Emergencies/Coronavirus>

Should you have any questions regarding this plan, please contact us at info@gershacademy.org.

We appreciate your continued support in ensuring the safety and well-being of our entire Gersh family!

Very truly yours,

Diana DeVivio
Superintendent

We Change Lives



Re-opening Plans 2020-2021 School Year

Gersh Academy is committed to reopening our schools in a manner that provides for the safety, health, and security of both students and staff. Gersh Academy will submit this reopening plan to the New York State Education Department (NYSED) as well as the New York State Department of Health (DOH) as required. The Gersh Academy executive team comprised of school administration, directors and the executive leadership with parent input, has worked diligently to review the requirements and guidance we have received from various entities such as the CDC, NYSED, and the DOH. Gersh Academy diligently seeks to both comply with state expectations and maintain the needs of the students.

ABOUT US

Gersh Academy is a system of innovative private, non-public pre-K-age 21 schools that serves children on the Autism Spectrum and related disabilities. Our specialized programs uniquely combine academics with an emphasis on social thinking, therapeutic/clinical services and vocational or post-secondary opportunities. Our accredited programs (NIPSA, MS-CESS and Cognia) lead to many students receiving a diploma and being prepared for transition to adulthood and independent living. Gersh Academy programs also prepare students with the functional vocational life skills that help them to be life-long learners and successful adults. The academic program follows NY State Common Core standards to ensure that students will be prepared for state assessments, exams, SATs, the college experience and/or life outside the classroom. Although the approach is individualized, students learn the same curriculum in the same scope and sequence as they would if they were in their home school district. Coupled with positive behavioral supports and practical clinical behavioral methodologies, Gersh Academy is well-known to be a trusted source of quality services, information and support for our students and families.

At Gersh Academy, we do not subscribe to one style of teaching or approach to learning, as we understand that each child is unique. We believe every child deserves the opportunity to grow and thrive in the school setting, as well as in the community and home. Approaches we teach support and guide students to meet their own individual potential and personal best.



Re-opening Plans 2020-2021 School Year

Gersh Academy West Hills 21 Sweet Hollow Road, Huntington, New York 11743.
 Gersh Academy West Hempstead. 307 Eagle Avenue. West Hempstead, New York 11522
 Gersh Academy Hauppauge. 358 Hoffman Lane. Hauppauge, New York 11788
 Gersh Academy Cougar Mountain 5410 194th Ave SE Issaquah, Washington 98027

Planning Team



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Health and safety

Gersh Academy is committed to providing a safe and healthy workplace for all our students, employees and visitors. To ensure we have a safe and healthy workplace, we have developed the following COVID-19 Safety Plan in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. Managers and employees are all responsible for implementing this plan. Our goal is to mitigate the potential transmission of COVID-19 in our workplaces and communities, and that requires full cooperation among our employees and management. Only through this cooperative effort can we establish and maintain the safety and health of our students, families, and employees.

What is COVID-19?

Coronaviruses are a large family of viruses that are common in people and many different species of animals. COVID-19 is caused by a coronavirus called SARS-CoV-2. Most cases are mild to moderate, like the common cold. But in older adults and people with chronic health conditions, the disease can be more severe.

Symptoms of COVID-19

It is important that students, families and employees understand the symptoms of COVID-19 and self-monitor their health and contact local health officials or their doctor if they suspect that they have COVID-19.

- Use the following link to [get up-to-date information from the CDC](#)
- Know the symptoms: Symptoms may appear 2-14 days after exposure to the virus. People with the following symptoms may have COVID-19:
 - Fever or chills (100 degrees Fahrenheit or greater)
 - Cough
 - Shortness of breath or difficulty breathing
 - Fatigue
 - Muscle or body aches
 - Headache
 - New loss of taste or smell
 - Sore throat
 - Congestion or runny nose
 - Nausea or vomiting
 - Diarrhea
- The CDC has a '[Symptom Checker](#)' online chat that you may use to navigate your symptoms.

How is COVID-19 Spread?

A. Person-to-person spread

The virus is thought to spread mainly from person-to-person contact between people who are in close contact with one another (within about 6 feet). Through respiratory droplets produced when an infected person coughs, sneezes, or talks. These droplets can land in the mouths, eyes or noses of people who are nearby or possibly be inhaled into the lungs. COVID-19 may be spread by people who are not showing symptoms.

B. The virus spreads easily between people

The virus that causes COVID-19 is spreading very easily and sustainably between people. Information from the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic suggest that this virus is spreading more efficiently than influenza, but not as efficiently as measles, which is highly contagious.

C. **The virus may spread in other ways**

It may be possible that a person can get COVID-19 by touching a surface or object that has the virus on it and then touching their own mouth, nose, or possibly their eyes. Coronavirus on surfaces and objects should die naturally, but the time in which it dies is uncertain and varies depending on the composition of the surface. Studies reflect that the COVID-19 virus can live 72 hours in surfaces like plastic and stainless steel, but less than 4 hours on copper and less than 24 hours on cartons. It is also said that warmer temperatures and exposure to sunlight will reduce the time the virus survives on surfaces and objects.

Therefore, personal prevention practices such as handwashing, staying at home when sick, wearing protective gear, and cleaning and disinfecting surfaces are important principles that should be practiced.

Preventing the Spread

How to protect others and yourself in the workplace and at home

Currently there is no vaccine to prevent coronavirus 19 (COVID-19). The best way to prevent illness is by limiting your exposure to the virus and taking precautionary measures.

