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PARENT FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

School Year 2020-2021

Disclaimer: This information is subject to change based on the evolving COVID-19 situation in Guam. Please refer to the online FAQ sheets available on the GDOE back to school page at <https://www.gdoe.net/District/Portal/school-year-2020-2021-information> for the latest information.

Will schools reopen in August 2020?

- The Guam Department of Education (GDOE) is working with the Department of Public Health and Social Services (DPHSS) and the Governor's Office to determine when and how schools will open this fall. GDOE has submitted its plans to reopen schools to DPHSS to review. The ultimate decision on whether or not to open schools will be made by DPHSS and Governor Lourdes Leon Guerrero. In order to open GDOE schools, the island will need to be in PCOR-3, GDOE's reopening plan must meet or exceed all recently issued DPHSS guidelines, and the necessary personal protective equipment must be available for schools.

Are schools currently open to the public?

- Yes. As of June 8, 2020, GDOE schools and the district office in Tiyan are open to the general public. At this time, schools are not open to students. Note that although schools are open to the public, please call ahead of time or make note of office occupancy limits before entering. Due to the ongoing public health emergency and guidance from public health experts and executive orders issued by Governor Lourdes Leon Guerrero, schools remain closed to students at this time.

What safety protocols should parents be aware of when visiting GDOE facilities/schools?

- Visitors, parents and guardians should call ahead prior to visiting each school in order to avoid crowding in school offices. All entering GDOE campuses are required to wear a mask, and visitors should report immediately to the main office where temperature screening will be conducted. Visitors may be asked to wait in their vehicles should doing so be necessary to enforce social distancing guidelines. When submitting registration documents, parents/guardians should call ahead to schedule an appointment.

When is the first day of classes?

- The first day of classes is tentatively scheduled for August 17, 2020. However, this date may change based on the evolving COVID-19 situation in Guam.

How do I register my child for school year 2020-2021?

- To register your child at a Guam Department of Education school, please contact each school directly to ensure the proper registration forms are completed and submitted. Parents/guardians are asked to call ahead before picking up registration packets, and they may also download registration packets at each school's website. The contact information for each school may be accessed here: <https://www.gdoe.net/District/Portal/Directory>.

What safety protocols are in place to ensure my child is safe at school and to prevent the spread of COVID-19?

- As Guam navigates the evolving COVID-19 situation, safety remains a top priority for all Guam Department of Education schools. The GDOE is working to safely reopen schools this fall through new safety protocols aligned with guidance from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) to include:
 - Wearing a mask (or face shield for young children) while on all GDOE facilities
 - Temperature checks upon arrival
 - Physical distancing
 - Frequent cleaning of common areas and high traffic areas/surfaces
 - Frequent washing of hands
 - COVID health education for students and staff
 - Posted safety signs and protocols

What is the process should a student or employee test positive for COVID-19?

- Once GDOE receives notice of a student or employee with a confirmed positive COVID-19 diagnosis, GDOE will immediately coordinate with the Department of Public Health and Social Services (DPHSS). Notification will be provided to employees or students of that respective school/division. A COVID-19 contact investigation will be initiated by DPHSS to determine which employees and students have been exposed to the index case based on a review of the following:
 - o Class rosters
 - o Bus schedule
 - o Students that transferred during the infectious time frame
 - o Cafeteria staff
 - o Cleaning staff
 - o Employees and visitors listing

Employees and students that have been identified as contacts to the confirmed case of COVID-19 will be excluded from work and school for 14 days, and the GDOE Nursing Administrator will coordinate with DPHSS to set up a testing schedule. The division or school will be closed for 2-5 days according to CDC guidance for cleaning and disinfecting. Employees and students will require a clearance letter issued by DPHSS before they can resume school or work.

What will the school instruction be like for my child this coming school year?

- The Guam Education Board has approved three models of instruction for School Year 2020-2021. Parents may select which of the three models their child will participate in:
 - **Home Learning Online Instruction (Online Learning):** This model of instruction and attendance is 100% online home learning. Students will participate

in classes online and are required to have a computer or tablet, and reliable internet access. Additionally, though not necessarily required, access to a printer and scanner is beneficial.

