



# Gulf Shores City Schools Safe Return to School 2021-2022

Dear Parents and Students,

We are excited about the start of the 2021-22 school year. Although we faced many challenges last year, the opportunities for our students continue to grow. We have continued to expand our curriculum by offering Spanish in grades K-5, robotics and STEAM classes at the middle school, and financial literacy and aviation classes at the high school. We also have continued to improve our facilities by adding outdoor classrooms, STEAM labs, robotics labs, a music lab, a sensory room, and improved athletic facilities for female and male athletes.

School will start on August 11, and we hope that this year will resemble a more typical school year with face-to-face awards ceremonies, field trips, and pep rallies. Rigorous and engaging learning experiences will continue to be offered in a traditional face-to-face format. Our K-12 virtual program will continue to be an instructional option for qualified students; admission requirements can be found on our website at [www.gsboe.org](http://www.gsboe.org). We understand that you may have many questions about the upcoming school year; therefore, we have provided you with as much information as possible in our 2021-2022 Safe Return to School plan. Please note that this plan is subject to change as the circumstances surrounding Covid-19 evolve and guidance from the Alabama Department of Public Health and Alabama State Department of Education is updated. We will keep you apprised of any changes. If you have any questions or concerns, please do not hesitate to reach out to me directly by calling my office (251) 968-9873 or sending me an email at [makin@gsboe.org](mailto:makin@gsboe.org).

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Matt Akin".

Dr. Matt Akin, Superintendent

## Instructional Delivery: Traditional School

- Students in grades preK-12 have the option to attend classes in a traditional, on-campus setting.
- Each school will continue to offer a rigorous and diverse selection of courses including Spanish in grades K-12, Gulf Coast Ecology, aviation, robotics, engineering, Rising Tide, fine arts, financial literacy, and more. Additionally, students will have access to new learning spaces such as STEAM labs, outdoor classrooms, a sensory room, and a music lab.
- Teachers will deliver face-to-face instruction but also maintain content and assignments online for possible short-term absences by students due to COVID-19 exposure or infection. Teachers will use Canvas as the online platform for maintaining assignments. For students who must be out of school for short periods of time, our goal is to provide a seamless transition from the traditional classroom to a temporary online environment.
- Teachers will use STAR, iReady, and/or ACT assessments to monitor learning. Learning gaps will be addressed by classroom teachers, interventionists, and tutors through face-to-face whole group and/or small group instruction as well as personalized digital resources. Professional learning opportunities will be provided for staff to assist in improving student achievement.

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## Instructional Delivery: Virtual Education

Eligible students in grades K-12 have the option to remain at home and attend classes online. Virtual education is a rigorous text-based instructional program; characteristics of successful virtual education students include high levels of motivation, independent style of learning, and on-grade level skills in reading, math, science, and social studies. It is extremely important that students who participate in virtual education have access to regular adult instructional support at home. Our goal is to ensure that students have a highly successful school year. Therefore, we have reinstated the Gulf Shores Virtual Academy admission requirements which are posted on our website at [www.gsboe.org](http://www.gsboe.org). Students who select the virtual education option will be required to participate in this program for a minimum of one school year. Students with an Individualized Education Plan, Gifted Education Plan, 504 Plan, and/or English Language Learner Plan will receive approved accommodations.

### Gulf Shores Elementary Virtual Program Grades K-5

- Instruction in core courses will be provided by dedicated virtual education teachers using a combination of digital and traditional curricula combined with teacher led instruction that is delivered through videoconferencing technology. All course components will be organized in an online learning management system.
- While students are permitted to work ahead in their online courses, they are expected, at a minimum, to complete all assignments on time and to participate in scheduled, small group videoconferencing sessions 1-5 days per week.
- Participation in online courses including required videoconferencing sessions will be monitored, and attendance will be taken. Students who fall behind in their coursework and/or do not maintain adequate attendance may be required to attend traditional school for the remainder of the year.
- Students are required to take tests associated with their courses as well as annual state mandated standardized tests on campus.
- Elementary students have the option of participating in weekly face-to-face or virtual enrichment activities such as art, music, physical education, and Spanish at Gulf Shores Virtual Academy located at the City of Gulf Shores Cultural Center.
- Eligible K-5 students can participate in after-school clubs at Gulf Shores Elementary School.
- Teachers will use STAR, iReady, and/or ACT assessments to monitor learning. Learning gaps will be addressed by classroom teachers, interventionists, and/or tutors through face-to-face whole group and/or small group instruction as well as personalized digital resources. Tutoring will be available via videoconferencing and by appointment in a face-to-face format at Gulf Shores Virtual Academy.

### Gulf Shores Virtual Academy Grades 6-12

- Instruction in core courses, electives, and Advanced Placement courses will be provided by virtual education teachers and delivered in an online format utilizing ACCESS Virtual Learning and locally developed curricula. Click [here](#) for *online* course offerings.
- Eligible high school students will have the opportunity to take 18 hours of tuition free dual enrollment classes at the Gulf Shores campus of Coastal Alabama Community College. Online dual enrollment classes with reduced tuition fees are available through Auburn University, the University of Alabama, and the University of South Alabama (*pending Board approval*).
- While students are permitted to work ahead in their virtual academy courses, they are expected, at a minimum, to complete all assignments on time. Based on student performance, some students in grades 6-12 will be required to participate in scheduled, small group videoconferencing sessions 1-5 days per week.
- Participation in online courses including required videoconferencing sessions will be monitored, and attendance will be taken. Students who fall behind in their coursework and/or do not maintain adequate attendance may be required to attend traditional school for the remainder of the year.
- Students are required to take tests associated with their courses as well as annual state mandated standardized tests on campus.
- Eligible 6-12 students can participate in clubs and athletics (if applicable) at their base school. Please note that most, but not all of the online high school courses have been approved by the National Collegiate Athletic Association.
- Teachers will use STAR, iReady, and/or ACT assessments to monitor learning. Learning gaps will be addressed by classroom teachers, interventionists, and/or tutors through face-to-face whole group and/or small group instruction as well as personalized digital resources. Tutoring will be available via videoconferencing and by appointment in a face-to-face format at Gulf Shores Virtual Academy.



