

# GEMS

# Family Handbook

2020 - 2021

# Hybrid Start to School

**Revised: 09/18/20**



4416 Ethan Allen Highway  
St. Albans, VT 05478  
802-524-6358

<https://www.gemsvt.org>

<b>Link to Complete GEMS Handbook</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>FWSU Guidance Document for Families</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Personal Protective Equipment</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Health Screening</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Student Arrival</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>Vehicle</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>Bus</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>Student Dismissal</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>Student Drop-Off &amp; Pick-up Outside of Arrival and Dismissal Times</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>Visitors</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>Building Use</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>Hygiene</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>Physical Distancing</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>Lockers</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>Recess</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>Meals</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>Remote Learning</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>Field Trips and Contracted Services</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>Bathrooms</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>Water Fountains</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>Cleaning and Disinfecting</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>Attendance</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>Communal Space</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>Behavior Expectations</b>	<b>8</b>
<b>After School Programming</b>	<b>8</b>
<b>Athletics and Activities</b>	<b>8</b>

## Link to Complete GEMS Handbook

The complete Georgia School Family Handbook can be found here:

[https://docs.google.com/document/d/1C-Uy9V9F5eZ9sQ3sMXa7EDeJUU40dW8yfk\\_e9CFSJF4/edit](https://docs.google.com/document/d/1C-Uy9V9F5eZ9sQ3sMXa7EDeJUU40dW8yfk_e9CFSJF4/edit)

Paper copies will be available upon request.

## [FWSU Guidance Document for Families](#)

### Personal Protective Equipment

All students in grades PreK to 12, as well as staff, will be required to wear a facial covering (mask) while in the building and on the bus. As of 08/11/20 the Center for Disease Control (CDC) does **not** recommend use of **face shields** for normal everyday activities or as a substitute for cloth face coverings.

Neck Gaiters are permitted if they are at least 2 layers. Please provide a note from your child's doctor if there is a medical reason your child cannot wear a facial covering, and contact the school. We request that all students bring, and carry three(3) clean and dry masks or neck gaiters with them to school each day. The school will provide masks to those who need them.

### Health Screening

Each morning, students and staff will be required to complete a health screening in order to enter the building. Daily Health Screenings will require a temperature screen (must be lower than 100.4 degrees Fahrenheit). Students delivered by personal vehicles will be required to successfully complete a temperature screen prior to exiting the vehicle. Everyone in the vehicle must be wearing a mask during this temperature check.

Per the Vermont Department of Health guidelines students with any of the following symptoms: fever, cough, shortness of breath, sore throat, a new lack of smell or taste, nausea, vomiting, diarrhea, fatigue, muscle aches or headache should NOT be attending school until symptoms improve or resolve without the use of medication.

### Student Arrival

*We will be unable to accommodate early drop-off's, please arrive at 8:00.*

#### Vehicle Arrival

All vehicles must enter the upper parking lot in a single file line, pass through the Health Screening Station, and drop students off at Designated Drop Off Stations along the fire lane.

- Designated Drop Off Stations:

- Drop-Off Station 1: Grades 2 through 8 between the Main Office Stairs and the Middle School Entrance
- Drop-Off Station 2: PreK to Grade 1 between the Main Office and the preschool playground
- Exiting Traffic please be mindful of pedestrians

Bus Riders:

Students will be assigned seats on the bus. Students will ride one student per seat on the bus and be required to maintain physical distance from others, as well as wearing a mask.

Families/siblings will be allowed to sit together. Elementary students will sit in the front section of the bus, Middle School students will sit in the back of the bus.

Busses will begin unloading in the lower parking lot where the guardrails are located and continue to unload around the back entrance to the school by the 3/4 playground. We will complete the Health Screening for bus riders as they exit the bus. Students who show signs of symptoms will be held in the nurse's office isolation space until someone can come pick them up.

- Bus Unloading Station 1: PreK students will unload at the preschool playground gate
- Bus Unloading Station 2: Grades K-1 will unload at the First grade exit by 1/2 playground.
- Bus Unloading Station 3: Grades 2 - 8 will unload behind the school and enter through the Main lobby back doors (by the Grades 2 - 4 bathrooms).