- **WASH YOUR HANDS OFTEN** with soap and water for at least 20 seconds, especially if you have been in a public space, after blowing your nose, or after coughing or sneezing.
- **USE HAND SANITIZER** that contains at least 60% alcohol.
- **AVOID TOUCHING** your eyes, nose and mouth.
- **AVOID CLOSE CONTACT** with people especially those who are sick both at home and in public.
- **PUT DISTANCE BETWEEN YOURSELF AND OTHERS** and remember to stay at least 6 feet from other people. Also, keep in mind it can be spread by people not showing symptoms.
- **AVOID GROUP GATHERINGS** and stay out of crowded places and avoid mass gatherings.
- **COVER YOUR MOUTH AND NOSE** by wearing a mask when in public.
- **ALWAYS COVER YOUR MOUTH WHEN SNEEZING AND COUGHING.**

School Health Office

An isolation wing has been created to reduce the spread and risk of COVID-19. Room 100 is the dedicated nurse's office, while rooms 100A, 100B and 100C are dedicated isolation rooms.

All students/employees with flu-like symptoms/experiencing symptoms of COVID-19 will be sent to one of the isolation rooms (not the nurse's office) to eliminate cross contamination.

All healthy students (those receiving medication or nursing treatments) are to be sent to the nurse's office and kept away from the isolation rooms.

The nurse will disinfect the office after each student visit, regardless of the symptoms, including but not limited to all horizontal surfaces, cots, sinks and faucets, doorknobs, chairs, pillows, etc.

Teachers should call the nurse's office before sending the student down to alert the nurse and allow them time to disinfect if there was a student or staff member there before. This also ensures that only one student/staff member is in the room at a time. If it is an emergency, one of the isolation rooms will be used and the teacher/staff member may bring the student directly to an empty isolation room.

The nurse's office and isolation rooms will be stocked with proper PPE (gloves, masks, face shields, etc.) at all times.

Health Checks

Parents/ Guardians and staff members will be provided with resources to educate them regarding the careful observation of symptoms of COVID-19 and health screening that must be conducted each morning before coming to school. Students and staff members with a fever of 100 degrees Fahrenheit or greater and/or symptoms of possible COVID-19 virus infection should not enter the school building and stay at home.

All staff will be educated to observe students or other staff members for signs of any type of illness such as:

- a. Flushed cheeks;
- b. Rapid or difficulty breathing (without recent physical activity);
- c. Fatigue, and/or irritability; and
- d. Frequent use of the bathroom

Students and staff exhibiting these signs with no other explanation for them will be sent to the nurse's office for an assessment by the school nurse. If the school nurse is not available, the school will immediately contact the parent/guardian to come pick up their ill child or send the staff member home. Persons experiencing these signs when the nurse is not available will be placed in an isolation room while awaiting transport.

Health screenings including daily temperature checks and completion of a screening questionnaire are required for staff, contractors, vendors and visitors. Students are required to have a daily temperature check and periodic completion of a screening questionnaire.

Students that are sent to the isolation area will be supervised by the school nurse or administrative personnel while awaiting transport home. Students and staff that are sent home with symptoms of COVID-19 will be referred to a healthcare provider and provided with resources on COVID-19 testing. Students and staff are required to notify the school when they develop symptoms or if their answers to the questionnaire change during outside school hours.

Staff is encouraged to complete the required temperature check and screening questionnaire prior to arrival at school and parents/guardians are encouraged to screen their child before sending them to school. Screening by the parent/guardian prior to arriving at school is preferred in lieu of temperature checks and symptom screening being performed after arrival at school.

Gersh is prohibited from keeping records of student, faculty, staff and visitor health data (i.e. the specific temperature data of an individual) but is permitted to maintain records that confirm individuals were screened and the result of such screening.

Those parents/ guardians and staff that are unable to perform temperature checks and screening questionnaires at home will be allowed to do so at the entrance of the school upon arrival.

Temperature Screenings

Temperature screenings will take place upon arrival at the entrance of the school. All students, staff and visitors must have their temperature taken prior to entering the school building.

Staff must take their temperature at home and complete the health questionnaire before arriving to work. Staff who have a fever at or above 100 degrees Fahrenheit or who are experiencing coughing or shortness of breath must stay home. The staff member should monitor his/her health and call a healthcare provider or use telemedicine.

The process is as follows:

1: Reliance on social distancing (preferred and recommended by NYSED)

- Parents/ Guardians are to take their child's temperature either before coming to the facility or upon arrival at the facility. Upon their arrival, stand at least 6 feet away from the parent/ guardian and child.
- Gersh Academy has developed a survey that will be sent to all staff and families that will need to be filled out the morning of each day. A staff member will review the data of all people that did not respond, and a call will be placed to them and those who answered "yes". The survey is the same for staff and students.

https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSdC6-ey9v9wHQm15WjUVJcTxvZcsGw9zFhJ76xm_EKOHTdhfw/viewform

- Ask the parent/ guardian to confirm child does not have a fever, shortness of breath or cough
- Make a visual inspection of the child for signs of illness which could include flushed cheeks, rapid breathing or difficulty breathing (without recent physical activity), fatigue, or extreme fussiness.

