To: Parents and Guardians

Re: Covid and Fall School Reopening

Included in this mailing is the Gardiner Schools Covid Reopening Plan approved by the Gardiner School Board of Trustees. It is the result of collaboration between the supervisors of all major areas of operation within the school, teachers, and parents in consideration of guidance supplied by The State of Montana, The Office of Public Instruction, The Montana School Board Association, The Park County Health Department, and other varying organizations. The plan sets a framework for how school would function on a daily basis for those parents/guardians choosing to send their children to school. The plan is subject to change as the Covid situation evolves and as guidance from the aforementioned organizations dictate.

In recognition of varying thoughts and feelings on the Covid pandemic, the school is deferring to the sources mentioned above in choosing its path. We recognize that some parents for varying reasons will choose to keep their students home, and we will work with those parents and families to ensure your students receive the best possible education and the education you have come to expect from Gardiner Schools. For those families choosing to send their children to school we will comply with the latest mandates and guidelines to keep your students as safe as possible and to mitigate risk arising from Covid.

Please review the plan thoroughly as to help you make your decision on whether to return your children to school or not. Understand that there will be some strict guidelines and expectations of both you and your child, two of the most relevant being:

- Masks will be required when physical distancing can not be maintained. This will occur on the bus, in hallways during the passing period, in the lunch line, and at times within the classroom depending on the activity being conducted (not at times where physical activity is expected such as PE and recess).
  - Please make sure students arrive to school and enter the building wearing a mask.
- Sick children will not be permitted at school. Any symptoms that can be related to Covid (see Covid-19 Checklist for Parents and Can My Child Go To School Today flowchart included in this mailing) will be cause for sending students home until a doctor’s note is provided clearing your student for return.

These are strict guidelines that will be enforced until circumstances change. However, instead of resulting in lost school time, students with symptoms will be expected to participate remotely in class until they are cleared by a doctor, symptoms go away, or they are otherwise able to attend school. If there are questions about any of the plans’ guidelines please contact Mr. Mike Baer at 406-848-7563.
Remote learning will not be the same as it was in the spring. The expectation will be that students attend their regularly scheduled classes remotely via google classroom. All materials will be provided by uploading them into google classroom or seesaw depending on grade level. Students will be expected to upload completed assignments. Text books and chromebooks as well as any other “hard supplies” will be provided by the school. For Junior High and High School students that will mean logging in every period to participate in class, and for elementary, teachers will send home a schedule of times where new instruction will be happening daily for students to log in to. This will allow their full participation in class and give them access to the education being provided by their teachers. Failure to attend will result in an absence. All the expectations of a Gardiner School student will apply.

Bussing is an area where we will not be able to offer the services we have provided in the past, especially on the valley route. Due to seating capacity and limited resources the valley route will be restricted to those students living on that route. Students will not be able to ride that route to go visit friends or to meet parents at stops where they do not reside. We will be in contact soon to ask for commitments for bus riding so we can ensure that we provide transportation for all of those qualified riders.

Communication is important, but never more so than now. The school will update parents as conditions change which is liable to be sudden and/or with no change for long periods of time. We ask that parents/guardians communicate as well. As your personal situations evolve, letting the school know of any changes in attendance is important in providing the quality education Gardiner School is used to supplying. In order to reduce confusion and to make sure the most timely and pertinent information is available the point of contact for all things Covid in the school will be Mr. Mike Baer, Superintendent 406-848-7563.

Normally we encourage parents to come to the school, volunteer, eat lunch with the students, and generally be around to witness the good things being done at Gardiner Schools. In light of reducing exposures, we are asking that parents limit their interactions with the school to doing business at the front office. This is not a normal year, and even though we would be remiss to not learn anything from this situation and to better our educational offering, we have to be mindful that this is temporary.

School will be starting shortly and as we plan for our school year it would be appreciated and useful to know for sure if your student(s) will be attending in person or remotely. Please contact the school and let Julie Rehmer or myself know by calling 406-848-7563, or emailing mbaer@gardiner.org or julie@gardiner.org.

Your efforts as parents have been greatly appreciated. We expect that there may be some hiccups along the way, and that some will be frustrated. The sooner and the more often and open communication occurs the better the chance of reducing some of those frustrations. We are here with you looking for solutions. Please feel free to contact me anytime with any questions or concerns. Mr. Mike Baer 406-848-7563 or mbaer@gardiner.org.
Gardiner Schools
Covid-19 Fall Reopening Plan
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Task Force Members

Pat Baltzley Board Chair  
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Julie Rehmer Admin. Asst.  
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Shelby Coy Transp. Super.  
Anna Holloway Kitchen Super.  
Carmen Harbach A.D.

