



2020-2021 REOPENING PLAN (Last updated - 11.5.20)

**Please be aware this document will be continuously updated based on the latest guidance from GaDOE and the Department of Public Health.*

Overview

Southwest Georgia STEM Charter School has continuously monitored federal, state, and local guidance regarding the COVID-19 pandemic. Some of the specific information that has been reviewed includes the Georgia Department of Education and Georgia Department of Public Health guidance, World Health Organization guidance, and CDC guidance. In addition to this guidance, Southwest Georgia STEM Charter School is constantly meeting with local and state health officials to ensure that our approach is in accordance with the most recent data available.

First Day of School

August 24, 2020 will be the first day of school. The school times for face-to-face instruction will be 8:00 am - 3:30 pm.

Learning Options

Two instructional models are available for students during the first quarter of school (and possibly beyond): **Hybrid Model** (face-to-face: Monday-Thursday with a Distance Learning Day on Friday) and **Full Distance Learning Model** (not at school). Parents/Guardians should have enrolled your student into one of the options prior to July 24, 2020 through the form offered to all parents - if you have not done so, please email drichter@sowegastemcharter.org to let us know your choice: Hybrid or Distance Learning. Every parent needs to remember to visit Southwest Georgia STEM Charter School's web page (under the Parents section) and join the school's FaceBook page to stay up to date on the latest information pertaining to reopening.

Option 1: Hybrid Model

Parents selecting Option 1 are choosing for their child to begin the school year with a return to in-person instruction on Monday-Thursday with a Distance Learning Day on Friday (not at school). While students are on campus Monday-Thursday, there will be several infection mitigation measures put into place. The Distance Learning Day on Friday will not require any new instruction, but will be focused on a writing assignment from your child's teacher(s).

The Hybrid model will require students to become familiar with the use of the distance learning platform (Google Classroom) while being in class each day and during Friday's Distance Learning Day because IF there is a significant increase in community spread or school spread of COVID-19, a school wide Distance Learning Model may be utilized. The degree of increased community spread will be based on data from the CDC and Department of Public Health.

In the event of increased community spread or school spread of COVID-19, school buildings may be closed to students and Southwest Georgia STEM Charter School's Distance Learning Model would be implemented. This Distance Learning Model was revised to incorporate lessons learned from our



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experience in the spring of 2020. All Pre-K-9th grade students will have a device to take home during a school closure.

Option 2: Full Distance Learning Model

Parents selecting Option 2 are choosing for their child to learn remotely from home. It is important that students and parents understand that remote learning for the 2020-21 school year will not be structured like distance learning from this past spring. Expectations in terms of attendance, grading, and accountability will be the same for those students participating in remote learning and in-person learning. Parent involvement is key to the success of the Full Distance Learning Model as students will need parental assistance during the remote learning school day. Please carefully read the information below as a significant commitment will be needed by both students and parents in order to facilitate successful remote learning.

For students who choose to begin the school year with the Full Distance Learning Model, must commit to the entire first quarter of school. Students enrolled in full-time distance learning can participate in most extracurricular activities at the school.

- Reliable internet access is required in order to participate in remote learning and a district-issued device is available for each student. If reliable internet access is an issue, please notify the school as soon as possible.
- Every student, regardless of grade level, will be expected to attend and adhere to the school board-approved academic calendar. Attendance will be recorded and assignments will be graded.
- Core academic courses (social studies, science, math, and language arts/reading) will be available for all grade levels. Students will also have access to specials, remediation and enrichment opportunities.
- Students will be taught according to the Georgia Standards of Excellence and grades will be based on academic performance.
- The school district will remain responsible for the education of students eligible for special education services with an individualized education program (IEP) that opt for remote learning. Because remote learning may affect how special education and related services are provided, the student's IEP team will work to develop a temporary Distance Learning Support Plan for students with IEPs.
- Students who are eligible for additional support services will be contacted to discuss a plan.
- Students will be responsible for adhering to the procedures and guidelines of Southwest Georgia STEM Charter School's Technology Usage Agreement.



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Grades K-9

Students choosing to begin the school year with the Full Distance Learning Plan will be enrolled into a Google Classroom monitored by a Southwest Georgia STEM Charter School teacher. Curriculum will be aligned with grade level standards. Other programs, such as Freckle Reading and Math, USATestPep, Lexia Core 5, and Pearson Online will be utilized as well. Classroom participation will be required as part of the Full Distance Learning option. Students must remain in distance learning throughout the first quarter of school. Transition back to a traditional face-to-face learning schedule may be requested at the end of the first quarter of school.

Gifted/Early Intervention Program Instruction

Gifted services and Early Intervention Program instruction will be provided within the Google Classroom for those students who have been identified as such.

Grading

Southwest Georgia STEM Charter School teachers will assign grades for all students.

