

Spring 2021 Frequently Asked Questions

RESIDENCY SCHEDULE

(Note: Staff and faculty will meet virtually for their scheduled professional development day on Monday, January 4, 2021 and virtual instruction will resume as scheduled on Tuesday, January 5)

When will students be on campus?

We plan to start 2021 with two senior residencies:

- **Senior I (January 18-29):** Drama; Visual Arts; and Music: Woodwinds, Brass, Percussion, Piano
- **Senior II (January 31-February 12):** Creative Writing; Dance; and Music: Strings and Voice

All students are then in residency in rotations by discipline:

- **Spring I (February 21-March 4):** Creative Writing and Music: Voice and Piano
- **Spring II (March 14-25):** Visual Arts: Juniors; Dance: Seniors; Music: Strings
- **Spring III (April 5-16):** Visual Arts: Seniors; Dance: Sophomores/Juniors; Music: Brass/Percussion
- **Spring IV (April 18-29):** Drama; Music: Woodwinds

All students will be in residence for the month of May, with students arriving on May 1 and 2.

Why isn't this the same as the fall schedule?

As was true in our planning for the current semester, this schedule is built around the curriculum and instruction in each program and in consultation with department chairs and faculty. Dance, Drama, and Music share facilities, so this is also a consideration in the schedule. Seeking the single-occupancy room capacity required shifting and/or dividing some departments. Finally, lessons learned in our first set of residencies helped us spread students more effectively for next semester.

What about academic classes?

Academic classes will continue to meet virtually during the two-week residencies, with opportunities for in-person instruction at the teacher's discretion. For example, students in residence did a hands-on science lab this fall while other students joined online. During the full residency in May, in-person instruction will resume for academic courses, since students would not be able to work from their rooms or limited campus spaces. (Note: VirtualSC courses will continue in an online format through the end of the year or until the student completes the course).

STUDENT LIFE, HOUSING, AND DINING

Will students be required to share rooms or suites during the residencies?

During each two-week residency, students will be housed in single rooms and, as much as possible, in single suites. We will seek volunteers prior to assigning students in suites and then, if necessary, choose students randomly. During the four-week residency, all students will be housed in double-occupancy rooms.

Will families be required to pay for meal service during the spring residency periods?

Thanks to the generous support of the SC Governor's School Foundation, all student food costs will be covered for the 2-week residency periods. Families will be charged for food service during the 4-week period during May. If a student was awarded financial support for this school year, the foundation will provide assistance for the 4-week period in May.

How will the school address individual dietary needs or restrictions?

We will continue to work with students' special dietary needs. This will be an item on the forthcoming spring survey. Please respond in a timely manner so that we can plan meals with Aramark.

My student is assigned to the final two-week residency. Can they just stay on campus until the four-week session? Can they leave their belongings?

Unfortunately, no, they cannot. Between each residency session our facilities team will be cleaning all campus spaces. This requires that residence hall rooms be vacant and empty.

Will the school continue to allow virtual or day students?

Yes, for the remainder of the 2020-2021 school year, students in the local area may continue to participate as day students. Students may also participate as virtual students for the remainder of the year. Families should respond to the spring survey to indicate their plans.

During the 4-week all-student residency, will students be responsible for cleaning their bathrooms?

Yes! During each residency, students are responsible for cleaning their assigned bathroom. During the 4-week residency when all students will be sharing a bathroom, they should coordinate with their roommate and suitemates.

Will students still be able to receive rides to and from the airport? If they fly, may they return to campus?

Student Life staff will continue to provide transportation to Greenville-Spartanburg International Airport during designated hours. Students needing transportation assistance should contact the Student Life office.

What is the schedule for arrival and departure for each residency?

For the two-week residencies, we will use a similar schedule to the fall.

Students will **arrive** between 2:00 p.m. and 5:00 p.m.

- Lowcountry - 2:00 p.m.
- Midlands - 3:00 p.m.

- Upstate - 4:00 p.m.

Students will **depart** from 4:45 - 6:15 p.m.

- Lowcountry - 4:45 p.m.
- Midlands - 5:15 p.m.
- Upstate - 5:45 p.m.

For the May residency, students will arrive as assigned on Saturday, May 1 and Sunday, May 2. Each day will have two check-in windows: 9:30 - 11:30 a.m. and 2:00 - 4:00 p.m. Students will arrive in the order of their 2-week residency. End-of-year departure will be in alignment with the end-of-year schedule.

END-OF-YEAR ACTIVITIES AND EVENTS

Will students be able to perform or exhibit their work this spring?

As you see in our reopening plan, we will Livestream readings, solo and/or chamber work next semester, in lieu of large, in-person events. Plans are in the works for a mid-May showcase of student work, using the Gunter Theater at the Peace Center. This venue and timing would ideally allow us to organize a series of performances which would be Livestreamed if seating a live audience is not a viable option.

When will students take spring standardized tests?

