

Infectious Diseases Safety Plan

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Gardner Valley School (GVS) will continue the successful practices of the prior year in providing in-person instruction. During the prior school year, much was learned about the effective practices for reduction and prevention of spreading a number of infectious diseases. GVS is fortunate to have a small student population and a good-sized facility. As a charter, the school has the flexibility to adapt to challenges posed by the every-changing public health requirements and recommendations. This plan aligns to the GVS Charter Board Resolution ([Board Policy website](#)) that keeps our vision and mission at the forefront, to Colorado and CDC guidance (see Bibliography), and to lessons learned regarding successful practices that balance a safe school environment with a quality educational experience.

GVS is intent on providing the best possible education while carrying out the critical protocols necessary to warrant the prevention of spreading infectious diseases among students, staff and families. This safe-for-in-person-learning plan addresses educational planning, infection spread prevention and being prepared in the event of an infectious disease outbreak. Cooperation in the school safety plan is essential not only to protect the students but to prevent the school from becoming a source of infection for the wider community that includes parents, staff, teachers and all their families. The GVS Infectious Diseases Safety Plan is a living document, adapting to guidance and requirements as they are updated. The intent is that the proposed protocols are an effective balance of prevention of infection practices and limited burden on students, staff and families, with all parties uniting in the effort to provide the best education with the least risk.

II. Providing the Best Education

A. In-Person Learning at School

Students learn best in a stimulating learning environment enhanced by collaboration with their peers and teachers. Learning is intuitive and amplified when practiced with one's peers, interacting with new ideas and strategies. GVS is a caring and joy-filled place; students, staff, parents and community are happy to be with one another. Guidance from educational and health agencies support keeping schools open for in person instruction. To review agency guidance, see the Bibliography below.

GVS is developing an educational model where health and wellness are a key priority. Besides disease prevention, the school promotes healthy eating, exercise and activity in the fresh air. Teachers are learning new ways to incorporate out-of-doors instruction that maximizes outdoor activities. Together, the staff, students, parents and community are creating an educational environment that is healthy, enriching and meaningful (see [Our Vision website](#) and [Our Mission website](#)).

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III. Infection Spread Prevention

It is clear that students' wellness extends well beyond just disease control. The school, staff, families, and students will balance the social, emotional, physical and academic needs of our students in order to achieve wellness and create a productive learning environment.

Colorado has adopted a guidance model designed to empower local public health and local leaders to protect their communities using a layered approach most appropriate to local conditions. According to Colorado guidance, regardless of transmission and vaccination rates, all education settings should create the safest environment possible for their students through tried-and-true disease prevention measures. These include promoting hand washing, ensuring good ventilation, encouraging activities outside and having sick students stay home. In addition, schools create an accepting environment for parents and students who choose to use masks even when they are not required.

A. Response to Infection Spread

Although Gardner Valley School strives to prevent infection, in the event of an infection spread situation, the school will respond immediately and decisively with strategies aligned to Colorado guidance. These strategies will be applied on a case-by-case basis to ensure that the actions taken are the most appropriate for the situation at hand.

IV. School Entry Immunization Law

As of July 1, 2021, the School Entry Immunization Law Senate Bill 20-163 is in effect and applies to students returning for the 2024-25 school year. Within the law, parents and caregivers are able to choose immunization, a medical exemption, or a non-medical exemption.

A. Guidance for Immunization

Parents and caregivers of vaccinated children must provide an up-to-date record of vaccination to the school.

- Prior to the start of the school year, parents and caregivers check to make sure that their children are up-to-date with all required vaccines. Vaccines required for schools in Colorado: cdphe.colorado.gov/schoolrequiredvaccines
- The parent or caregiver provides to the school the record of immunization with the signature of an immunization provider (such as a medical doctor, advanced practice nurse, pharmacist, etc.).

B. Guidance for Medical Exemption

Parents and caregivers claiming a medical exemption from vaccination for their child must provide a completed Certificate of Medical Exemption to the school.

- Prior to the start of the school year, parents and caregivers check to make sure that they have an up-to-date Certificate of Medical Exemption.
- The parent or caregiver provides to the school the Certificate of Medical Exemption with the signature of an immunization provider (such as a medical doctor, advanced practice nurse, pharmacist, etc.).
- Medical exemptions only need to be submitted once, unless the student's information or school changes.

C. Guidance for Nonmedical Exemption

Parents and caregivers claiming a nonmedical exemption from vaccination for their child must provide a completed Certificate of Nonmedical Exemption to the school. Nonmedical exemptions will no longer be separated into two categories (personal belief and religious).

- Prior to the start of the school year, parents and caregivers may claim a nonmedical exemption in one of two ways:
 - 1) The official Certificate of Nonmedical Exemption with the signature of an immunization provider (such as a medical doctor, advanced practice nurse, pharmacist, etc.)
 - a) Download the official Certificate of nonmedical exemption.
 - b) Take certificate to an immunizing provider to be signed.

OR

- 2) The official Certificate of Nonmedical Exemption received upon completion of CDPHE's Online Immunization Education Module*.
 - Access the module [Click Here](#) (it is recommended to review the Technical Guidance and Troubleshooting).
 - Complete the entire module (takes about 15 to 20 minutes to complete).
 - Nonmedical Exemption applies to all children of parent or caregiver without having to retake the course.
 - The parent or caregiver provides to the school the official Certificate of Nonmedical Exemption form (received from CDPHE).
- Nonmedical exemptions for school-aged children must be submitted annually and expire on June 30th of each year.

* The Online Immunization Education Module contains information about vaccine-preventable diseases and their vaccines, vaccine safety and schedules, and vaccine safety concerns. It is accessible online 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

Nonmedical exemptions will be reported to the Colorado Immunization Information System (CIIS). Parents and caregivers retain the right to opt their child out of CIIS. Parents and caregivers must complete and submit the CIIS Opt-Out Form to the CDPHE.