2: Reliance on Barrier/Partition Controls using a no-touch thermometer at the entrance of the facility

- Stand behind a physical barrier, such as a glass or plastic window or partition that can serve to protect the staff member's face and mucous membranes from respiratory droplets that may be produced if the child being screened sneezes, coughs, or talks.
- Make a visual inspection of the child for signs of illness, which could include flushed cheeks, rapid breathing or difficulty breathing (without recent physical activity), fatigue, or extreme fussiness.
- Perform hand hygiene
- Wash your hands with soap and water for 20 seconds. If soap and water are not available, use a hand sanitizer with at least 60% alcohol.
- Put on disposable gloves.
- Check the child's temperature, reaching around the partition or through the window.
- Make sure your face always stays behind the barrier during the screening.
- If performing a temperature check on multiple individuals, we will ensure use of a clean pair of gloves for each child and that the thermometer has been thoroughly cleaned in between.
- For non-contact thermometers, we will clean with an alcohol wipe (or isopropyl alcohol on a cotton swab) between each student. We will reuse the same wipe as long as it remains wet.

3: Reliance on a stand-alone thermal device

- Students and staff enter the building while maintaining social distancing practices
- Students and staff stand in front of the thermal thermometer and have their temperature read
- Those whose temperature reading is below 100 degrees Fahrenheit may enter the building and go directly into their assigned room.
- Those whose temperature reading is at or above 100 degrees Fahrenheit must immediately go to one of the isolation rooms and follow the nurse's instructions.

Health Hygiene Practices

Health Hygiene practices will be taught to both students and staff. Signage will be posted throughout the building to encourage frequent hand and respiratory hygiene. Signage will remind individuals to:

- Stay home if they feel sick
- Cover their nose and mouth with an acceptable face covering when unable to maintain social distance
- Properly store and discard PPE
- Adhere to social distancing instructions
- Report symptoms of, or exposure to, COVID-19

- Follow hand hygiene, and cleaning and disinfection guidelines
- Follow respiratory hygiene and cough etiquette

Signage will be posted at the following locations in English and Spanish:

- Entrances
- Restrooms
- Classrooms
- Administrative offices
- Janitorial staff areas
- Nurse's office

Hand Hygiene

Students and staff must practice good hand hygiene to help reduce the spread of COVID-19. Hand hygiene includes:

- Traditional hand washing (with soap and warm water, lathering for a minimum of 20 seconds), which is the preferred method
- Use of alcohol-based hand sanitizers (60% alcohol or greater) when soap and water are not available, and hands are not visibly dirty
- Student use of hand sanitizer should be supervised by an adult
- Parents/ guardians that do not want their child to use alcohol-based hand sanitizer must notify the School Principal/Director so that the child is permitted to wash their hands with soap and water
- Signage will be posted near hand sanitizer with instructions
- Hand sanitizer will be provided throughout common areas, near high-touch surfaces and all classrooms

At a minimum, students and staff should wash hands as follows:

- Upon entering the building and each classroom, when possible
- After using shared objects or surfaces
- Before and after snacks and lunch
- After using the bathroom
- After helping a student with toileting
- After sneezing, wiping or blowing nose, or coughing into hands
- Upon coming in from outdoors
- Anytime hands are visibly soiled

Respiratory Hygiene

The COVID-19 virus spreads from person to person in droplets produced by coughs and sneezes. It is important that students and staff cover their mouths or noses with a tissue when coughing or sneezing and dispose of the tissue immediately and appropriately.

A supply of tissues and no touch trash cans will be available in each classroom, office and restroom. If no tissue is immediately available using the inside of the elbow (or shirtsleeve) to cover the mouth or nose is preferable to using the hands. Always perform hand hygiene after sneezing, coughing and handling dirty tissues or other soiled material.

Social Distancing

Social Distancing, also called "physical distancing," means keeping a six-foot space between yourself and others.

The following measures are being taken to provide social distancing:

- Staggering arrival/ dismissal times to allow increased social distancing

- Utilizing multiple entry points to limit the amount of close contact between students in high-traffic situations and times
- Reducing in-school movement by having classes remain in the same classroom (teachers will move around if necessary)
- Facing all desks in the same direction
- Opening windows to improve ventilation
- Keeping individual student belongings separated. Each student will receive a bin to store their items under their desk
- Limiting the use of shared supplies utilizing visual aids to illustrate traffic flow and appropriate spacing
- Utilizing classrooms instead of the cafeteria for lunch and meals
- Limiting gathering in small spaces. One person limits in common areas
- Limiting visitors to school buildings

Medically Vulnerable/ High Risk Groups

Persons in these groups should consult with their healthcare provider regarding prevention and in-person attendance:

- Individuals age 65 or older
- Pregnant individuals
- Individuals with underlying health conditions including, but not limited to:
 - Chronic lung disease or moderate to severe asthma
 - Serious heart conditions
 - Immunocompromised
 - Severe obesity (body mass index of 30 or higher)
 - Diabetes
 - Chronic kidney disease undergoing dialysis
 - Liver disease
 - Sickle cell anemia
 - Children who are medically complex, who have neurologic, genetic, metabolic conditions, or who have congenital heart disease are at higher risk for severe illness from COVID-19 than other children

Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)

PPE will be required for all students and staff while in the school building. All students will be provided disposable face masks and all staff will receive a cloth reusable face mask. Face coverings Do's & Don'ts will be provided to all staff and students/families.

Face shields will be provided to those staff members that will be in close contact with students, as well as the school nurse and administration that will be assisting students/staff.

N95 masks and gloves will be available to the school nurse, staff and custodians that may be in contact with a suspected COVID-19 positive case and/or performing aerosol-generating procedures. Alcohol-based hand sanitizer will be provided in each classroom, office space, bathroom and common area.

