

GPA's Commits to the Whole Child and the New State Mask Order for Children over 10

Dear Grand Peak Families,

If you haven't yet chosen a learning method for your children, at school or at home, please take just a moment to respond to the survey below. To those of you who have responded, thank you so much for your attention to this during summer. If you are unable to click the link, please copy the address and paste it in your browser. Responses are due today, Thursday, July 16th:

<https://forms.gle/2f93VJfReXPrwYud>

While we at GPA want and are required to take appropriate precautions while at school, we also recognize the humanness of each of your children. I have three children of my own and many of our staff are parents. In addition to the necessary and important safety measures, please know we are hard at work to make school as child-friendly, developmentally appropriate, and loving and welcoming as possible.

To this end, we are looking into staff masks with clear windows to help children better read the smiles and encouraging affect of their teachers. Our goal is to allow our students to form connections with their teachers by reading facial expressions, as well as to more easily access language learning by seeing teachers' mouths forming words, thereby increasing auditory comprehension.

We recognize that safety procedures in classrooms can appear and could possibly feel restrictive. Please also remember that all of our staff take the social-emotional learning of children to heart. Physical distancing won't impact our teachers' ability to be responsive to student needs, including the need to be physically active, to be social, to learn from each other, to grow in their academic skills, to build strong bonds with trusted adults, and to celebrate the everyday successes that live and breathe in our classrooms.

D-49 has announced the requirement that all students from 1st grade - 12th grade, along with all staff and visitors, wear masks throughout the day for in-person learning. The goal is to keep students, faculty, and staff as safe as possible. As we had described in our recent survey, Grand Peak Academy is aligned with the regulations set in place by the El Paso County Health Department and the District. We understand that each family may make different choices at home or at other places. However, in order for us to move forward with in-person learning, which is our goal, we will ask all families to understand the temporary need for this addition to our school dress code. If families feel strongly against masks for their children, our virtual in-person option will still allow students to participate in real-time with teachers and peers.

STATEWIDE MASK ORDER FOR CHILDREN OVER 10

Today, Governor Polis issued a statewide mask order for children over 10 years of age inside public buildings. GPA will obviously be following any orders issued by Governor Polis or local health officials.

We understand that young children wearing masks for periods of time will be an imperfect process, and we are ready and able to work with them and support them to be successful. If there are issues that arise with individual students (e.g., getting headaches or other complications), we will happily work with families and children to find an appropriate solution. If students arrive without masks, we will provide one mask for them, so that they can go to class without interruption. If this happens multiple times, we will follow the uniform code violation procedures and ask students to wait in the office for a parent to bring them the missing aspect of their uniform.

These are challenging times. Thus, we ask for your support as we prepare to greet your children with open hearts, and we are excited to welcome students back to our campus to allow the GPA community to grow and thrive in the coming months!

Sincerely,

Scott Hunter
Principal