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<b>Air Quality</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>HVAC systems on all school campuses will be upgraded in order to improve air quality and reduce the spread of germs.</li> </ul>
<b>Arrival/Dismissal &amp; After School Care</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Pre-Covid arrival and dismissal procedures will be reinstated.</li> <li>After school care will continue to be provided at the elementary and middle schools.</li> </ul>
<b>Assemblies, Club Activities, Athletics, &amp; Field Trips</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Field trips, pep rallies, assemblies, club activities, and award ceremonies will be reinstated in accordance with guidance from the Alabama Department of Public Health (ADPH).</li> <li>Athletic events will be scheduled and regulated in accordance with guidance provided by the Alabama High School Athletic Association.</li> </ul>
<b>Child Nutrition Program</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Cafeterias and outside dining areas will be used.</li> <li>A contactless payment system will be used for breakfast and lunch.</li> <li>Cafeteria tables will be sanitized between each lunch period.</li> <li>Water fountains and water bottle filling stations will be available for students to use.</li> <li>The Child Nutrition Program will continue to provide meals during the summer to children in accordance with guidance provided by the Alabama State Department of Education.</li> </ul>
<b>Cleaning and Disinfecting of Buildings</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Hospital grade sanitizer and disinfectant will be used for all routine cleanings.</li> <li>High touch areas including desks, door handles/knobs, and water fountains/bottle fill stations will be disinfected throughout the day.</li> </ul>
<b>Face Coverings</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>In accordance with guidance from ADPH, face coverings are not required.</li> </ul>
<b>Hand Hygiene and Respiratory Etiquette</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Students and staff are encouraged to wash hands frequently with soap and water.</li> <li>Hand sanitizer stations will be placed throughout each school and in each classroom.</li> <li>Respiratory etiquette including covering one's mouth with a tissue or elbow rather than one's hands will be encouraged.</li> </ul>
<b>Physical Education and Recess</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Dressing out for PE will be reinstated.</li> <li>Gyms and outside areas will be used for physical education activities.</li> <li>Playground equipment, weights, and other items used for PE/recess will be sanitized regularly.</li> </ul>
<b>Public Input and Plan Review</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>During the development of this plan, public input was encouraged and considered. This plan will be reviewed and revised no less frequently than every six months to ensure that it remains relevant and meets statutory and regulatory requirements. The plan is posted on our website at <a href="http://www.gsboe.org">www.gsboe.org</a>. Public input can be submitted at any time by clicking the <i>Public Input</i> button located near the plan. Additionally, input is regularly sought through school board meetings.</li> </ul>
<b>School Calendar</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>At this time, there are no changes to the school calendar. School will start for all students, traditional and virtual, on August 11, 2021.</li> <li>If schools are closed unexpectedly, students will take their school issued devices home, and learning will continue in an online format with instruction provided by the students' classroom teachers.</li> </ul>
<b>Social Distancing</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Per guidance from the ADPH, social distancing is not required.</li> </ul>
<b>Technology</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>All students in K-8 will be issued an iPad, and all students in 9-12 will be issued a MacBook.</li> <li>District provided hotspots are available to students who do not have Wi-Fi at home and who must miss school due to COVID-19.</li> </ul>

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<b>Transportation</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• School buses will operate normal routines.</li><li>• All school buses will have hand sanitizer available for students.</li><li>• Students will not have assigned seats.</li><li>• All buses will unload from front to back.</li><li>• All buses will be disinfected after each trip.</li></ul>
<b>Vaccinations</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• A COVID vaccination clinic was held on the school campus for all eligible staff members who elected to participate.</li><li>• A back-to school COVID vaccination clinic will be held on the school campus for all eligible students and staff members who elect to participate.</li></ul>
<b>Visitors</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Pre-COVID visitor procedures will be reinstated.</li></ul>
<b>Wellness Monitoring and Attendance</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Parents should check their child's temperature every morning and keep their child at home if the child has a temperature of 100.4 or higher.</li><li>• Parents should monitor their child for symptoms of COVID-19, including fever, cough, congestion, shortness of breath, difficulty breathing, loss of taste or smell, chills, or gastrointestinal symptoms every morning and keep their child at home if their child has any of these symptoms.</li><li>• Parents should notify the school nurse as soon as possible if their child is staying home from school due to COVID-19. The school nurse will coordinate the excuse of COVID-19 related absences, and these absences will not impact truancy.</li><li>• Any student who presents with COVID-19 symptoms during the school day will be quarantined until the student leaves campus.</li><li>• In the case of a positive COVID-19 test of a student or staff member, school officials will follow current guidance of ADPH and the Alabama State Department of Education (ALSDE).</li><li>• Social emotional health will be addressed by school guidance counselors as outlined in each school's guidance plan. Partnerships have been established with AltaPointe and The Bridge to provide additional on-campus mental health support for eligible students.</li></ul>

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