



**GERMAN  
INTERNATIONAL  
SCHOOL | Boston**

*empowering students for success in a global world*

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# *Parent Communication* **Elementary School Reopening**

*Hindernisse und Schwierigkeiten sind Stufen,  
auf denen wir in die Höhe steigen.*

*Obstacles and difficulties are steps on which we  
ascend.*

*Friedrich Nietzsche*

Boston, August 14, 2020

Dear Parents of Elementary School Students,

We are very pleased to be able to share this concept today to take away some of the uncertainty as to how things will work at the end of August. It is a concept that aims above all to provide the children with a social and academic learning environment. GISB is aware of the fact that, especially in the elementary school sector, active support in the learning process is of the highest priority, as we see that children up to the age of 10 need very intensive care in coping with school tasks from home. In recent months, this has often been in conflict with parents' professional responsibilities. Above all, however, the children lacked social contact, and the interactions with friends.

Our concept, which we will present to you here, focuses on various aspects. First of all, there is the safety aspect. We have a responsibility towards the students, their families and the whole GISB community. We are aware of this. Like all of us, we wish for a way back to normality. With this concept we have taken the first step. However, we are also aware that there will be uncertainties, fears and discomfort in sending children back to school. You have our greatest understanding with this. The concept should therefore not only show what our return will look like in the different class levels, but also what safety precautions we have taken to minimize the risk of infection.

The following concept shows you in detail what your child's everyday school life will look like at the beginning of the new school year. It will be different from what you are used to, starting with the drop-off and pick-up times and ending with breaks and lunch. We will have to work even more closely together as a community and show a willingness to compromise in many areas. In return, our children will again have the opportunity to learn together in small groups, to help each other, to share successes and failures, and to grow on their achievements. The teachers of the elementary school face these challenges just as they have been committed to online learning in this new situation.

These are uncertain times that none of us expected, but we will meet this challenge together and grow as a community. We at GISB stand before a mountain that wants to be climbed. No one can do it alone. We will join hands, support each other and be vigilant that no one falls back or falls down. And be sure that we will always be here to listen to you, to advise you, to take your advice or just to talk. We are a community.

Our decisions have been based on three guiding principles:

- **Guiding Principle 1** Social and emotional development of the students
- **Guiding Principle 2** Safety and health measures to ensure the well-being of families and staff
- **Guiding Principle 3** Regular, in-person learning opportunities as much as possible to support and stimulate students cognitive development.

After intensive discussions in the Elementary School Task Force and the consideration of the whole from the students', parents', and staff's perspectives, we now hope to have found a way that is acceptable for everyone and that enables us to resume our learning process in a social, emotional and cognitive way.

We all know that there are many possible scenarios in the weeks and months ahead. These will certainly be addressed by GISB in a timely manner if and when they transpire. This document is a roadmap to reopening our elementary school in our present situation. Further school-wide information and protocols will be forthcoming.

We look forward to mastering this new challenge together with you, trusting in the cohesion of our community and we are sure that we will emerge strengthened from this new experience.

With kind regards,  
Anke Roost

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## *abbreviations and explanations*

<b>GISB</b>	-	German International School Boston
<b>UC</b>	-	Upper Campus located at 57 Holton Street
<b>ASP</b>	-	After School Program
<b>ELL</b>	-	English language learners
<b>DaZ</b>	-.	German as a second language

## Official Guidelines

For the school's safe reopening we are following the guidelines issued by the state of Massachusetts.

Minimum Requirements for Health and Safety released by the Department of Early Education and Care [https://eeclead.force.com/resource/1595274325000/Min\\_Reg](https://eeclead.force.com/resource/1595274325000/Min_Reg)

FAQ about the Minimum Requirement released by the Department of Early Education and Care [https://eeclead.force.com/resource/1591036171000/FAQ\\_Min\\_Reg](https://eeclead.force.com/resource/1591036171000/FAQ_Min_Reg)

Initial Fall School Reopening Guidance released by Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education <http://www.doe.mass.edu/covid19/return-to-school/guidance.pdf>

Considerations for school released by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/schools-childcare/schools.html>

## Groups and Teachers

We will start the new school year with divided classes in Grade 1, 2 and 3. This is in accordance with the 6 feet social distance guidelines recommended by the Massachusetts government.

