



**GERMAN  
INTERNATIONAL  
SCHOOL | Boston**

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*Parent Communication*

# Lower Campus Reopening



Boston, August 7, 2020



Dear Parents of Lower Campus students,

We at GISB are keenly aware that you, like parents all across the country, are eagerly awaiting plans about the fall re-opening of our facilities. Here at the Lower Campus we recognize the important role that our Early Education Program plays in getting parents back to work in brick and mortar buildings or in home offices. It is abundantly clear that remote learning is extremely difficult for this age group, supervision must be nearly constant, independence is minimal, social development is crucial at this age and language learning needs consistent, in-person support. Likewise it is clear that some families might not yet be comfortable sending their children back to school. I can, however, not overstate the amount of information our Lower Campus task force with support from the school leadership has assessed and the number of options that they have vetted.

GISB is prioritizing the full re-opening of the Lower Campus with our primary caveat being the safety of children, families and staff. The key factor in our plan as you will find outlined in detail in this document is our ability to create closed, self-contained clusters of students and teachers to prevent any cross-contamination and ensure no interaction between groups. Many existing structures from the low teacher-student ratios and large classrooms with real windows and individual bathrooms to the new HVAC system with high grade filters and our easy access to outside spaces along the Charles River have worked to our advantage, enabling us to offer complete care to each child enrolled every day.

Things will obviously look and feel different--staggered drop-off and pick-up times, masks and mask breaks, frequent handwashing routines, outside learning times, the school door as a protective barrier to an area for students and staff only to name a few. In order to ensure that the environment is the safest possible, we all must work together to follow guidelines and protocols for cleaning, safety and health. As a community we will thereby help keep each other in school, playing, learning and growing. Safety is our priority, our responsibility!

In a world of uncertainties, we want you to know that one thing is certain: the teachers and staff of our Lower Campus are rising to the challenges of this unprecedented time with dedication, commitment and a resolve to deliver the best experience possible to your child and our families. This remarkable community of families, students and staff ensures that GISB remains a powerful and transformative experience. Thank you for being part of that. Thank you for entrusting your children to us. Please know that we are here for you, to listen, to learn, and to care.

In summary our decisions have been based on three guiding principles:

**Guiding Principle 1**

Social and emotional development of the children

**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 children's cognitive development.

In weighing these aspects and deciding on a full time, cohort-based reopening, we hope to have found a middle ground that will provide an emotionally, socially and academically healthy and positive experience for everyone.

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, however, serves as a roadmap to reopening our Lower Campus in our present situation. Further school-wide information and protocols will be forthcoming.

I am looking forward to interacting with you and the children, our greatest asset, as we move into what will undoubtedly be a most unusual year.

Humbly yours,

Lauren Sallis

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## *abbreviations and explanations*

**GISB** - German International School Boston

**LC** - Lower Campus

The GISB building for Preschool and Kindergarten at 387 Western Avenue

**ASP** - After school Program

Participation by sign-up at time of enrollment, from 2:00-4:00, extended after school until 6:00, fixed for entire school year

### **Cluster**

Closed group of children and teachers with no interaction with other students or staff so as limit transmission and avoid complete closure in case of positive case

**Preschool** - German: Kindergarten, children year 2.9 - 5

**Kindergarten** - German: Vorschule, children year 4 - 6

This English-language document will use the English nomenclature in referring to these levels.

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## 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 start this school year with three Preschool classes (Eulen, Bären, Löwen) and two Kindergarten classes (Waldwichtel, Waldfüchse). Each group has its own classroom and an individually assigned toilet to use. To maintain clusters and minimize the risk of infection between groups, specific morning and afternoon teachers are assigned to each specific group. These teachers will stay with the same group of children and will not be in physical contact with other groups.

### *Ratio - Preschool*

In Preschool there will always be two teachers and 11-13 children present in each class, with two morning teachers and two ASP teachers to each Preschool class.

### *Ratio - Kindergarten*

In Kindergarten there will be one teacher and up to 12 children present in each class, with one morning teacher and one ASP teacher to each Kindergarten class.

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## 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 Lower 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.**

## Drop-off and Pick-up

### Times and Locations

In line with the state guidelines and to ensure social distancing at all times, we have set up staggered entrance and exit times (15 minutes for each group) and will be using two different entrances to the building.

Because of the indicated 15 minutes time frame for each group, we must insist that you please be on time for drop-off and pick-up. This helps to make sure that all children and their parents can maintain social distancing, that the children stay in their cluster and that the drop-off and pick-up is smooth for everybody.