The Gardiner School Covid Task Force has met with the goal of producing a plan that provides the quality education that the Gardiner community has come to expect while at the same time ensuring the safety of students and staff. These plans are produced with guidance from “The Governor’s Plan For Reopening Safe and Healthy Schools For Montana”, the Office of Public Instruction’s “Reopening Montana Schools Guidance; Putting Montana Students First”, direction from the Montana School Board Association, the Montana High School Association, and the Park County Health Department.

This plan is subject to change at the guidance of the aforementioned entities, as well, school administration has the ability to adjust this plan in emergency situations.

Remote learning is always a choice during this declared emergency. Parents have the choice to individually decide on using remote learning or not based on their own private circumstances. However, we ask that the choice not be made randomly from week to week based on personal issues. It is recognized however that as circumstances evolve in regards to the overall covid situation, or illness within a home, choices may need to change and we will honor those choices.

This plan has broken the school operations into four main components; Transportation, Facilities, Instruction, and Extra Curriculars.

Transportation
Gardiner Schools runs two routes (Mammoth and Valley) the Valley route extends from Point of Rocks north of Yankee Jim Canyon where highway 89 crosses the Yellowstone River to Trail Creek. The Mammoth route covers both upper and lower Mammoth. The Valley route services roughly 50-60 (56+ current count) students daily while Mammoth services approximately 25-27(35 current count)students. Several students that ride the Valley route, or come to school with their parents in the morning, ride the Mammoth route in the afternoon. As well, in the winter additional students ride the Mammoth route after school to basketball or ski practice.
Stage 1 (school is in session, with remote learning for those not comfortable or able to return).

- Additional route buses (1 each) will be used to meet suggested guidelines.
- **Masks will be required on all route buses.**
  - Students who violate the seating arrangement and/or mask rule will be given a warning with parents contacted and after a second violation will be removed from the bus.
- Bus seats will be disinfected after each bus route daily.
- Students will have assigned seats on assigned buses.
- The Valley Route will be limited to riders who live on the Valley Route.
- Buses will load back to front, with the first riders on the bus seated in the back.

Stage 2 (school is remote, no students in school)

- No buses or reimbursement

**Facilities**

The recommended custodial staff size based on building size for Gardiner Schools is 2.0 FTE custodians. For over a year we have been operating with 1.5 FTE custodians. A recommendation for a 1.0 FTE hire is being made to the board on June 29th. We will retain the .5 FTE increasing our custodial staff to 2.5 FTE custodians. The custodial staff has been able to perform a deep clean using the closure time in the spring to get a head start on regular summer cleaning. Full custodial staff will allow all classrooms to be cleaned daily.

- Custodial staff will have access to an electrostatic disinfectant sprayer for sanitation purposes allowing staff to sanitize classrooms and facilities on a regular basis (every room being done once a week.)
- Locker rooms, bathrooms, and cafeteria tables will be sprayed daily using the electrostatic disinfectant sprayer.

**Instruction**

Teacher survey indicates that 66% favor a return to school following guidelines of the State, MTSBA, and Park County Health Department with 16% supporting full remote learning, 11% supporting a cohort rotational model, and 6% supporting elementary returning and high school learning remotely (due to larger classrooms in the elementary). 18 responses

Initial Parent survey indicates that 69% favor a return to school following guidelines of the State, MTSBA, and Park County Health Department with 17% favoring a cohort rotational model, and 14% favoring full remote learning. Further 70% have said if school reopens with guidelines they
would send their student to school, 25% say maybe and 5% say they won’t send their student to school. 101 responses

Remote Learning
Teachers have developed remote learning plans identifying platforms they will use in expectation of some students not returning. For practical purposes teachers are not able to meet remotely only with small groups of students to give instruction while having a classroom of students in school. Therefore and unlike in the spring, new instruction will be streamed live from the classroom to remote students. This will cause remote students to need to log in and participate in live classrooms more often in order to receive the needed instruction. For example Junior High and High School students will log into every classroom every day for attendance purposes. Elementary teachers will create schedules so parents and students know when new instruction is taking place for each subject area. Remote students will be counted for attendance purposes the same as on site students. Streaming will provide the opportunity for remote students to fully participate in their education.

Classroom sizes and enrollment numbers in the elementary school would allow students to be spaced 6 foot apart in desks. The possible exception being a 5th/6th grade combination class that was proposed in the spring before Covid-19 hit. An elementary teacher was hired at .5 FTE to teach specials (art and PE) classes. In expectation that there may be some needs arising due to Covid-19, this position was made 1.0 FTE. The planned 5th/6th combo classroom will need to be split. A certified staff member will teach elementary PE, and PE and music times will be increased to add enough specials time to allow for the allotted prep time of the elementary teachers.