Disinfectant wipes, disinfectant spray, disinfectant solution and paper towels will be provided in each classroom, office space and common area. Instructions on how to use all of these products will accompany all items. All materials will be securely stored for safety.

Face Coverings

All individuals in school facilities and on school grounds must be prepared to put on a face covering if another person unexpectedly cannot socially distance. Employees with healthcare provider

documentation stating they are not medically able to tolerate face coverings will not be required to do so.

The covering should cover the nose and mouth completely, should not be overly tight or restrictive, and should feel comfortable to wear. A face covering is not meant to substitute for social distancing but is especially important in situations when maintaining a 6-foot distance is not possible.

All students and staff members must wear a face covering:

- Whenever they are within 6 feet of someone
- In hallways
- In restrooms
- In other congregate settings, including buses

Face coverings may be challenging for students to wear in all-day settings such as school, so scheduling mask breaks is important. Students may remove their mask when at their desks and are 6 feet away from others. Face coverings should not be placed on:

- Students where such covering would impair their health or mental health, or where such covering would present a challenge, distraction, or obstruction to education services and instruction;
- Anyone who has trouble breathing or is unconscious; or
- Anyone who is incapacitated or otherwise unable to remove the face covering without assistance

Instructions on the following will be provided to students, staff, parents/guardians, contractors and vendors:

- The proper way to wear face coverings
- Washing hands before putting on and after removing their face covering
- Proper way to discard disposable face coverings
- The importance of routine cleaning or reusable face coverings
- Face coverings are for individual use only and should not be shared

Per the CDC, persons that are at least 6 feet away from others and can maintain such distance do not need to wear a face covering. Students and staff may not wear a face covering while eating or drinking but must try to maintain a 6-foot distance from others while doing so.

Management of Ill Persons

Students and staff with symptoms of illness must be sent to the health office. A school nurse will assess individuals as chronic conditions such as asthma and allergies or chronic gastrointestinal conditions may present the same symptoms as COVID-19 but are neither contagious nor pose a public health threat.

If students or staff become ill with symptoms of COVID-19 while at home

All employees who have COVID-19 symptoms should notify Human Resources (hr@gershacademy.org) and stay home. Parents/ guardians who have a child with COVID-19 symptoms should notify the School Superintendent and School Principal/Director and refrain from sending the child to school.

Sick employees and students should follow [CDC Guidelines and recommended steps](#). As of now, the quarantine period is 14 days for employees that feel sick, whether or not you test positive. Employees and students should not return to school until the [criteria to discontinue home isolation](#) are met, in consultation with a healthcare provider and written approval.

Employees who are well but who have a sick family member at home with COVID-19 should notify Human Resources (hr@gershacademy.org) and follow CDC recommended guidelines along with their doctor's recommendation. As of now, it's the same protocol and quarantine period as if you were sick yourself. Parents/ guardians who have a student who is well but have a sick family member at home with COVID-19 should notify the School Superintendent and School Principal/Director and follow CDC recommended guidelines along with their doctor's recommendation.

If students or staff become ill with symptoms of COVID-19 while at school

Students and staff who have a fever or other symptoms of COVID-19 that are not explained by a chronic health condition will be sent to an isolation room to await pick up or immediately sent home. Students that are sent to the isolation area will be supervised by the school nurse or administrative personnel while awaiting transport home. The school nurse or administrative personnel will utilize appropriate PPE while in the room. Multiple students suspected of COVID-19 may be in the same isolation room if they can be separated by at least 6 feet.

To prevent the possible transmission of the virus to others:

- Students will be escorted from the isolation area to the parent/guardian. The isolation area is a separate location in the building which has its own restroom and means of egress.
- The parent/guardian will be instructed to call their health care provider. If they do not have a health care provider, they will be instructed to follow up with a local clinic or urgent care center
- Symptomatic students or staff members will be instructed to follow the CDC's [Stay Home When You Are Sick](#) guidance unless otherwise instructed by a healthcare provider or the local department of health.
- If the student or staff member has emergency warning signs such as trouble breathing, persistent pain or pressure in the chest, new confusion, bluish lips or face, call 911 and notify the operator that the person may have COVID-19
- Staff members will be taught to be aware of the symptoms of Multisystem Inflammatory Syndrome in Children (MIS-C) associated with COVID-19 which is a serious condition associated with COVID-19 in children and youth. The parent/guardian will be immediately notified if their child shows any of the following symptoms and will be referred to follow up with a healthcare provider:
 - Fever
 - Abdominal pain
 - Vomiting
 - Diarrhea
 - Neck pain
 - Rash
 - Bloodshot eyes
 - Feeling extra tired

As per the CDC and NYSDOH, we are implementing the following protocol:

- Closing off areas used by a sick person and not using these areas until after cleaning and disinfection has occurred
- Opening outside doors and windows to increase air circulation in the area
- Waiting at least 24 hours before cleaning and disinfection. If waiting 24 hours is not feasible, wait as long as possible
- Clean and disinfect all areas used by the person suspected or confirmed to have COVID-19, such as offices, classrooms, bathrooms, lockers, and common areas
 - Once the area has been appropriately cleaned and disinfected, it can be reopened for use
 - Individuals without close or proximate contact with the person suspected or confirmed to have COVID-19 can return to the area and resume school activities immediately after cleaning and disinfection

- If more than seven days have passed since the person who is suspected or confirmed to have COVID-19 visited or used the facility, additional cleaning and disinfection is not necessary, but routine cleaning and disinfection should continue.