This will be as follows:

Classteacher	Grade	Cohort
Melanie Weindl	1	group A+B
Martha Michalec	2	group A+B
Anke Roost	3	group A+B
Julia Schlegel	4	group A
Henriette Lehmann	4	group B

The groups have different numbers of students according to the size of the classroom and the 6 feet social distance rule. Grade 1, 2, 3, 4 A and 4 B will be individual cohorts and will not mix with one another. Cohort design is based on the number of students in each grade.

## Daily Health Screenings at Home

Daily health checks are key to mitigating the risk of transmission. After in-depth analysis by our Health & Safety department we will be working with the mobile app MyMedBot. This app provides us the ability to track our students' well-being on a daily basis.

How does it work? You will receive an invitation and further explanations from our nurse, Alicia Nurnberger. The app, easily and quickly installed on your phone, provides a daily questionnaire about your child's health. Before bringing your child to school, you are asked to check your child for Covid19 related symptoms, including measuring their temperature. After the check-up, the app transfers a confirmation to the school and provides you with advice as to whether you can bring your child, your child should remain at home, seek medical advice, etc.

Only children for whom we have a confirmation that they are symptom-free will be allowed into the Upper Campus. The questionnaire will be available each morning from **6:30 - 7:45 am**. It must be submitted by 7:45 am! You will receive a reminder on your phone.

**It is crucial that you keep your child home when they show symptoms! If your child comes to school with symptoms learning in the whole cluster will be compromised. This is a responsibility of all the teachers, parents and staff of the school. We are all responsible for everyone's safety in the GISB community.**

Please refer to Safety Procedures for further information.

## Drop-off and Pick-up

### *Drop-off Procedure*

We look forward to welcoming your children in the morning healthy and motivated. Please remember to fill up the app every morning in a responsible manner in order not to risk the health of your child and the whole learning group.

The students gather in the morning until 8:30 a.m. on the podium provided for the group in the schoolyard. A briefing will be given on the first day of school.

The allocation of the individual sections will be as follows:

Elementary school (1st floor)	-	Entrance by the church garden
Middle school (ground floor)	-	Entrance at Holton Street garden
High School (basement)	-	Entrance Everett Street

Students must stay in the assigned area, taking into account the necessary social distance. The 4 + 1 model of elementary school and the hybrid model of middle and high school ensures that there are not too many students in the outside and inside areas of the school.

At 8.30 a.m. each group or class is picked up by the subject teacher of the first lesson and taken to the appropriate classroom. The subject teacher is informed via the app which students are allowed to enter the school. If parents forget to fill out the app, they will be informed immediately by telephone to make up for it. Without filling out the app, students are not allowed to enter the school.

At 8.40 a.m. a supervisor will pick up all students who have either arrived late or have only just received the release of the app.

The drop off situation is a special challenge. It will not be possible to say goodbye to the child extensively. We therefore ask you to do this at home, so that we can ensure a smooth drop off for everyone.

### *Pick-up Procedure*

Lessons end daily at 2.10 pm. The subject teacher of the last lesson accompanies the students to the spot that the students entered in the morning. Students who participate in the ASP program stay in their classrooms and will be picked up at their spot according to the chosen pick up time.

For ASP pick up, parents will call the ASP cell phone and the students will be sent downstairs for pick up (the ASP teachers communicate via walkie talkie).

To avoid an increased risk of infection, parents are not allowed to enter the school building.

## Schedule

The lessons take place constantly 4 days a week from **8.30 - 2.10pm**.

You will receive the timetable for the individual classes from your class teacher on **Friday, August 21**.

Due to the social distance guidelines it is not possible for us to teach some elementary school classes as a whole class. For this reason, classes 1, 2 and 3 were divided into two groups and

assigned to different classrooms. This increases the number of teacher hours and is one of the reasons for the 4+1 model.

This leads to the following teaching model:

Monday - Thursday classes present: **1A; 1B; 3A; 3B**

Tuesday - Friday classes present: **2A; 2B; 4A; 4B**

The allocation of the groups will take place the following week and will be sent to you with the timetable.