High school and junior high class sizes (largest is 15 8th graders) and smaller classrooms will make social distancing more difficult. For example, the English classroom measures 24X24, at the very most 15 students can be spaced following social distancing guidelines and allowing a teacher desk space. Other classrooms are of the same or similar size such as History and Math (23x25). The FACS room will have to have limited enrollment due to Kitchen availability, (perhaps 2 students per kitchen). The science room will need desks to replace the tables in order to maximize space, and the AG room will have to have limited enrollment, or use the shop space as a classroom when needed. In addition, the computer lab used for MTDA will have to have limited enrollment (11) and/or spill over may have to use the library, but the library will not have full time supervision. Two to three students could use the space in the entryway by the windows and this could be reserved for students that have shown an ability to work independently and perhaps are upperclassmen.

Cohort groups consisting of K-3, 4-6, 7-8, and 9-12 will be created and will observe the following guidelines.
No volunteers, parents for lunch, or outside use of the school. Limit the presence of outside people.

Classroom Guidelines
In order to provide the best possible education while protecting students and staff from Covid-19, the following guidelines will be in place for Gardiner School classrooms.
- Classrooms will use individual desks where practical.
- Desks will be spaced 6 feet apart.
- When students are closer than 6 feet they will need to wear masks.
- Regular hand washing routines will be established in grades K-6.
- Regular hand washing will be encouraged, and hand sanitizer available in the Junior High/High School classrooms and hallways.
- Proper hygiene will be taught as part of SEB curriculum at the start of school in grades K-6.
- Students will be encouraged to clean desks/surfaces regularly throughout the day.
- Some HS/JH classes will be limited enrollment based on physical space available or will be taught in an alternative location when possible.
- Masks will be worn during passing periods.
- Students will have their own items. Sharing will be discouraged.
- There will be seating charts for each class.

Hallways
- JH/HS students will wear masks during passing periods.
- Elementary students will wear masks walking through the hallways as a group to specials.

Lunchroom Guidelines
- Students will sit 6 feet apart at the lunchroom tables (24 kids)
- K-3 will get their food K-1 will eat in the cafeteria, and grade 2-3 will take it to their classroom where they will eat.
- Grades 4-6 will get lunch when K-3 lunch is over.
- Masks will be worn in the cafeteria line.
- Salad bar will be served to students or all food will be served from behind the counter.
- JH/HS will eat in their respective classrooms or socially distanced outside. While getting food and returning trays, they will wear masks. Students will be allowed to socialize while exhibiting physical distancing and will be encouraged to go outside while the weather permits.
- Students in classrooms with sinks should wash their hands before leaving the classroom for lunch.
- HS will go to lunch 3 minutes early and get their lunch to take outside or to their classroom.
***Breakfast in the classrooms***

**Recess**
- Recess will be monitored to keep students moving and active and to avoid students grouping without following physical distancing guidelines.
- Recess will be modified so that K-3 and 4-6 will be grouped for recess to stay within their cohort.

**PE**
- Follow Park County Health guidance given for open gyms.
  - Group size will be limited to 50 individuals (including coaches) not to exceed 5 groups of 10 individuals.
  - Activities will be managed with consideration of CDC Covid-19 guidelines.
  - Outdoor “Open Gym” will be encouraged.
  - All players and coaches will wash hands with soap/water, or use hand sanitizer before and after each session.
  - All footballs, volleyballs, and basketballs will be sanitized before and after each session.
  - A pre-screening Covid-19 checklist will occur before each session and students will not be allowed to participate if the student:
    - ✔️ has a fever (documented or subjective)
    - ✔️ has a cough
    - ✔️ has a respiratory illness (participation is allowed with medical provider documentation of non-Covid-19 illness)
    - ✔️ is directed to be in quarantine or self-isolation

- Implement activities that reduce the amount of physical contact and proximity.

**Band**
- When possible a mask with a small slit for mouthpiece access should be worn while playing.
- In instrument groups where a mask cannot physically be worn the mask should be worn over the chin and replaced during periods where the student is not playing.
- Students should sit all facing the same direction, back to front to minimize potential exposure.
- Trombones should have an additional three feet of distancing making their space 9x6. The player should be seated three feet in front of the back line, leaving an additional six feet in front of them due to the extended nature of the instrument and slide that can be in extended position.
- Spit valves should not be emptied on the floor. Recommend using a puppy pad (or similar) to catch the contents of the spit valve and discard.
Senior Considerations
Many seniors take either an hour of Teachers Aide, a Senior Study hall for those taking an "academic course load" and a 3.0 or higher GPA, and or several hours of School To Work. Our seniors graduate with 28 credits, the school requirement is 25, and the state is 20. In order to maintain cohorts and not intermingle high school students with elementary students, and in light that businesses and/or the park and Xanterra may not want students for the School To Work program, consideration should be given to the schedules of seniors. Montana Digital Academy is restricting each school's enrollment as well.
- Teacher's Aide will be modified so that the students do not go to the elementary school classroom.