If a student or staff member reports having tested positive for COVID-19, the School Superintendent/Human Resources will notify the local health department to determine what steps are needed for the school.

Return to School after Illness

If a person is not diagnosed by a healthcare provider with COVID-19 they can return to school:

- Once there is no fever, without the use of fever reducing medicines, and they have felt well for 24 hours
- If they have been diagnosed with another condition and has a healthcare provider written note stating they are clear to return to school

If a person is diagnosed with COVID-19 by a healthcare provider based on a test or their symptoms or does not get a COVID-19 test but has had symptoms, they should not be at school and should stay home until:

- It has been at least 10 days since the individual first had symptoms;
- It has been at least three days since the individual has had a fever (without using fever reducing medicine); and
- It has been at least three days since the individual's symptoms improved, including cough and shortness of breath

School Health Office

All students/ employees with flu-like symptoms/ experiencing symptoms of COVID-19 will be sent to one of the isolation rooms (not the nurse's office) to eliminate cross contamination.

The nurse will disinfect the office after each student visit, regardless of the symptoms, including but not limited to all horizontal surfaces, cots, sinks and faucets, doorknobs, chairs, pillows, etc. Teacher should call the nurse's office before sending the student down to alert the nurse and allow them time to disinfect if there was a student or staff member there before. This also ensures that only one student/staff member is in the room at a time. If it is an emergency, one of the isolation rooms will be used.

The nurse's office will be stocked with proper PPE (gloves, masks, face shields, etc.) at all times.

All healthy students (those receiving medication or nursing treatments) are to be sent to the nurse's office and kept away from the isolation rooms.

COVID-19 Testing

- Use the following link to complete an [assessment, pre-register for the test, and find a testing site near you.](#)
- Please note that if you go to a test site run by New York State, there is no charge for your test. If you go to a test site operated by local governments, private companies, medical practices or not-for-profit organizations, you are advised to check with the testing site and your insurer in advance of being tested to confirm you will not be responsible for any fees associated with your test.

Contact Tracing

Contact tracing is a public health function performed by local health departments to trace all persons who had contact with a confirmed case of COVID-19. This allows public health officials to put in place isolation or other measures to limit the spread of the virus. We will assist public health departments in knowing who may have had contact at school with a confirmed case by:

- Keeping accurate attendance records of students and staff;
- Ensuring student schedules are up to date;
- Keeping a log of any visitors which includes date, time and where in the school they visited

Confidentiality will be maintained, and we will not try to determine who is to be excluded from school based on contact without guidance and direction from the local department of health.

Facilities

Ventilation

Air conditioning filters will be changed more frequently. Windows will be opened, when it is safe and appropriate to do so, to assist with air circulation.

Doors

All interior doors that are not fire rated will be fixed in the open position to reduce the spread of the virus from touching door levers and knobs.

Plastic Separators

Light transmitting plastics will be used to separate sinks in shared bathrooms.

No touch Alcohol-Based hand sanitizer & hand soap dispensers

No touch alcohol-based hand sanitizer dispensers will be placed in each classroom, office space, conference room, bathroom and common area. All students will be supervised while using alcohol-based hand sanitizer. All students are to be taken to the restroom by a paraprofessional or staff member.

No touch hand soap dispensers will be placed in all bathrooms.

Classrooms

Items that must be shared in a classroom must be disinfected before and after each use.

Paraprofessionals and teachers must make sure that classroom items are properly stored and out of the reach of children so that students do not have access to supplies that are not needed.

Each student will be provided with his/her own container (with a lid) to store their school materials in each day. Students must store papers and supplies in these bins to protect them when the cleaners spray the classrooms each night.

Restrooms

Restrooms have been assigned to each individual staff member and classroom to reduce the number of people using the same restroom. Additional restrooms have been made available to allow better flow and reduce the amount of people using the same one. All employees and students must wash their hands for at least 20 seconds before returning to their desk/classroom. A staff member must accompany students to the restroom and assist with hand hygiene procedures. Employees and students must ONLY use their designated restroom as explained below and marked in blue on the accompanying floorplans. School restrooms will be cleaned and disinfected on a rotational schedule daily. Dividers will be used between sinks and no-touch hand sanitizer and soaps dispensers will be installed in all restrooms.

Conference Rooms

A total of two conference rooms are available to use. There is a 4-person limit in each conference room to allow social distancing practices. Conference rooms must be booked in advance utilizing a calendar meeting invite. All staff members that utilize a conference room must clean and disinfected all horizontal surfaces, as well as any communal items in the conference room (i.e. phone, keyboard, mouse, markers, etc.), before and after each use. If weather allows and it is possible to do so, windows should be opened during the duration of the meeting.

Any room requiring scheduled meetings must have a 15-minute gap to allow for disinfection in between use.

Security Desk

The security guard will be seated at a table at the entrance of the school building. A sneeze guard will be set up with an opening at the bottom to allow for papers and identification to fit through. Hand sanitizer will be set up at the security desk for the security guard and visitors to use. All visitors must check in with the security guard prior to going anywhere in the building. Per the visitor policy, those employees expecting a visitor, must notify the administrative assistant and he/she will let the security guard know who to expect. Employees will meet the visitor at the security guard to perform a health screening prior to their meeting. *(Not applicable in Cougar Mountain)*

Lockers

Students will use individual plastic containers inside the classroom to store items that they will need throughout the day. Lockers will not be used.