Meal Service

We are currently working on a plan for meal service to happen once per week for all Full Distance Learning students - by request only. During this one-time per week pick up at the school, 5 days worth of meals (breakfast and lunch will be offered) will be bagged and distributed to each of the identified students in the lunchroom pick-up line.

Action Plan for Instruction (primarily Hybrid Model)

Details are below and organized alphabetically by topic

Attendance

All perfect attendance awards, school monthly attendance awards, and all other attendance incentives will be waived for the 2020-21 school year. Southwest Georgia STEM Charter School cannot completely waive truancy requirements per Georgia law. However, Southwest Georgia STEM Charter School will work with parents to resolve attendance issues.

For Full Distance Learners, students will have to log into Google Classroom each day by 12:00pm to be counted present.

Cafeteria

Students in Pre-K and Kindergarten will eat in the cafeteria. All other grade levels will receive a tray with a closed lid that will be taken back to the classroom for designated lunch times or eat their lunch from home in the classroom. Cafeteria staff will be screened daily for COVID-19 symptoms and will continue to practice appropriate safety precautions (mask, gloves, etc.).



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Contact Tracing

Individuals (employees or students) who meet the Georgia Department of Public Health's contact tracing guidelines will be notified by the school system. In addition, individuals in a classroom where someone has tested positive for COVID-19 will be notified and encouraged to contact their healthcare provider. Due to privacy laws, individuals with COVID-19 will not be identified, and we ask that others not speculate about such instances. Southwest Georgia STEM Charter School will not dictate any testing requirements for students or staff. Those decisions are to be made by the individuals, the Department of Public Health and/or medical professionals based on the individual's circumstances and symptoms.

*Added - 9/5/20: There will be markers in the classrooms for teachers to remain at least 6 ft. away for the students at all times. Teachers will also be mindful of the time that they are attending to the students in the classroom and be limited to 5 minutes at each students' seat. This will help use to be absolutely certain that we are adhering to DPH guidelines and make contact tracing more reliable for all.

Devices

Southwest Georgia STEM Charter School will be checking out Chromebooks for all students at the beginning of the school year. Those devices will be allowed to be taken home in grades K-9th grade at any time during the normal school year.

Drop-Off

Each morning during drop-off at the school, only the Pre-Kindergarten students may be dropped off at the "yellow building." A staff member will check their temperature and send them into the building if they do not have a fever (100.4 or higher is considered a fever). Parents must wait until their child is "clear" before driving off. All other students will be dropped off at the Main Building drop-off point, where a staff member will check their temperature as well.

Employees

All employees at Southwest Georgia STEM Charter School will be required to return to work on August 3, 2020 unless a medical diagnosis of an underlying health condition prohibits them from returning. Administration will work with those teachers to provide distance learning instruction to students and other staff members as necessary.

Employees will be provided guidelines and procedures regarding:

- What to do if they are symptomatic/test positive for COVID-19
- What to do if they are in close contact with a person with COVID-19
- Contact Tracing
- Return-to-Work Protocol
- Employee Paid Sick Leave Act (EPSLA)
- Emergency Family and Medical Leave Expansion Act (EFMLEA)



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Extracurricular Activities (Including Athletics)

The continuation of athletics are determined in large part by the Georgia High School Association (GHSA). Most available athletics and other extracurricular activities will be available to students regardless if they are enrolled in the traditional or remote learning instructional models

Field Trips

Field trips will not occur during the first quarter of school. State and local guidance will be utilized in making decisions beyond this point.

First Day of School

Parents dropping off students the first day will be limited to one parent or guardian per student. Parents are our most important visitors and we understand their desire to have that moment with their child. We ask that parents wear a mask if they wish to walk their child to class and drop them off at the classroom door. Parents will not be able to walk their child to class beyond the first day of school.

Illness at School

It is imperative the parents do their part and check their child for symptoms and do not send them to school if they are sick. If a child is running a fever or exhibiting other COVID-19 symptoms, a parent will be contacted to pick up the child. Temperature checks will be conducted by the bus monitors before allowing students on buses and by staff who have drop-off duty at the school each morning before allowing the students to enter the school. Students with COVID-19 symptoms will be separated - in the nurses station - while waiting for their parents.

Internet Access

If reliable internet access is an issue, please notify the school as soon as possible.

Masks

Masks are strongly encouraged anytime social distancing isn't possible. Students and staff are allowed to provide their own mask or one will be provided for them if needed.

Media Center

We will not check out any books during the first quarter of school. We will adjust after the first quarter depending on the situation.