Entering the Building/Classroom

***Reminder: K-8 Parents are NOT allowed to enter the school building to drop-off their student(s).*** We will have a variety of staff supporting students to successfully transition into their classrooms at arrival.

Students must continue to wear their mask. They will be given hand sanitizer upon entering the building and will go directly to their classroom. As soon as students enter their classrooms, they will wash their hands and bring their belongings to the designated area.

## Student Dismissal

Students Exiting the Building

Dismissal will be staggered to allow for physical distancing measures.

Staff will lead each class out to the bus line or for pick up purposes (for Elementary grades)

Bus Riders (Fire Lane)

The buses will line up single file along the fire lane in front of our main office.

Students will use hand sanitizer upon entering the bus

Students will remain in their assigned seats (see Arrivals)

### Parent/Guardian Pick-Up (In lower parking by guard rails)

All vehicles **must park** in the lower parking lot. Parents will need to exit their vehicle and practice social distancing along the sidewalk to pick up their students

- PreK to Grade 4 students will be in the 1/2 playground area inside the fencing with a staff member for sign out. Classroom teacher names will be posted on the fence for you to locate your child.
- Students grades 5 - 8 will be outside of the fenced in area to await their ride and DO NOT have to be signed out.

## Student Drop-Off & Pick-up Outside of Arrival and Dismissal Times

*A Note on Appointments: We ask that, whenever possible, families adjust appointments during this period of Hybrid Learning to take place on students' off-site days in order to minimize disruption to student learning.*

### Early Dismissal

If you are picking your child up early, please send a note with your child with the time that you will need to pick up your student. Please allow as much advance notice as possible. Last minute adjustments will be difficult. When you arrive at school please drive up the fire lane and remain in your vehicle by the Main Office Entrance and call the office, we will send your student out to you.

### Late arrivals:

Parents/Guardians will drive up to the fire lane and park your vehicle outside of the Main Office Entrance and call the school's main office at (802) 524-6358. A staff member will meet you at your vehicle to complete the Health Screening. (Please read the Health Screening and Vehicle Arrival Sections above). Students delivered by personal vehicles will be required to successfully complete a temperature screen prior to exiting the vehicle. Everyone in the vehicle must be wearing a mask during this temperature check.

## Visitors

In compliance with the AOE Guidelines, visitors, including family, will not be allowed into the building until further notice. If a virtual meeting is not possible and you need to enter the building, you must schedule a meeting in advance to ensure that we have an appropriate space in which to safely conduct the meeting. Any visitors that are entering the building must complete a health screening and sign in on the contact log.

## Building Use

Due to current health and safety guidelines and protocols, requests for building and facility use by non-school groups will not be considered until further notice.

## Hygiene

Throughout the day, students will be asked to wash hands or sanitize. According to the AOE, those times are, “arrival, after snack, lunch, breakfast, after playing outside, after sensory play, before and after bathroom use, prior to and after switching rooms/locations, before and after handling facial coverings, before and after cleaning.”

Due to the frequent use of sanitizer and handwashing, lotion will be helpful to prevent dry skin and available in most learning spaces.

## Physical Distancing

To keep classes as small as possible, we will be returning to school in a Hybrid Model with half of our students in the building for in-person instruction on Monday/Tuesday and the second half of our students in the building for Thursday/Friday.

Classrooms will be configured with desks (when possible) and will separate students as far as possible. Clear dividers will be used when physical distancing is not possible and to allow small group interactions. Hallway traffic will be directed with visuals on the floor to help with distancing and direction.

Classes will have designated outside spaces on the grounds for “mask breaks” throughout the day. This is space when students will be able to remove their masks as long as they can maintain appropriate physical distance. Teachers will have discretion when to use these spaces.

## Lockers

In order to reduce congestion and allow clear passage through hallways, we will not be assigning lockers for students at this time. Students will need to carry their belongings (books, coats, technology...) with them throughout the day.

