



# Gilmer County Schools

Dr. Brian Ridley, Superintendent

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Dear Parents,

We at the Gilmer County Schools have been monitoring and following recent increases in the spread of COVID-19 in Gilmer County and our surrounding communities. Unfortunately, current trends indicate that a significant increase in the number of COVID-19 cases in our community is imminent. Although our numbers of positive cases among students have remained extremely low, we have seen our number of quarantined students explode from 24 to over 160 in the first five days of school.

We understand that there is a tremendous amount of confusing and often contradictory information available from various sources regarding COVID-19 protection measures. Therefore, in preparation for this possibility, we have chosen to base our levels of response on specific metrics that are easy to comprehend and can be measured in real time.

The following indicators will serve as benchmarks that will trigger more restrictive action aimed at keeping our schools open and our students and staff safe.

**Staff Absences** – Schools cannot operate without staff regardless of the reason. Although staff are considered “essential workers” and can work with a mask after being exposed, a positive diagnosis will keep them out of school for a minimum of 10 days.

*Any school with a staff absence rate of 20% or more will be temporarily closed until sufficient staff can be made available.*

**Students in Quarantine** – Students learn most effectively when exposed to in person instruction. Our goal is to keep our schools open and preserve this opportunity for all students. To prevent excessive numbers of students in quarantine, various levels of mask mandates will be implemented based on current data.

8% Students in Quarantine District Wide – Masks will be required on all buses at all times.

10% Students in Quarantine District Wide – Masks will be required for all staff while inside buildings

15% Students in Quarantine District Wide – Masks will be required for all students inside buildings.

### **Additional Considerations**

A student quarantine rate of 15% or more at any individual school will serve as grounds to consider the closing of a specific grade level, program or school.

All central registration will be conducted through the drive through only.

The GCS is committed to continuing many of the prevention efforts from last year such as increased sanitation and cleaning in all buildings and disinfectant fogging of buses and classrooms.

We sincerely appreciate your support in our efforts to keep schools open and our students safe. Although the COVID-19 pandemic continues to present challenges to our community, I truly believe that, working together, we can move closer to a return to normalcy.

Thank you

**Dr. Brian Ridley**  
*Superintendent,*  
**Gilmer County Schools**

**Every Child, Every Opportunity, Every Day!**