- **Home Learning Hard Copies (Paper Based/Hard Copy Curriculum):** This model of instruction and attendance is for students who would like to do 100% distance learning but do not have the equipment to support 100% online work. This would be a home learning model supported by a paper-based or hard copy based curriculum.
- **Traditional (Face-to-Face):** This model of instruction and attendance will be for students who will be participating in a blended model of face-to-face and distance (home) learning. Due to safety and physical distancing considerations, the Guam Education Board has approved using an A-B-C alternating schedule, where 1/3 of students attend classes on any given school day. The proposed A-B-C alternating schedule entails the following:
 - Students are divided up into equally sized alphabetical cohorts (A, B, C). Efforts will be made to align schedules of siblings in the same or multiple schools.
 - Cohorts will alternate days for physical attendance on campus.
 - On days when students are not physically on campus, they will have assignments, projects or activities to complete and submit when they return. These assignments, projects, or activities can be provided and completed electronically or through hard copy depending on students' access to equipment and the internet.
 - Alternating days will follow the same order and adjust accordingly for holidays.
 - Fridays will be designated as student interventions and parent support days.

What is the Model of Learning Registration Form and why do I need to complete this?

- Due to COVID-19 safety concerns, the Guam Education Board has approved three models of instruction for School Year 2020-2021. All three models will be offered, and parents may select which model their child will participate in. The Model of Learning Registration Form allows parents to select which schedule option they would like to enroll their child in this year: (1) Home Learning Online Instruction; (2) Home Learning Hard Copy Curriculum; (3) Traditional Face-to-Face (involving an A-B-C cohort schedule where $\frac{1}{3}$ of the student population attends classes at any given time). This form should be submitted to each school by July 10, 2020, or as soon as possible.

After I turn in my child's Model of Learning Registration Form, am I able to change the model of instruction my child is enrolled in?

- Yes. Changing a student's model of instruction will be difficult for both schools and students, especially if changes are made in the middle of the quarter. However, parents are able to change their child's model of learning by coordinating with their child's school directly.

How will home learning online classes be conducted?

- Students will attend a live video conference with their teacher a minimum of one and maximum of three times per week via either Zoom or Google Meet. Correspondence between students and teachers will be done through email, phone, Google Classroom and/or Moodle. Students will receive their coursework and instructions from their teachers to be completed by the given deadline. The online learning model encourages and enforces independent learning and work.

How will home learning hard copy curriculum be conducted?

- Students will pick up hard copy learning packets from their school/teacher each week, similar to the Grab & Learn distribution that took place in Spring 2020 and over the summer. Students will receive their coursework and instructions from their teachers to be completed by the given deadline. Hard copy assignments will be returned to each student's teacher for grading. The home learning hard copy model encourages and enforces independent learning and work.

How will the traditional face-to-face ABC model be conducted?

- Students will be placed into one of three ABC groups. They will attend class on an alternating schedule from Monday through Thursday. Fridays will be designated student interventions and parent support days. On days when students are not physically on campus, they will have assignments, projects or activities to complete and submit when they return. These assignments, projects, or activities can be provided and completed electronically or through hard copy depending on students' access to equipment and the internet. All periods will fall on the same day and there is no alternating block schedule.

How will the ABC groups be determined?

- Students will be grouped alphabetically by last name. Parents may request that their child(ren) be placed in the same group.

What support will GDOE be offering to help parents who are educating their children at home through the home learning options or face-to-face off days?

- GDOE will be offering support to all students and parents every Friday. Each child, regardless of the instructional model they are enrolled in, will have a dedicated teacher for their course or classes. Every Friday, teachers will be available to support parents and students with any issues or questions they may have regarding the week's assignments and materials. This support may be provided over the phone or online.

What do I need to do if my child is sick with COVID-19 symptoms?

- If your child has any symptoms of COVID-19 (fever, shortness of breath, cough, loss of taste or smell), do not bring your child to school. Please inform the school nurse and teacher right away so they can monitor other students in the class for symptoms. Students with symptoms of COVID-19 should be tested and cleared before returning to school. If your child tests positive for COVID-19, please inform the school right away.

What if I need to pick up my child to go to an appointment?

- Any time a parent/guardian visits a school, they are asked to call the office to coordinate ahead of time. This will allow the school to ensure safety protocols are in place. Parents may be asked to remain in their cars depending on the size of the school office.

For incoming kindergarten, 6th and 9th grade students, if parents opt for online or hard copy home learning, do students still need to have physical exams and TB shots completed?

- Yes, these are still required.

Am I required to purchase uniforms for my child this year?

- No. The Guam Education Board suspended the uniform policy this school year to help parents who may be struggling financially. While uniforms are not mandatory, they are optional for those who prefer to use them. Schools will provide dress code guidelines for those opting not to wear the uniforms.

How will the busing situation be different this year?

- Additional safety measures will be put in place on school buses. The Department of Public Works is currently working with the Physicians Advisory Group to determine final safety protocols for busing operations. Masks will be required on the school bus.