Extra Curriculars

MHSA has made the commitment that activities will begin in the fall. Those activities will have guidelines that all member schools will have to follow.

- Masks will need to be worn on buses.
- No overnight travel (to be re-evaluated for post season).
- Travel destinations will be evaluated the week of a trip to determine Covid risk.
- Bus stops will be limited and will exclude stops for food, food should be packed and transported by the team.
- No spectators will be allowed to keep the number below the 50 person limit.
- Home games will be live streamed when we get the capability.

*MHSA or Park County Health Department restrictions will apply and will supersede any stages determined by the school.

https://www.mhsa.org/news_article/show/794594

Disinfect bleachers with sprayer after activities (games)

**Students without a valid medical reason requiring a 504, or students not on and IEP who do not attend school on site will not be eligible to participate in extracurricular activities. Students with a 504 or on and IEP will be considered on an individual basis.**

Sick Protocol
• Parents should use the CAN MY CHILD GO TO SCHOOL TODAY? Flow chart.
• Employees should use the CAN I GO TO WORK TODAY? Flow chart.
• In case of a sick student at school:
  o If a teacher suspects a student is ill or is showing symptoms of Covid 19 the student will be instructed to put on a mask if they are not already wearing one, contact the front office that a student is on the way, and send the student to the office.
  o Symptoms will result in exclusion from onsite schooling.
  o Student and care provider will put on masks immediately.
  o Student will be isolated in a designated space until pickup by parent.
  o Care will be given including a temperature check.
  o Parents will be contacted for pickup.
  o Parents will need to take supplies home to prepare for remote learning.
  o A doctor’s note will be required for readmittance to school.
  o Parents will be expected to pick up their student within an hour or have an emergency contact pick them up.
  o Please update your emergency contact information with the school.

• In case of a positive Covid test result:
  o Park County Health Department will be notified by the state lab.
  o Park County Health Department contacts the school.
  o The school will give a general announcement of a positive case to the school community via Infinite Campus if so directed by Park County Health Department. Student and grade level will remain anonymous.
  o Close contacts will be notified by the Park County Health Department about their possible exposure and with further guidance.

***Please notify the school of any prolonged absences that may occur due to isolation, quarantine, or sickness***

Other Thoughts:
• Additional professional learning about remote teaching practices for teachers?

• Substitutes? Have our substitutes agreed to come to work this year? Remote learning and substitutes do not seem likely, especially in younger grades

If a positive case of Covid occurs within the school system, we will contact the Park County Health Department for their recommendation.
Alternative Stages/Plans
- K-5(6) return to school (6) 7-12 remote
- Classes divided in half and each half attends in person 2 days, and remote 2 days (if only 65% are going to attend in person this doesn't seem necessary)
- Full remote learning

Resources:
- Governor's Reopening Plan:  https://www.docdroid.net/ZDqQzhF/education-final-1-pdf
- OPI's Reopening Plan:  
- https://www.mhsa.org/news_article/show/794594
Can My Child Go to School Today? Can I Go To Work Today?
COVID-19 Flow Chart for Schools

Students and staff should be excluded from school due to Covid-19 for any of these reasons:
- They have tested positive for Covid-19
- They have been notified by a health department they are a close contact of a positive Covid-19 case
- They have symptoms of Covid-19

General Covid-19 Symptoms:
- Cough, shortness of breath, difficulty breathing, fever (above 100.0 °F), chills, fatigue, headache, muscle ache, sore throat, new loss of taste or smell, congestion or runny nose, nausea, vomiting or diarrhea, rash

Covid-19 Symptoms in Children:
- Similar to adults; however, children generally show mild symptoms, including cold-like symptoms, such as fever, runny nose, cough, vomiting and diarrhea

Determine if it is safe to be at school by using this flowchart:

Start

Have one or more reasons for exclusion been met?

Yes

Remain at home, isolate and:
- Contact your medical provider
- Do NOT return to school until you have been cleared by your medical provider to return to school (a medical note is required for re-entry to school)

If you are not evaluated by a medical provider, you can follow the CDC guidelines for return to school:
- You are fever free for 24 hours
- At least 10 days has passed since symptoms first appeared
- Symptoms have improved

No

If no other criteria for exclusion from school exists, the individual may attend school.
Follow “Communicable Disease: A guide for Schools” and injury standards as usual.

Questions?

Contact your medical provider, the school or the health department

No exclusion

- Continue to follow Covid-19 prevention habits
- Continue to monitor for symptoms (if symptoms develop, begin at the top of this flowchart

Local Medical Providers:
Community Health Partners: (406)222-1111
Livingston Healthcare: (406)222-3541
Medcor in Mammoth: (307)344-7965

Additional assistance:
Park County Public Health Department: (406)222-4145