The day off on day 5 is taught remotely and is mainly filled with music and art as compulsory subjects. This is a decision in favour of these creative subjects, as for logistical and health reasons, for example in music lessons, it is not allowed to sing or play a wind instrument in the classroom. Furthermore, on the day off, the students will receive a task from the class teacher to prepare or follow up the lessons, which may include reading a book or working on tasks that the students can work on and solve mostly independently.

If students are unable to attend classes for health or other reasons, it is possible to follow the lessons via video. Each classroom is equipped with technical equipment for this purpose. We would like to ask you as parents to take responsibility for active participation here, as the teacher cannot work with the students in class and on the screen at the same time. However, after the lesson there is the possibility for the remote students to meet with a teacher in a google meet room and discuss any questions that may arise.

## Breaks and Lunch

Breaks are an important part of everyday school life. They are used to meet friends, to switch off for a moment and to recharge the batteries for further lessons. During these times, the breaks will also look a little different than usual. The individual groups will be able to spend their breaks in the schoolyard, taking into account the social distance.

As there will be far fewer students in the school building on Mondays and Fridays, it will also be possible to use the spot of another group that is not in school on that day.

The schoolyard is also entered by the elementary school through the main entrance.

In case of heavy rainy weather the break will take place in the classrooms or in the gymnasium, staggered with 2 groups spread out at a time.

Except in the most extreme weather, lunch will be held outside the school building, as the masks have to be taken off for a longer period of time. As always, food may not be exchanged between students.

## Additional Educational Programs/ASP

We will offer our After School Program (ASP) daily for Elementary students from 2:10 - 6:00. Parents sign up for the entire week and have the pick up time option of 4:00, 5:00 or 6:00. During ASP students will have homework and snack time, as well as projects and activities in the classroom and designated outside time. Students will remain in their grade cohorts with ASP teachers for the entire afternoon. We will not mix the cohorts.

For pick up, parents will call the ASP cell phone and the students will be sent downstairs for pick up (the ASP teachers communicate via walkie talkie).

## Guidelines in the Building

### *Masks*

For some weeks now, mouth and nose protection has been one of the things we almost always use when we want to get out of the house. At school, while shopping or on the bus and train, masks are compulsory. Researchers have now been able to prove that the compulsory use of masks has actually led to a significant reduction in the number of people being infected with the coronavirus. We are not only following the Massachusetts guideline here, but also the important idea that by wearing the mask not only do we protect ourselves, but also minimize the risk of infecting others. Therefore, it is mandatory to wear a mask inside and outside our school building. We **recommend** that you give your child **3 masks** so that the children have the opportunity to exchange masks during the school day.

We will also make sure that, taking into account all health factors, the children can be given short mask breaks of maximum 5 minutes during the school day.

### *Promoting Handwashing and Good Hygiene*

Good and frequent handwashing will be promoted and discussed with the children. Each classroom will be equipped with the necessary cleaning products. When students enter the classroom, their hands will be cleaned. It is not allowed that children under 14 years old bring their own hand sanitizer.

The classroom will be frequently cleaned and sanitized with a natural cleaning product that is certified by EPA.

<https://www.forceofnatureclean.com/natural-cleaner-and-disinfectant/?seg=consumer>

The classrooms are cleaned daily by a professional cleaning service.

### *Physical Distancing in the Classroom*

Physical distance in the school building as well as in the classroom is an essential part of our everyday school life. We know that it is difficult to meet friends and not be allowed to touch each other. It is important that you discuss this with your child at home. Each student will have his or her own workstation in the classroom, located 6 feet away from his or her classmates. This distance is also maintained when walking through the school building, for example when using the toilet.

Measures put in place include:

- Assigned seating and spaces for each child
- Markings on the floor (line-up, walking directions,..)
- Child-friendly signage
- Markings on the schoolyard for every group

### *Health Guidelines*

Protocols and [guidelines](#) as to how to handle students or staff with signs of sickness have been published on [our website](#). An isolation room has been assigned in the building to ensure that people with symptoms can immediately be separated from other members of the cluster.