What social and emotional wellness resources is GDOE able to offer my child?

- Social and emotional resources for parents and students are available at <https://www.gdoe.net/District/Portal/social-and-emotional-wellness>. If you believe your child is in need of further support, please contact your child's school counselor for social and emotional screening, the Guam Behavioral Health and Wellness Center at 647-5440, or contact your health insurance provider for the listing of available therapists in private practice. Families may also contact the Guam Crisis Hotline at 647-8833.

How will my child's clubs/organizations be affected?

- Clubs/organizations may proceed as usual with consideration of physical distancing procedures. Activities are limited to less than 25 people. Restrictions may either be lifted or become tighter as the year progresses. Club standard operating procedures and activities are also dependent on each school's administration.

Will service learning still be required for graduation?

- GDOE is moving to waive this requirement, but this has yet to be approved by legislature.

How will students practice physical distancing during lunch?

- Students will either practice physical distancing in the cafeteria or eat their lunch in their classrooms. Students will transition as usual and with the potential for increased rules and guidelines provided by each school. The decreased number of students on campus will assist with physical distancing.

Will students be taught the new safety procedures at school?

- Yes. Students will have to learn the new safety protocols during the first week of classes.

How will sports be affected in the new school year?

- The GDOE Interscholastic Sports Association (ISA) has been meeting to determine the safe opening of sports this school year. The ISA Board of Control has determined a modified sports schedule that identifies high risk, medium risk and low risk sports, and which would potentially allow for low risk sports such as cross country to resume in the first quarter. However, the final determination on the modified schedule will depend on guidance from Public Health and the Governor's Executive Orders. At this time, no practices are being conducted for first quarter sports.

SPECIAL EDUCATION FAQ's FOR PARENTS

Questions and Answers: Determining and Implementing Your Child's Special Education Program

What is GDOE's obligation to my child during the COVID-10 pandemic?

- Your child's school continues to be required to provide a Free Appropriate Public Education (FAPE), in accordance with the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA). FAPE must be provided consistent with the need to protect the health and safety of students with disabilities and those individuals providing education services to these students. When the Guam Department of Education provides educational services to the general student population, such as through distance learning, it must provide comparable opportunities to students with disabilities, tailored to their individual needs, to the greatest extent possible.

How can we make changes to the IEP if we are not allowed to meet in person?

- The IDEA and State law regarding special education allows parents and school personnel to agree to amend an IEP outside of an IEP meeting except when the purpose of the IEP meeting is to conduct an annual review of the IEP.

How will the IEP amendments be determined?

- You will be contacted by your child's IEP case manager or another member of the IEP team to discuss the services, supports, goals and objectives in your child's current IEP. Together, you will determine whether and how each of the parts of the IEP can be implemented during the school closure and in light of the current Island wide restrictions that have resulted from the Governor's Stay at Home Order. It is possible that the services provided and the frequency of the services may change from how they were delivered when schools were in session. Your input is very important in this process. The IEP can be amended outside of an IEP meeting with your agreement. Once you agree, the IEP may be implemented immediately. You will not be required to provide written consent when you agree to amendments outside of an IEP meeting. You have the right to request a formal IEP meeting if you are uncomfortable with the informal discussion for any reason.

What if my child was in the process of being evaluated before school buildings closed?

- If the evaluations can be done remotely the team may continue to complete them and move forward with determining eligibility if you provide written consent. Be prepared that the process may have to be delayed until school can resume. If assessments are needed that require face-to-face interaction with your child and there is not enough data to determine eligibility without those assessments, the team should note this and complete the process once schools reopen.

What do I do if my child's circumstances have really changed (e.g., new behaviors)?

- You should share your concerns with your child's IEP case manager or other school staff that is working with your child. If you and the school staff agree to make additions or changes to the IEP to address the child's needs, that can be done through an amendment. If necessary, an IEP meeting can be called to address these concerns during this time if you and the school staff cannot agree on how to amend the IEP. In addition, when school resumes the IEP team, including you, will meet to discuss any concerns you have including any changes or additional needs your child may have developed during the time that school buildings were closed.

With the three (3) proposed learning models how does it change the role of the 1:1 aide?

- The role of the aide will remain the same as a support to the assigned student and teacher. It would be the delivery of supports that would change to align with the learning modality.

Where can I get help if I have more questions?

- You should seek the help of each school administrator and the Division of Special Education office. The Division of Special Education Office may be reached at 300-1322 or via email at sped@gdoe.net.