

GTCYS COVID-19 PROTOCOLS

Updated January 6, 2022 with future updates likely

Given the unique circumstances of the COVID-19 pandemic, GTCYS continues to follow principles and protocols to aid in mitigating the risk of virus transmission at GTCYS activities. A true spirit of community solidarity is necessary for these policies to be effective: we are all in this together and each student, parent/guardian, and staff has an important part to play to create the safest possible environment for each other. However, no policy can eliminate all risk or guarantee complete safety. Given that every family's health circumstances are unique, and families' comfort level with attending GTCYS activities may change throughout the season, GTCYS will provide a high level of communication, flexibility, and extra care to families as they work to navigate these protocols. Sincere thanks to all our families for understanding the challenges, entrusting us to provide a music experience for students, and complying with these protocols.

GTCYS' GUIDING PRINCIPLES FOR PLANNING

- Protect the health and safety of our students, staff, and the GTCYS community
- Sustain our mission to provide accessible, high-quality music education through ensemble experiences
- Support students, parents, and staff with clear policies and transparent communication, and a commitment to adapt with changing circumstances

HEALTH SCREENING

- **Required Health Assessment:** Parents/guardians (on behalf of their student), volunteers, and employees must conduct a [self-screening health assessment](#) prior to every GTCYS activity, including weekly rehearsals. This will be conducted on an honor system rather than submitting an online form.
- **Illness and Symptoms: No one may attend in-person activities if they are ill or have symptoms of any kind, COVID-19-related or otherwise** (fever of 100° F or above, sore throat, cough, shortness of breath, new loss of taste or smell, etc.). GTCYS strongly recommends that individuals who have any symptoms of illness get a negative COVID-19 test before returning to in-person GTCYS activities.
- If a student or volunteer experiences COVID-19 symptoms during a GTCYS activity, they must immediately report to onsite staff who will direct that individual to a pre-determined isolated space until transportation home can be arranged. GTCYS employees must notify their supervisor and go home immediately.
- GTCYS will support contact tracing efforts through clear and prompt reporting of known COVID-19 to parents/guardians, staff, and program venues, while respecting the privacy of individuals and applicable HIPAA requirements.
- In the event of a confirmed case of COVID-19 within a GTCYS orchestra, quarantines may be required depending on the level of contact and/or rehearsals may move online. These decisions will be further informed by MDH and CDC guidance and will be taken on a case-by-case basis.

COVID EXPOSURE

Household exposure: If a member of a GTCYS individual's household has been tested and diagnosed with a case of COVID-19 within the past 5 days, they should stay home from GTCYS, monitor for symptoms, and strongly consider taking a rapid antigen test (or PCR test) before attending the next in-person GTCYS activity. The rapid antigen test should be done the day of the GTCYS activity.

External exposure: If a GTCYS individual (student, volunteer, or employee) has been exposed to someone outside of their household who has COVID-19, they should monitor for symptoms and are strongly encouraged to take a rapid antigen or PCR test before attending the next in-person GTCYS activity. The rapid antigen test should be done the day of the GTCYS activity. Ideally, a rapid antigen test would also be taken the day prior to the activity. The PCR test should be done within 72 hours prior to the GTCYS activity.

CONFIRMED CASES

If a GTCYS individual (student, volunteer, or employee) has a confirmed case of COVID-19, they must complete the following steps before returning to in-person GTCYS activities:

1. **Report the case to GTCYS immediately.** Families should use the [GTCYS' COVID-19 student information form](#). Volunteers must notify GTCYS Program Director Miranda Bryan at miranda@gtcys.org. Employees must notify Executive Director Megen Balda at megen@gtcys.org.
2. **Isolate at home according to one of the following schedules (regardless of vaccination status) before returning to in-person GTCYS activities:**
 - Individuals may return after a 10-day isolation period* (on day 11 or later) without a negative rapid antigen or PCR test IF symptoms have resolved completely, including being fever-free without fever-reducing medicine for 24 hours; *OR*
 - Individuals may return after a 5-day isolation period* (on day 6 or later) IF they have had at least one negative rapid antigen or PCR test, AND symptoms have resolved completely, including being fever-free without fever-reducing medicine for 24 hours. At this time, we will operate on the honor system and will not ask to see individual test results. We are counting on families to uphold this policy with integrity.
 - *The isolation period starts with the onset of symptoms, or after a positive PCR or antigen test if the student is asymptomatic.
3. **Be completely free of symptoms.** With either schedule above, individuals must not have symptoms of any kind when returning to GTCYS in-person activities.

MASKING

Universal masking is required for all individuals at GTCYS indoor, in-person activities, regardless of vaccination status. Beginning on January 6, 2022:

- **NEW: All GTCYS individuals (students, volunteers, and employees) must wear:**
 - N95 or KN95/KN94 masks *OR*
 - Double mask with two surgical masks or a surgical mask underneath with a cloth mask on top
 - Cloth masks alone will not be allowed
- **NEW: Rather than double masking, winds and brass will wear adaptive musician's masks.** Instrument covers and bell covers will not be required, though students are welcome to use them if they wish.
- Conductors will be masked and amplified with a microphone

HYGIENE & CLEANING PROTOCOLS

- Upon arrival and before entering the activity space, everyone must sanitize hands (sanitizer provided by GTCYS)
- All shared orchestra equipment (chairs, percussion instruments, etc.) and high touch points will be disinfected between each use.
- Everyone must practice proper respiratory etiquette (cover nose and mouth when coughing or sneezing).
- The use of disposable pads to collect condensation water will be required for all brass players. GTCYS will provide the pads and require students to dispose of the pads at the end of the activity and sanitize their hands immediately thereafter.

ATTENDANCE POLICY

- **A flexible attendance policy will allow for health-related absences without penalty.**
- Students must stay home if they have symptoms of any kind; a [weekly pre-rehearsal self-screening health questionnaire](#) will be used on an honor system rather than submitting an online form.

REHEARSALS

- **Spacing:**
 - Students will be spread out as much as possible in our rehearsal venues
 - String players will not share stands at rehearsals for the time being
- **Livestreams:** Each rehearsal will be livestreamed so absent students can participate from home if they are able.
- **Closed rehearsals:** Our venues will be closed to parents and guests to minimize the spread of COVID; we hope to adjust this policy as the season progresses.
- **Food and beverages** will not be allowed at program sites, except for bottled water which individuals may bring on their own.

OTHER PROGRAM ACTIVITIES

- **Concerts:** GTCYS will follow any COVID-related policies in place at venues at which our students perform. In the event that a venue's policies are less stringent than GTCYS', our policies will be followed. Audience protocols will be announced for each concert.
- **Retreats:** Social camaraderie is an important part of the GTCYS experience. This year's annual fall and winter retreats will be shorter than pre-COVID retreats, but still full of music-making and social activities.
- **Sectionals and seating auditions:** Sectionals with professional musicians are woven in throughout the year and will be led by fully vaccinated adults.

VACCINATION

All GTCYS employees are required to be fully vaccinated. All adults working directly with GTCYS youth – volunteers, sectional coaches and judges – are also required to be fully vaccinated.

ADAPTABILITY

GTCYS will continue to adapt our policies and programming as the COVID situation evolves.