Cafeteria and Multipurpose Room

The cafeteria and multipurpose room will be used for related services. A maximum of 10 related service personnel and 10 students are allowed in each room at any given time. Social distancing will be in effect while services are being delivered, except for the related service provider and the individual student. Where appropriate, a face covering will be worn or replaced with a face shield to allow the student to see the service provider's mouth.

All tables will be placed at least 6 feet apart, and only two students/related service providers will be at each table. Tables are 9 feet long and will allow for social distancing to take place between each student/related service provider group.

Mail & Deliveries Policy

All deliveries must be delivered directly to the basement. Facilities will disinfect all packages and deliver them to the designated person.

All mail will be brought to the main office and sorted by the administrative assistant. The administrative assistant will deliver the mail to the designated person after disinfecting it. Where possible, the administrative assistant will scan the mail to the designated person to avoid person-to-person contact.

Copy Room Policy

Copiers must be wiped down using the provided disinfecting wipes before and after each use. Only one person is allowed at the copier/ copy room at a time. Employees must stay 6 feet away from each other if waiting for the copier (social distancing markers will be used as reminders).

Only the administrative assistant is allowed to restock the printer. The administrative assistant is responsible for restocking the printer in the morning and afternoon and disinfecting the machine before and after each restock. All employees must request a restock from the administrative assistant instead of doing it themselves.

Supply Closet Policy

Only the administrative assistant is permitted to go into the supply closet. If you need any supplies, you must contact the administrative assistant and request the supplies in writing. The administrative assistant will retrieve and/ or order the requested items for you and deliver them to you when they are available, which will usually be within 3 business days. Please order in advance by keeping an eye on your supplies and make sure to give her time to order anything that might not be stocked.

Drinking water facilities

All water fountains will be closed and replaced with no-touch water dispensers. There is a one-person limit while at the water dispenser. Paraprofessionals and staff members may assist students to fill their water bottle/cup while wearing a face covering.

Employees and students are encouraged to bring their own reusable water bottle/cup. This will reduce the number of hands touching the disposable cups provided. If you are using a reusable bottle/cup, you must make sure that you do not touch the spout with your hands or the bottle/cup. If you use a provided disposable cup, you must make sure to only touch the cup that you will use.

Visitor Policy

Visitors with no appointments will not be allowed into the building, unless for emergency reasons.

All visitors must wear face coverings while in the school building.

Administration will determine whether meetings can be held virtually instead of in-person.

All visitors must be provided with the same information. We will copy and paste the following message into an email along with the COVID-19 Visitor Questionnaire and send it to the visitor prior to their scheduled visit. Forms may be completed as early as 24 hours prior to the visit but no later than 1 hour prior to the visit.

In order to provide a safe work environment for employees and visitors, all visits must be scheduled in advance and approved in writing. On the day of your visit, once you have arrived at the facility, you must call (631.385.3342) from your vehicle to notify the main office of your arrival. The Receptionist will notify the employee you are visiting that you have arrived, and he/she will meet you at the entrance. Prior to your appointment, you MUST complete the "COVID-19 Visitor Questionnaire" and allow the employee to take your temperature before entering the building. Based on your answers and temperature reading, the employee will grant or deny you access into our facility. You must wear a mask when you are on our property.

A visitor log will be kept of all visitors to the facility, even if the meeting is in an office. Visitors will need to e-mail the receptionist the details of the meeting, including but not limited to – visitor's first and last name, person they are meeting with, what office/room they will be meeting in, and the date and the time of the meeting. The receptionist will provide this list to the security officer.

If the office does not allow for appropriate social distancing practices with a visitor (at least 6 feet between staff and the visitor at all times), we will request a conference room via a calendar invitation.

When the visitor arrives, they must call the main phone line to notify us of their arrival. The receptionist will notify the security officer and staff member of the visitor's arrival and the staff member must meet the visitor at the security desk.

All visitors must have their temperature taken. Use the provided No-Touch Thermometer at the entry table, while wearing a mask and gloves, to take the visitor's temperature. Employees perform hand hygiene prior to taking the visitor's temperature and must wear a face covering and gloves. Employees must make a visual inspection of the visitor for signs of illness, which could include flushed cheeks or fatigue, and confirm that the visitor is not experiencing coughing or shortness of breath. Discard PPE and perform hand hygiene after taking the visitor's temperature.

If performing a temperature check on multiple individuals, make sure that you use a clean pair of gloves for each person and that the thermometer has been thoroughly cleaned in between each check.

- If the visitor has a temperature reading of 100.0 degrees Fahrenheit or higher, we will deny them entry into the building. Immediately wash hands and notify Facilities and the School Principal/Director.
- If the visitor has a temperature reading of 99.0 degrees Fahrenheit or lower, we may allow them to enter the building. We will escort them directly to the location of the meeting.

Once a meeting has concluded and the visitor has the left the facility, we will be responsible for cleaning and disinfecting all of the areas that visitor have come in contact with. All horizontal surfaces, light switches, doorknobs, tables, chairs, writing utensils and technology (keyboard, phone, etc.) must be wiped down with a disinfectant.

Social-Emotional Well-Being

We acknowledge that students and teachers transitioning to online learning and practicing social distancing are experiencing a major, and likely disconcerting, change in daily activities and interactions, and with that, are under a great deal of stress. During this time period of the COVID-19 pandemic in which our ability to check in on one another in person is limited, it is even more critical that we find ways to reach out and check in with each other virtually, supporting everyone’s social emotional learning (SEL) and mental health.