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If you are not able to arrive within the assigned time, you will need to park on the street and wait with your child until there is a window during which no class is arriving. Only then will your child be checked-in and led into the building. We realize that this is difficult with the traffic etc. Nevertheless the guidelines mandate this kind of drop-off and pick-up procedure.

## *Drop-off Procedure*

### **By Car**

When arriving at the school by car please make sure to follow the one-way loop into the parking lot. The drop-off by car will only be possible via drive-through. The teacher of your child's cluster will be awaiting your child at the drop-off location. Please wait in line (in your car) for the teacher to help your child out of the car, process the child's attendance and accompany your child into the school building. Unfortunately, under state guidelines it is currently not possible to accompany your child into the building.

### **By Foot**

There will be NO parking for parents in the LC parking lot.

If you would like to park nearby, you may wait with your child on the markings in the parking lot (6 feet apart) until your child's attendance is processed. Then he or she will be accompanied into the building by the teacher. No parents are permitted into the school building.

## *Pick-up Procedure*

### **By Car**

Please arrive within your assigned time frame and line up for the drive-through pick-up. If the line is full, please drive an additional round around the block and then join the line. Your child will be brought to the car and buckled in. Please proceed directly to the exit.

### **By Foot**

There will be NO parking for parents in the LC parking lot.

If you would like to park nearby, you may wait on the markings in the parking lot (6 feet apart) until your name is called and your child is brought to you. Please respect social distancing during pick-up.

## Schedule

To ensure a good start for everybody and to give the children time to get used to the school again, we will start the school year in three phases.

You will receive the following information on **Friday August 14** from your child's teacher:

- Detailed schedule for your child
- Supply list
- Class list
- Information regarding the first three days of school
- Sign-up sheet for the Meet and Greet on August 26 and 27

### *Phase 1 - Meet and Greet*

#### **August 26 - 28**

##### August 26 and 27

Every child and their family are invited to meet their teachers individually and to see the class room for the new school year. All extra clothes, supplies, boots etc. **MUST** be clearly labeled and brought at this time. There is a 30 minute time frame for each child and family with 15 minutes of sanitation in between. Please make sure to sign-up for these meetings. This is the only time during which parents will be permitted into the building. Please observe social distancing guidelines and wear masks.

##### Returners Preschool August 28

All the returning preschool children who have already spent the last school year at GISB have a shortened introduction day at school (3 hours) without parents. New children to our program will not be in attendance on this day.

Returner Eulen: Drop-off 9.00 - 9.15 / Pick-up 12.00 - 12.15

Returner Bären: Drop-off 9.15 - 9.30 / Pick-up 12.15 - 12.30

Returner Löwen: Drop-off 9.30 - 9.45 / Pick-up 12.30 - 12.45





### Kindergarten August 28

In addition to the individual classroom meetings on August 26 or 27, all Kindergarten students will be offered online sessions to get to know their remote teachers. You will get an invitation to the remote session directly from the subject teacher (see more information about Remote Learning in Kindergarten in the category [Additional Educational Programs](#)).

## *Phase 2 - Introduction Weeks*

### *August 31 - September 11*

During these two weeks our main goal is to give all the children time to adjust to the new situation, procedures, teachers and children. To know what a day at GISB looks like for your child, please have a look below. Detailed schedules about staggered drop-off and pick-up times and more information will follow with the specific class information. Teachers and the Director are available for individual clarification as needed. Please reach out. We know there are many moving parts!

#### *Preschool Beginners*

Your child will have a shortened morning program (4 hours). During the first hour only the beginners and their teachers will be present to ensure that the children are able to become comfortable and get to know their teachers and new classroom and classmates. After that the returning Preschool children will arrive at the school. The school day ends before lunch and nap time. These children will need a filled water bottle and a morning snack.

#### *Preschool Returners*

Your child will have a shortened morning program with a later start but will stay at school for extra learning time, lunch and nap time. After nap time your child will either be picked up or participate in ASP in their classroom until departure time.

#### *Kindergarten*

Your child will attend a regular morning program in the Kindergarten. If your child is enrolled in the ASP they will stay in the same classroom until departure time. All other children will be picked up after the regular morning program.

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## *Phase 3 - Regular Schedule*

### **September 14 and following weeks**

All the children have a regular morning program and, for those enrolled, participate in the full ASP. The staggered drop-off and pick-up times will be adjusted so that only children of the same cluster enter the building at the same time.

## **Recess**

### *Preschool*

Every group will spend at least 25 minutes each morning and 25 minutes during ASP on the playground in front of the building. After each visit the playground will be sanitized for the next group.