There will also be a protocol in place on how the school proceeds if there is a positive test result of students, parents, or staff of GISB and what the consequences will be in such a case.

Please refer to Safety Procedures for further information.

## Misbehavior and consequences

We all wish for a reunion in the school where the joy of returning should be in the foreground. However, due to the restrictions imposed, we all have to adhere to certain guidelines in order to ensure the safety and well-being of all persons in the building and the maintenance of everyday school life. This means that we will consistently investigate and follow through in any instances in which students do not follow our established rules. We will discuss these rules and expectations with the students on the first day of school.

All misbehavior will be followed up according to this procedure: first the school management (Head of School or Assistant Head of School) is informed, then the parents receive a call that they have to pick up their child from school and the child is not allowed to enter the building for 3 days, and thus the lessons are followed by video from home.

### **Misbehavior is as follows examples:**

- The student intentionally does not wear a mask in places where this is required.
- The student does not keep the social distance by invading someone else's privacy (hugging, handshake, physical fights...)
- The student does not respond to instructions from the teacher in this regard.
- The student repeatedly exchanges materials or things with classmates or other students despite instructions not to do so.
- The student discourages other students from following the rules set.

## Communication

To minimize personal contacts, no face-to-face communication between parents and teachers will take place at the moment. Please contact the teachers of your child by email to arrange an online meeting or phone call if needed.

If your child is sick or can not attend school for other reasons, please inform the school as soon as possible by either sending an email to [attendance@gisbos.org](mailto:attendance@gisbos.org).

+1 (617) 783-2600 x 10 (Front Desk) Please leave a message.	<a href="mailto:attendance@gisbos.org">attendance@gisbos.org</a>
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Additional Contact Details:

Anke Roost	Coordinator Elementary School	<a href="mailto:anke.roost@gisbos.org">anke.roost@gisbos.org</a> +1 (617) 783-2600
Amy Kremer	Head of English Department	<a href="mailto:amy.kremer@gisbos.org">amy.kremer@gisbos.org</a> +1 (617) 783-2600
Charlotte Cane	Director of Co-Curricular Programs (ASP)	<a href="mailto:charlotte.cane@gisbos.org">charlotte.cane@gisbos.org</a> +1 (617) 783-2600 x16 (office) +1 (617) 356-6651 (ASP cell phone)
Sarah Feinberg	Front desk UC	<a href="mailto:sarah.feinberg@gisbos.org">sarah.feinberg@gisbos.org</a> +1 (617) 783-2600 x 10
Alicia Nurnberger	School Nurse	<a href="mailto:alicia.nurnberger@gisbos.org">alicia.nurnberger@gisbos.org</a> +1 (617) 783-2600 x 15

## Changes of Guidelines / Closure of School Building

Should the current health situation in Massachusetts change and additional guidelines or orders are released, we are prepared to adapt our protocols and procedures accordingly. The health of our community is our top priority. We monitor the information released by the Department of Early Education and Care, the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education and the State of Massachusetts closely. We will inform and keep you updated about any changes in our schedule and procedures. We greatly appreciate your support and cooperation during these unusual times.

	Regular School	All students every day on campus, no clusters, ASP in mixed groups, no online activities, no physical distancing or masks
	Soft Hybrid Model <b>Start August 26</b>	All students are for 4 days a week on campus, divided groups in 1,2,3 and 4, remote teaching on one day a week (Music, Art, Worksheets), physical distancing, masks
	Remote Learning	No one in the building, off campus learning, google classroom

## Additional Information

Department of Early Education and Care	<a href="https://www.mass.gov/orgs/department-of-early-education-and-care">https://www.mass.gov/orgs/department-of-early-education-and-care</a>
Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education	<a href="http://www.doe.mass.edu/">http://www.doe.mass.edu/</a>
Parent Reopening Guide for Day Care Centers	<a href="https://www.boston.com/wp-content/uploads/2020/07/Fall-Reopening-Facilities-and-Operations-Guidance-vF.pdf">https://www.boston.com/wp-content/uploads/2020/07/Fall-Reopening-Facilities-and-Operations-Guidance-vF.pdf</a>