Meet the Teacher/Open House

Southwest Georgia STEM Charter School will not have one large open house this school year. A schedule will be shared that allows for a face-to-face meeting - with student, parent(s), and teacher - of students in Pre-K, Kindergarten, and 1st grade, as well as all students who are new to Southwest Georgia STEM Charter School. Grades 2-9 (with the exception of students new to the school) will host a virtual Meet the Teacher/Open House. Open House is available for all students - no matter which model (Hybrid or Full Distance) they choose. Exact dates and times will be posted at a later date.



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Quarantining

Based on Georgia Department of Public Health Guidelines, protocol is as follows:

Symptomatic persons with confirmed or suspected COVID-19 may return to work or school after all of the following have occurred:

- At least 10 days have passed since symptoms first appeared
- At least 3 days (72 hours) have passed since recovery, defined as resolution of fever without the use of fever-reducing medications
- Improvement in respiratory symptoms (e.g., cough, shortness of breath)

Asymptomatic persons with confirmed COVID-19 may return to work or school after:

- At least 10 days have passed since the positive laboratory test (and the person remains asymptomatic)

Asymptomatic persons who have a known exposure to an individual with a confirmed case of COVID-19 without appropriate personal protective equipment (PPE), in close contact as defined above, may return to work or school after:

- A 14-day home quarantine period has ended - This means that if a parent has COVID-19, the child must be quarantined at home for 14 days.

During quarantine, a student will be able to use Google Classroom to access instruction and assignments, so they do not fall behind.

Recess

Outdoor play is essential for elementary students. Therefore, schools will stagger the number of classes at recess at any given time and will spread out classes on the playground where appropriate to allow for social distancing.

Safety Protocols

To mitigate the spread of infection and viruses, the following measures will be put in place:

- Staff and students are agreeing that by virtue of coming to school, they do not have a fever above 100.4 and do not have any symptoms of illness. It is imperative the parents do their part and check their child for symptoms and do not send them to school if they have a fever.
- A mask will be provided to all staff and students if requested.
- All staff will be encouraged to wear masks when other social distancing measures are difficult to maintain.
- Students will also be encouraged to wear masks.
- All bus riders will be required to wear masks.
- Bus riders will be assigned seats on buses.



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- Social distancing will occur when possible.
- Enhanced hand-washing and sanitizing protocols will be in place.
- School buildings will be thoroughly cleaned on a daily basis.
- Student numbers will be reduced in the cafeteria during breakfast/lunch when possible.
- Outside visitors will be restricted at this time.
- A chemical disinfection dispenser will be under lock and key in the janitorial closet. The dispenser will premix CDC approved disinfectant that kills the virus on surfaces. All custodians will be trained to use the dispenser and cleaner. (serviced through Cintas)
- Water fountains will not be operational. Students are encouraged to bring their own labeled water bottles from home.
- Every classroom will have a hand sanitizer station. Hand sanitizer stations will also be in common areas of the school (serviced by Cintas)
- Transitions will be minimized and coordinated at the school level. 3rd - 9th grade teachers will rotate to the different classrooms rather than having students transition to the different classrooms. Transitions will be necessary to allow students to go to specials (media/art, technology, STEM, and PE).
- School pick-ups and bus dismissal will be adjusted to minimize hallway congregating after school.
- School supplies will not be shared among students - label as much as possible.
- Middle/high students will not be allowed to use lockers during the first quarter of school. Because the students will remain in the same classroom for all instruction, they will be able to keep their supplies in the classroom with them at all times.
- Seating will be assigned within classrooms with as much social distancing as possible.

Social Distancing

The following steps will be implemented to provide social distancing wherever possible:

- Flexible seating is being adjusted to provide the maximum possible spacing between student desks.
- Desks will face the same direction and will not be clustered together.
- There will be hallway markers to streamline hallway traffic and to limit congregating in common areas.
- Social distance markers will be in the cafeteria line and in the main lobby.
- Students will be distanced in cafeterias as much as possible.
- Teachers will be encouraged to take their classes outside - weather permitting - as much as possible for instruction.
- Any small group instruction occurring will not involve shared toys or supplies. Students will be as distanced as possible and masked are encouraged anytime you cannot be more than six feet away from someone.



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Special Education

Southwest Georgia STEM Charter School remains committed to providing students eligible for special education services with an individualized education program (IEP) that opt for full distance learning. Since instruction will be very different in the Full Distance Learning option compared to the Hybrid Model option, each IEP team will develop a temporary Distance Learning Support Plan for students with IEPs.

Specials/Connections Classes

Specials classes (Media/Art, Technology, STEM, and PE) will be offered to students each day with preventive measures in place.

Transportation

As students will not be socially distanced on buses, students and staff are required to wear masks. In addition, students will be assigned seats.

Visitors

At this time, we are unable to accommodate visitors in the cafeteria or in the classrooms. We will still be glad to set up parent-teacher meetings as needed after school hours (in-person or virtually).