## Recess

Every grade will have recess each day. Each classroom will have a designated zone on the grounds. To minimize the risk of spreading COVID-19, students will be asked to stay within their zone at recess. Masks are required during recess unless we can ensure that students can safely maintain required physical distancing. Students will be asked to wash their hands before and after recess.

## Meals

All snacks and meals will be consumed in classrooms according to the AOE’s Safe, Strong Start guidelines. Students will be asked to clean their desks and wash their hands prior to food consumption. Breakfast and lunch will be available at school through our foodservice, Genuine

Foods. Students can continue to bring meals from home, if preferred. Students will have school meals delivered to the classroom. Lunches will be handed out in each room. Students will be asked to wash their hands after they are finished eating. When possible, classes could choose to eat outdoors to allow for more space. A reminder, some of our students have food allergies so your classroom teacher may communicate with you regarding their classroom as Nut Safe.

## Remote Learning

As the year progresses, there could come a time where learning must shift to all remote. Teachers will work with our students at the start of the year building and practicing habits, schedules and routines to be successful during off-site learning times, as well as practicing online applications to help with remote learning. Those applications will be used throughout the year to help kids transition easier if remote learning is necessary.

## Field Trips and Contracted Services

Per AOE Guidance, no outside visitors and volunteers, except for employees or contracted services for special education or required services, are permitted. At this point, we have no plans to schedule field trips.

## Bathrooms

Classrooms will have scheduled bathroom times and additional bathroom visits will be allowed as needed. Students should use hand sanitizer upon entering the bathroom and wash their hands after using the bathroom before returning to the classroom. Bathrooms will be cleaned frequently throughout the day.

## Water Fountains

Students are required to have water bottles to stay hydrated throughout the day. There are bottle filling stations throughout the building.

## Cleaning and Disinfecting

All students and staff will be asked to: washing hands frequently, wiping down desks, sanitizing hands, wearing a mask or face covering. High use items will be sanitized regularly throughout the day and items not able to be disinfected regularly will not be used as a group. Students will have their own set of learning tools, when necessary.

## Attendance

Teachers will take attendance daily.

### In-person Days

They will mark students on their *in-person* days present or absent during that school day.

### Remote Day

Teachers will mark students on their *remote* days as present or absent, based upon the work completed and submitted by their next in-person day. If a student substantially completed *all* of their assigned remote learning assignments, their teacher will mark them as present for all remote days.

## Communal Spaces

According to the Vermont guidelines for reopening of schools, communal spaces will be closed or not used for intended purposes. Those spaces include the gymnasium, the cafeteria, the staff room, the library, the music room, the planning room. Communal spaces may be used for small group instruction, as needed.

## Behavior Expectations

Inappropriate behaviors and statements related to COVID-19 status or symptoms will be addressed according to our existing behavioral procedures and policies, including the FWSU Hazing, Harassment & Bullying Policies.

## After School Programming:

### Live Y'ers

After school programming will still continue to be offered. Students will only attend on their in-person days. There will be no program offered on Wednesdays.

## Athletics and Activities:

- GEMS athletic teams will begin practices no earlier than the week of September 14.
- Games played against other schools will not begin until Vermont schools are allowed to move to Step 3, per Vermont Agency of Education guidelines.
- Per AOE and VPA guidelines (<https://education.vermont.gov/documents/fall-sports-programs-for-the-2020-2021-school-year>), athletes, coaches, and officials must wear masks at all times, including during game play. ***The only exceptions are for cross country runners, who may remove masks when competing in races with staggered starts, and students with a documented medical exemption from wearing a mask.***
- **It is recommended that face coverings used for athletics be at least 2-ply.** Athletes are also encouraged to have multiple masks available during practices and games.
- Per Vermont State regulations on outdoor gathering size, as well as AOE and VPA guidelines, all spectators at events must wear a mask. Spectators are limited to a maximum of 150 per event.
- Specific practice and game schedules will be updated regularly and published on Schoology and TeamSnap.
- All other co-curricular activities will be implemented in the future as guidelines allow.