In order to create the mental, social, and emotional space for academic learning to occur, the following protocols will be implemented:

- Student support meeting 2xweek with Counselors, intervention specialists, BCBAs, School Psychologists, and Mental Health professionals and administration come together to discuss any student experiencing emotional stress/needs
- Administrators facilitate weekly class meeting with teachers and RS providers come together to discuss student needs in each classroom to ensure no student is overlooked
- Scheduled counseling sessions will be delivered as mandated on IEPs as well as any student showing any signs of emotional stress.

Attendance

All attendance will be managed through Power School. Power School is a student information system used by Gersh Academy. It is a web- based application that securely manages attendance related data.

Attendance is taken daily and recorded. If a student attends the live face-to-face class, and participates in learning, the student is marked “present.” If a parent cannot support a child during scheduled times or the student is unable to work, classwork is uploaded, calls to the parents are made and completed work is collected for that day. Under these circumstances, the student is also marked present. If a student does not appear at all and there is no contact with the student’s family, this is recorded as an absence.

Gersh Academy will continuously monitor student attendance and engagement in learning throughout all instructional delivery models. All students will receive support and encouragement throughout and contact will assure students and families have the resources needed to engage in continued learning opportunities.

Teaching and learning

All families will be given the option to use remote instruction throughout the 2020-2021 academic year. Those families choosing to use remote instruction only must sign the Family Commitment form which states the following:

Families should be prepared to support their children's active participation in all online learning activities. They will need to ensure their children have adequate space, materials, and technology access for their family online instruction, requesting school assistance to provide a device and internet service, as needed. Families will need to be ready to follow the established daily learning schedule and will need to work with school staff to arrange for their children to participate in standardized assessments and other mandated educational activities.

Gersh Academy will be prepared to move all students to virtual only instruction based on a State and/or local decision about closures as a result of an increase in COVID-19 spread.

Option 1: In-Person Instruction

In order to provide full in-person instruction, Gersh Academy will obtain a secondary building to maintain social distancing and maximum capacity regulations. A second building will allow the entire student and staff population to return to the school setting while adhering to COVID-19 guidelines.

Option 2: Hybrid (in-person and remote)

To ensure students and staff can meet physical distancing requirements, instructional delivery under this model requires a reduced schedule of in-person learning. Students participate in virtual learning on days when they are not present in a school building. This structure involves a rotating day schedule for in-person and virtual instruction with groups of students attending school on assigned days each week. A sample schedule is below:

Schedule A:

Students and Staff assigned to 'Schedule A' attend in-person on the following days:

Even Weeks: Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday

Odd Weeks: Thursday and Friday

Schedule B:

Students and Staff assigned to 'Schedule B' attend in-person on the following days:

Even Weeks: Thursday and Friday

Odd Weeks: Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday

Students and staff will be assigned to one classroom/office and will remain in the same room/location for the entire day.

In this model, students and staff must follow the health and temperature screening procedures described in this document. The school building will undergo daily disinfecting for high-touch areas according to CDC cleaning and disinfecting guidelines. *(This option not offered at West Hills or Cougar Mountain))*

Option 3: Remote Instruction

Under this plan, all students and staff will remain at home, utilizing technology and at-home tools to continue school instruction. Those students/ families requiring a school-provided device must follow the technology protocol in this document to obtain a device. Remote learning as an option for parents or if related to a school closure, will remain in effect until New York State provides additional information on health and safety guidelines for schools reopening.

How Remote Learning is Being Provided:

Learning will be both asynchronous and synchronous during the instructional day which expands from 8:30 am to 3:00 pm daily. Live, face-to-face classes are held during the school day for group lessons, one-to-one instruction, and related services. Supplemental work is also assigned to students for completion outside the scheduled class meetings, and staff subsequently documents the students' completion of assigned work. If a student is unable to connect to live teaching on a given day, lessons are shared with parents/caretakers and work assignments clearly defined either through phone calls, emails or Microsoft Teams at an agreed upon time.

Students and families will use laptops or tablets to connect to learning each day. Tablets will continue to be specifically purchased which contain internet access and distributed to families via the postal delivery service. Staff will maintain regular contact with families providing academic support and providing projects to students not needing access to technology to complete.

Instructional Practices (Synchronous and Asynchronous):

All core academic subjects and special subjects such as physical education, art and music are delivered to students daily by live, face-to-face interaction with supplemental resources such as Unique Learning, IXL Reading and Math, Reading A-Z, Handwriting Without Tears, and Touch Math. Project-based learning activities are used to encourage cooperative learning. Projects allow for the whole class to be broken into smaller groups to meet under the supervision of the teacher and/or teaching assistant and paraprofessionals for cooperative work amongst students. The staff facilitates the work and then students come together to share their learning. During this time, interactive materials are displayed.

Reinforcement and supplemental materials are uploaded onto Microsoft Teams classroom for completion outside of the face-to-face time during each school day. An online portfolio houses all students' completed work.

Safety continues to be our number one concern. Teachers will grant access for screen sharing and do have the ability to mute and unmute or even remove a student if necessary.

Related Service providers provide daily teletherapy by face-to-face sessions. Students will be receiving their individual mandates. The school has adjusted students' related services schedules to provide individual sessions rather than group mandates of counseling, speech and language, occupational therapy, and physical therapy to protect student privacy.

The school's behavior support staff will continue to provide ongoing and individualized parent counseling and training. Board Certified Behavior Analysts, a school psychologist, a mental health counselor and a school social worker are among the members of the behavior support staff who will assist parents with student behavior and emotional issues in the home which may interfere with student learning. All behavioral supports provided to students and families are documented.

