

LOWER GWYNEDD ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

Dear Lower Gwynedd Families: The past four months have been like no other and we are all working through these unprecedented times together, but most importantly, I hope everyone is well! Things seem to be changing on a daily basis and the plans we put into place now could very well change based on orders from the Governor, or the Department of Health. My wife and I are also weighing our options as parents for our own two daughters and the educational path we want them to take for this coming school year. I want to thank you for your continued patience, grace, and understanding as I am still gathering information from many sources to navigate these uncharted waters. Most, if not all of your specific questions, can be found from the links that were sent out previously I ask that you review them again carefully as there is a wealth of information contained in them.

[FAQ from the Elementary School Principals: July 23, 2020](#)
[FAQ from the Elementary School Principals: July 16, 2020.](#)
[Fall Reopening Teaching and Learning Plan](#)
<https://www.wsdweb.org/covid-19/fall-re-opening-plan>

I wanted to provide you with some LGE specific information. I will tell you that our school is undergoing major construction right now, so access to the building has been very limited, even for me, as we are getting all new floors and you will see from the attached pictures below that the floors have been sanded down all the way down to the original concrete base. However, the gym lobby is finished with new terrazzo-style flooring and it looks amazing...see pictures below!

As you may have heard Dr. Crisfield share in the School Board meetings, we will social distance within the classroom to the *greatest extent possible*. Children will be required to wear masks, per the Governor's Orders, in the classroom unless they have a documented medical issue, which will be handled through revisions with your child's IEP team or 504 plan. Your case manager, or Mrs. Moon, School Counselor and Mrs. Lattanze, School Nurse handle those accommodations for further follow-up. At LGE, "to the greatest extent possible" means anywhere between 4 to 6 feet between students while in the classroom. This, of course, will depend on the enrollment in each classroom, which I cannot speak to specific enrollment numbers at this point as the class sizes will depend on your selection, and we continue to register new students. There will be every attempt made for those families who are registering for the virtual option to remain with their LGE peers as we know that is important, but again that will depend on the students enrolled. More information about the virtual learning option can be found on the district website link above. However, if there are not enough students in one grade level to make a full class (i.e. around 20-25 students) then there could be a need to balance the classes with students from other schools. The district will know more information in mid-August about enrollment and staffing from employees, and all class lists will be posted in Infinite Campus on August 24 and more information will be sent out later about this.

Cafeteria and Lunches

During lunchtime the students will not be wearing masks when they eat or drink, so we will need to accommodate that and adhere to the 6-foot distance. Fortunately, at LGE, we have plenty of space in our cafeteria and our tables can be separated easily with the bench and half-table to allow almost 80 students to eat in there with 6 feet apart and all students facing front. There will only be one grade level in there at a time, and if we need to create more space, we will utilize the LGI near the Library which will allow for an additional 25 students. Again, I would include a picture for your visualization, but right now due to flooring construction, the cafeteria is filled with supplies, desks, and furniture, but I assure you our cafeteria is quite large and spacious enough for social distancing to take place in there safely. Hand washing and/or sanitizing will take place before entering the cafeteria and after lunch in their classrooms. An allergy free table will still be made available for those who need one.

Typical Classroom at LGE

Below is an image from a typical LGE classroom. The students themselves would be seated 5-6 feet apart in this room (the 5 feet is measured by the student, not the end of the desk). There should be no more than 24 student desks in a classroom, which can be accomplished by 4 student desks in a row and up to 6 rows, if needed. This set up also allows for the teacher to be distanced 5-6 feet or greater from the students when the teacher is at the front of the room. The picture on the left is the sample of some of the rows set up in a room. Kindergarten classrooms will be similar but with tables, and Plexiglas dividers to allow for social distancing. The image in the middle is a sample of the hallway, which reflects the entire school right now, with the tile floors removed right down to the bare concrete. The new tile floors will be installed in the coming weeks, however, the last image is the new Gym Lobby and it looks truly amazing!



Limited Exposure to Other Students

Our Encore teachers, with the exception of Physical Education, will be traveling to our homerooms to conduct their lessons. While this will be a challenging task for our teachers, this will allow our students to remain in their classroom and reduce the likelihood they will be in contact with other cohorts of students. Our goal is to keep our students in their cohorts as much as possible.

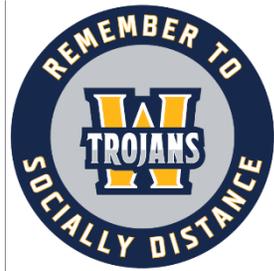
Recess and outdoor breaks will take place as a homeroom through the day, and not an entire grade level before lunch as we traditionally have done in the past. Our playground equipment will not be used, and recess areas will be separated into “zones” with various activities in each zone. The activities will not include shared equipment that can be touched with hands. The activities would be more like obstacle courses, time to run on the fields and blacktop, and other games that can be played without the use of hands, and without close contact between students. Mr. Jackson, our awesome PE teacher will work with students to brainstorm ideas for them to do safely while at recess. These are truly different times for our children at recess, but we all need to do our part to be safe. Masks will not be required at recess if students maintain 6 feet apart, but will be required to be worn when they line up to return inside the building, and hand washing and/or sanitizing will take place upon return to the classrooms. Opportunities for teachers to instruct outdoors safely will be provided, as we have plenty of open field space and blacktop surface area.

Arrival and Dismissal Procedures

We will be revising our arrival and dismissal procedures. This may mean adjustments to the carline area, as we will still begin drop off at 8:10AM, but may allow cars to drop off children as late as 8:30AM. More information will be forthcoming on this, but we need to be able to make sure our process not only allows for increased traffic, but also social distancing with increased staff out there. As we learn more about our enrollment, I will share those specific carline procedures with you in the coming weeks.

LGE Approach to Masks and Social Distancing

Procedures will be shared by the teachers as part of the first few days of routines that always takes place at the start of the school year. As we get closer to the start of the school year, it is recommended that a good practice is to have your children wear masks for extended periods of time to get acclimated to what is expected when in the school setting. Also, please continue to practice good hygiene with handwashing at home. These signs will be posted throughout the building as friendly reminders to maintain social distancing.



I hope that you will find some of this information helpful and again, please review the links that are included on the first page of this letter as that should answer most of your questions as my elementary principal colleagues and I tried to share what we have been asked about over the past few weeks. There will be more information that will be shared in the coming days and weeks. When I went into administration almost 20 years ago, pandemic training was not in my preparation courses so I am continuing to learn and evolve like the rest of you. I am grateful for your support, patience, and positive words, encouragement, and feedback received thus far, it truly means a lot to me! We are all in this together and I wish you the best for healthy and safe remaining weeks of summer, as I also plan to squeeze in a little family vacation time as well in this not-so-normal summer!

Warm Regards,

Dr. Matthew Walsh
LGE Principal