### *Kindergarten*

The Kindergarten classes will go to the Artesani playground as well as to the open meadow nearby for recess time every day in the morning and during ASP. The two groups will not be on the playground at the same time. Children will have their hands sanitized before and after playing and wash their hands upon returning to the building.

We encourage all groups to spend more time outdoors by visiting other local outdoor spaces as much as possible.

## **Additional Educational Programs**

To protect the clusters from cross-contamination there will be no extra or subject teachers in the building. Nevertheless we will offer some aspects through remote in-person learning.

### *ASP*

There will be no external organizations or teachers providing lessons during ASP unless this can be done via zoom. You will receive more information as we receive feedback from these providers.

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## *German as a Second Language*

Classroom teachers provide a complete German immersion experience, offering student-individualized assistance throughout the day. Additionally, kindergarten children in need of extra support in German will have the possibility to participate in Remote Sessions in small groups or individually.

## *English in Kindergarten*

Two English lessons will be streamed weekly during the regular morning schedule. There will also be one formal in-person English lesson with a classroom teacher every week.

## *Music*

Due to the current guidelines music will be implemented at a later date. Because of the higher risk of air transmission during singing, we must refrain from singing in the classroom. Dancing and rhythmic activities will continue to be a part of our daily program at the Lower Campus.

# Guidelines in the Building

## *Masks*

Everyone who enters the LC building should wear a mask. The official guidelines strongly encourage children 2-6 years old to wear a mask even if they stop short of mandating it. We **strongly** encourage children to wear a mask when entering the building. The modeling by you as parents and by the classroom teachers, mask”games” and thematizing masks will all help your child become more comfortable with it.

All the teachers will wear a mask if social distancing is not possible within the classroom. We are aware of the difficulties of wearing masks for young children and will include frequent mask breaks during the day. During outside recess time, snack and lunch time and during nap time the children will not wear masks. The teachers will also organize and encourage mask breaks whenever it is possible for social distancing in the classroom. To provide additional mask-free time all groups are encouraged to spend extra time outside including learning phases whenever possible.

Please provide your child with 4 masks each day in a bag marked “clean.” Additionally, provide a bag marked “dirty” for used masks that must be washed each evening at home.

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### *Items from Home*

Your child is allowed to bring one stuffed animal to school for comfort. This is especially important during the first few weeks of school. It is important, however, that these stuffed animals are not shared with other children. No other toys from home are allowed in the building. Nap supplies will be sent home weekly for washing.

### *Promoting Handwashing and Good Hygiene*

Good and frequent handwashing will be promoted and discussed with the children. Additionally we installed contact-less paper towel dispensers and handwashing timers. Cleaning protocols for highly touched areas are in place and will be followed.

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>

### *Physical Distancing in the Classroom*

One important goal in student's returning to the building is their social development. Measures will be put in place to encourage physical distancing. Nevertheless in creating the clusters we are enabling the children to continue their social development.

Measures put in place include:

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

### *Health Guidelines*

Protocols and guidelines as to how to handle students or staff with signs of sickness will be released by the school nurse shortly. 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 and staff of GISB and what the consequences will be in such a case.

## 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 [lcoffice@gisbos.org](mailto:lcoffice@gisbos.org) or call +1 (617) 779-7393 and leave a message on our voicemail.


+1 (617) 779-7393 (Front Desk) Please leave a message.	<a href="mailto:lcoffice@gisbos.org">lcoffice@gisbos.org</a>
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### Additional Contact Details:

Lauren Sallis	Director of Lower Campus	<a href="mailto:lauren.sallis@gisbos.org">lauren.sallis@gisbos.org</a> +1 (617) 779-7393
Anette Freiburger	Teacher & Co-Lead Administration	<a href="mailto:anette.freiberger@gisbos.org">anette.freiberger@gisbos.org</a> +1 (617) 779-7393
Hannah Rafferty	ASP Coordinator LC	<a href="mailto:hannah.rafferty@gisbos.org">hannah.rafferty@gisbos.org</a> +1 (617) 352-9349 (2 - 6pm)
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 children every day on campus, no clusters, ASP in mixed groups, no online activities, no physical distancing or masks
	Adapted Regular School <b>Start August 26</b>	All children are on campus every day, clusters (morning and ASP), some remote teaching (German as a Second Language, English) to keep clusters isolated, physical distancing, masks
	Hybrid Modell	Smaller clusters, fewer people in the building, time on and off campus, online teaching and classroom teaching combined, physical distancing
	Remote Learning	No one in the building, off campus learning, online live teaching and offline material provided

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## 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>