For some students, one to one academic and behavioral support will be provided by Gersh Academy's teaching staff and BCBA's. Teachers, related service providers, and paraprofessional staff will contemporaneously document all services provided, including a record of date, time, services provided, progress demonstrated towards learning goals, and persons present.

*Gersh Academy does not have multilingual learners. However, we do have parents who speak only Spanish. Personal calls from Spanish-speaking school staff ensure parental understanding of and engagement with distance-learning programs. Instructional technology support in Spanish is available.

Human Resources

*****EMPLOYEE POLICIES. There will be strict implementation of policies to support the objective of health and safety for all the students and the staff.**

Nutrition

Meals

All meals and snacks must be brought in from home in a lunch box/cooler and the proper cooling aids inside. The use of shared refrigerators in classrooms will no longer be allowed.

Classroom staff must ensure that all students wash their hands prior to and immediately after eating. Classroom staff must wash their hands prior to and immediately after assisting students with meals and washing their hands.

Face coverings are not required while eating and drinking. Classroom staff will enforce a 6-foot distance during lunch/meals.

The sharing of food and beverages is prohibited.

The staff lounge is indefinitely closed and will be converted into a conference room. Staff must take their lunch breaks at their desks and must perform hand hygiene before and after eating and/or drinking.

Teachers and non-food service staff will be trained on food allergies.

The most common food allergy signs and symptoms include:

- Tingling or itching in the mouth.
- Hives, itching or eczema.
- Swelling of the lips, face, tongue and throat or other parts of the body.
- Wheezing, nasal congestion or trouble breathing.
- Abdominal pain, diarrhea, nausea or vomiting.
- Dizziness, lightheadedness or fainting.

Transportation

To protect the health and safety of all occupants of the school bus, students and families are encouraged to comply with the health practices that the school district that transports the child puts in place. Such health practices may include wearing a face covering where it does not affect the mental or physical health of the child and social distancing.

Student Disembarking from Transportation Best Practices:

- When students embark and disembark the bus, they will follow social distancing protocols (6-feet apart)
- The loading and unloading locations for busses will be reconfigured to allow for social distancing while the students embark and disembark
- Since hand sanitizer is not allowed on the school bus, students will perform hand hygiene as they enter the school building utilizing the school provided hand sanitizer or washing hands at the assigned bathroom.

Schedule and Calendar

For the 2020—2021 school year:

- In person instruction in school will be 8:30 a.m.-3:00 p.m. Monday through Friday 5 days a week
- Hybrid will be as follows: 8:30 a.m.-3:00 p.m. with rotating weeks days one week 3 days the next week with alternate days
- Remote/distance: 8:30 a.m.-3:00 p.m. Monday through Friday 5 days a week

The dates for NY are as follows:

September 2, 2020 – June 25, 2021

The dates for WA are as follows:

September 1, 2020 – June 17, 2021

*In the event of a school closure, all students will transition to Remote/Distance Learning.

Technology

Remote learning

Students and families will use laptops or tablets to connect to learning each day. Tablets will continue to be specifically purchased which contained internet access and distributed to families via the postal delivery service.

Microsoft Teams will be the learning platform used. This is a cloud platform providing video and audio conferencing, which can be used on computers, mobile devices and cell phones. In addition, interactive sites and platforms such as Flip Grid are used for student engagement, participation and sharing of materials and home-made videos as they relate to projects assigned to students.

Student Devices

Families requesting a school-provided device must contact the building leader/administrator. Families must be provided with a “Student Loan Equipment Request Form” and they must send the completed form to IT at helpdesk@gershacademy.org. IT will order and prepare the device for the student. All families will receive a “Loan Equipment Agreement Form” before a device is provided to them. No devices will be delivered unless the form is signed.

When requesting a replacement for a damaged device, families must agree to return the damaged device prior to us giving them a new one. Families must be provided with a “Student Loan Equipment Request Form” and they must send the completed form to IT at helpdesk@gershacademy.org. A new Loan Agreement form must be signed and the family will be billed for the cost of the replacement and/or repairs.

For troubleshooting or any technology related questions, parents/ guardians should contact IT at helpdesk@gershacademy.org.

Special education

Gersh Academy will continue to provide a framework to ensure that all students with disabilities continue to have available to them instruction that emphasizes special education and related services designed to meet their unique needs and prepare them for further education, employment, and independent living. In consideration of the health, safety, and well-being of students, families, and staff, our school will enable a smooth transition between in-person, remote, and hybrid learning environments to ensure the provision of services that are consistent with the changing health and safety conditions that exist.

Teachers and service providers will continue to collect data, whether in-person or remotely, and use data to monitor each student’s progress toward the annual goals and to evaluate the effectiveness of the student’s special education services. Determining student progress will continue for understanding each student’s present levels of academic achievement and functional performance,

and for determining whether, and to what extent, the school closures may have disrupted the student's learning. Reports of progress to parents and the home district of residence CSE may be made via telephone or other electronic means if progress reporting procedures specified in the student's IEP cannot be met with reasonable efforts.

Gersh Academy will ensure access to the necessary accommodations, modifications, supplementary aids and services, and technology (including assistive technology) to meet the unique disability related needs of our students.

Communication

In addition to the generated messaging through email and phone communication efforts Gersh Academy makes for all students, we are committed to working collaboratively and creatively to help ensure there is an understanding of the school's efforts to provide services and monitor student progress.

For questions: Please contact Jennifer Domash, Vice-President of Marketing & Communications at:



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