

September 21, 2020

Dear German International School Community –

We are excited to share with you our updated plans for the school year.

Beginning with September 23, 2020, our plan is to provide our families with two options: (1) to continue with full-time remote learning; or (2) to engage in a hybrid learning option that will include both remote learning and on-campus learning. **At the end of this letter, all families are asked to let us know which of the two options they are planning to pursue.** Families may have the option of switching between these two options throughout the course of the year depending upon individual circumstances, such as when hybrid learning students may need to quarantine for a period of time due to illness or exposure.

GISW may move to full-time, on-campus learning during the school year if the School decides, in its sole discretion, that it is safe and advisable to do so. Should public health conditions take a turn for the worse, GISW, in its sole discretion, may also decide to return to a full-time remote learning program.

As you are certainly aware, COVID-19 continues to be an extremely contagious communicable illness that is believed to be spread through person-to-person interactions. COVID-19 can cause symptoms in any infected individual, though data strongly indicates that older individuals and those with existing medical conditions are at a significantly higher risk of developing severe symptoms and complications. Not all individuals infected with COVID-19 display any symptoms, but such individuals may nonetheless be contagious and spread the infection. COVID-19 is also associated with a serious and potentially deadly condition called Multisystem Inflammatory Syndrome in Children (MIS-C).

State and local authorities are closely monitoring the spread of COVID-19 in the State of Maryland and in the Greater Washington, DC area, and have introduced mandatory quarantines, social distancing, and other safety measures to prevent the spread of the disease. On August 28, 2020, Governor Hogan announced that all counties in Maryland currently meet state benchmarks to provide students with on-campus learning opportunities. Despite The State of Maryland clearing nonpublic schools to reopen during this fall, Montgomery County still encourages all schools to provide remote learning, and the County Health Department has advised schools against in-person learning due to the risks posed by COVID-19. We have reviewed guidance from the Maryland Department of Education (“DOE”), Governor Hogan, and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (“CDC”), as well as guidance from numerous other leading health and education experts. Our leadership team has worked throughout the summer to develop appropriate policies and practices, and to implement modifications to our buildings and facilities for students who choose to access our hybrid learning program. The safety of our students and employees is GISW’s primary concern, and thus our policies and protocols for learning on-campus will meet – and may exceed – the safety requirements outlined in the public health guidance.

Families and students, whether pursuing hybrid, fully on-campus (if such a program is offered later in the school year), or fully remote learning programs, should expect that the GISW experience will be (and will look) somewhat different than in past years. In addition to required social distancing measures and physical modifications to our campus and in classrooms, changes will also likely be required to many facets of our

program, including the school day schedule, meal service, health services, and extracurricular activities. Further information regarding re-opening can be found on our website at [QUICKLINKS > PHASED REOPENING](#):

<https://giswashington.org/reopening-gisw.html> All community members are expected to review and adhere to these policies and protocols, as well as to any updates that we may issue in the coming weeks and months. But as with seemingly everything during this pandemic, circumstances are changing rapidly and Maryland's specific school reopening guidance may be updated at any time during the course of the school year.

Although GISW will meet all applicable safety requirements (primarily by implementing CDC school re-opening guidelines), so long as COVID-19 continues to spread by community transmission and until there is an effective vaccine, *there will be a risk that students could become infected with COVID-19 despite the School's efforts if students come to campus.* That risk extends to the families of students as well as others with whom the student may have contact. All families who choose to send their child(ren) to campus this school year, whether in a hybrid or fully on-campus learning program, must execute the acknowledgement at the end of this letter. By signing the acknowledgement, you agree to the following:

- You acknowledge that, despite the State of Maryland clearing nonpublic schools to reopen during the fall, the County still encourages all schools to provide remote learning, and the County Health Department has advised schools against in-person learning due to the risks posed by COVID-19.
- You acknowledge and agree that despite GISW's compliance with applicable reopening requirements, there is nonetheless a risk that your child could contract COVID-19 and/or become a symptomatic and/or asymptomatic carrier of COVID-19 by coming to campus. You further acknowledge that children who become infected with COVID-19 may later develop MIS-C.
- You knowingly and voluntarily assume that risk on behalf of yourself and your child, as well as the risk that such infection could spread to other members of your child's household or family, as well as others with whom the student may have contact.
- **You hereby agree, on your own behalf and on that of your child, and of your heirs, executors, administrators, personal representatives, and/or assigns ("Releasers"), to forever release, acquit, discharge, and covenant to hold German School Society Washington D.C. , its trustees, employees, volunteers, representatives, and agents ("Releasees") from any and all claims, suits, liabilities, and actions, including, but not limited to, any negligence of Releasees, which Releasers may have, now or in the future, which relate in any way to your child contracting COVID-19, or any symptoms or complications arising from COVID-19 (including but not limited to MIS-C), as a result of attending any school program.**

In order to return to campus, this signed acknowledgment and a signed Health Pledge Form need to be submitted to [mail@giswashington.org](mailto:mail@giswashington.org) and in addition a negative test result for COVID19 needs to be submitted to [nurse@giswashington.org](mailto:nurse@giswashington.org).

If you choose not to sign this acknowledgement or otherwise comply with the protocols outlined in Reopening GISW 2020, your child will not be permitted on campus, and you will have the option of participating in the School's full-time remote learning opportunities.

We recognize that these are uncertain times, and we are committed to our mission of providing our students with an exceptional educational environment, whether that environment is partially or entirely online during the

2020-21 school year. Complying with the new health, safety, and online learning protocols will require significant additional effort on the part of everyone involved – the school, our staff, students, and families. But we are eager to reopen and see many of you in person again, even if that means wearing masks and physically distancing. If you have any questions about this letter, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Sincerely,

Marc Löckmann  
Acting Head of School  
[schulleitung@giswashington.org](mailto:schulleitung@giswashington.org)

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**Signatures are required by all parent(s) and legal guardian(s) of the Student.**

Name of Student: \_\_\_\_\_ Grade: \_\_\_\_\_

I am choosing for my child to attend (**select one of the following**) during phase 2 in the 2020-21 school year:

- Full Time Remote Learning Program
- Hybrid On-Campus and Remote Learning Program

*By signing below, I acknowledge that I have read this letter, that I understand the risks inherent in my child attending school on GISW's campus during the 2020-21 school year, and that by sending my child to GISW I accept those risks on behalf of myself, my child, and all household members. I understand that this document may be electronically signed, and by indicating my assent below, I am agreeing to the use of electronic signatures. I understand and agree that my electronic signature will have the same legal effect and validity as a written signature, and that this form is valid and will be given the same legal effect as a written and signed form. I understand that if I do not wish to sign this document electronically, I can request a paper copy of this document from the School, or I can print the document, sign it, and return it to the School.*

**Parent/Guardian 1:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Signature:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Date:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Parent/Guardian 2:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Signature:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Date:** \_\_\_\_\_

OR

**Student (Age 18+):** \_\_\_\_\_

**Signature:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Date:** \_\_\_\_\_

*This English version is the legally binding version.*