Sophomores and juniors who did not take the PSAT this fall will be invited to campus for a noon administration on January 26. We will schedule school-day SAT testing for juniors during each residency February - April. Students who would prefer to take the ACT should schedule that at a testing site at home. In order to maximize the residency experiences, we will not provide transportation to additional SAT/ACT test administrations while they are in Greenville. Juniors and seniors will take the WIN test during their residency as schedules permit. We are awaiting a final decision on End-of-Course testing in relevant courses. Students will be on campus for the two weeks of AP testing in May.

What will end-of-year activities be like?

We are planning a full, in-person conclusion to the school year. This includes our annual Celebration of Achievement on May 27 and Commencement Ceremony on May 28 at the Peace Center for the Performing Arts. At this time, we anticipate that these events will be ticketed with a limited number of guests per student to facilitate social distancing. These events will be Livestreamed to provide access to additional family members, staff, and faculty. Our Graduation Committee is hard at work on these plans and will share more information early in the spring semester. Additionally, our Student Life staff members and the Alumni Office are working to promote and continue our senior traditions and activities.

Will there be a prom?

The Student Life staff are currently working on plans for a formal event during May. Plans are tentative as we consider healthcare restrictions and student schedules. More information will be distributed in mid-Spring.

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HEALTH, VACCINES, AND TESTING

How is the school continuing to support mental and physical health during the pandemic?

Health and wellness services continue to be available both in-person and using a telehealth model. We recognize the increased stress, anxiety, and isolation felt by our students (and those around the nation). Several measures implemented this fall—such as FLEX Fridays, reduced courseload, an abbreviated instructional day, a no homework policy—will continue in the spring semester in order to address these concerns. Staff also work to build and sustain a strong school community, which in and of itself supports students and increases connections.

Are the School's plans based on the availability of a vaccine?

No, the school's plans were developed with the assumption that a vaccine will not be readily available to our campus community in Spring 2021.

If a vaccine is available will the school adjust its plans?

We will continue to monitor and adjust plans based upon health care metrics and advice as provided by the South Carolina Department of Health and Environmental Control (DHEC). COVID-19 continues to provide new and unique challenges to our school and all educational institutions.

Will the Governor's School test students and/or employees for COVID-19?

In his press conference on Thursday, November 19, Governor Henry McMaster indicated that schools will begin receiving testing supplies and training from DHEC. As with all public schools in South Carolina, we are awaiting further guidance on this process. At this time, indications are that testing will be for symptomatic individuals and not for surveillance purposes.

Will testing be mandatory when implemented?

At this time, Governor McMaster and the South Carolina Department of Education have indicated that testing will be voluntary and will require parent permission for students.

If a student is exposed/showing symptoms/tests positive, may they quarantine or isolate at school to prevent the spread of illness to families?

Students who are exposed, are exhibiting potential COVID-19 symptoms, or test positive for COVID-19 must be excluded from school in accordance with DHEC standards, including the School Exclusion List. The quarantine and isolation guidelines in effect at the time of the incident will be utilized. The school has set aside two residence hall rooms for students who are ill to facilitate isolation while we await parents' arrival in Greenville. These are not intended to be long-term housing for students.

Who will be notified if a member of the community is ill?

If a member of our school community becomes ill, we will follow the DHEC protocols and guidance in place at that time. At this point, notification is for those with a confirmed case of COVID-19 and those guidelines differentiate between close contacts (those with cumulative daily exposure of fifteen minutes or more within six feet) and casual contacts. At this time, the school does not notify those who would not have reasonably come in contact with the infected individuals.

SAFETY PRECAUTIONS AND PROTOCOLS

Will students and/or employees be required to quarantine prior to the beginning of a session?

The Governor's School supports all current health protocols, including social distancing, avoiding large gatherings, and wearing of masks. We ask families to make responsible decisions related to these issues. We do not have the authority to enforce or monitor a quarantine period.

Will students be allowed off campus during the residencies?

We do not plan to allow students off-campus during the 2-week residencies and do plan to do so during the 4-week session. As with other elements, this plan may be adjusted if local health conditions improve. Parents always have the option to restrict their student to campus if they wish to do so.

Why doesn't the Governor's School just close campus and/or prevent students from leaving?

To support the varied activities that occur on our campus, over 175 full-time and part-time Governor's School employees work on our campus each week. As these individuals must come and go from campus, we cannot secure the facilities. Equally, while some families have indicated a willingness to leave their child on campus for extended periods, this feeling is by no means universal nor can the school prevent access by custodial parents/legal guardians.

Can't you just eliminate breaks from the calendar?

We believe that a balance of types of engagement is important to students' social and emotional well-being, including time with families. Just as we are scheduling time on campus for students to engage with faculty and one another, we are committed to maintaining time for families to be united.

What mitigation measures will the school have in place?

The school will continue its layered approach to protection into the spring semester. These include:

- Personal Controls - Individuals' behaviors to protect themselves and those around them. This includes the use of face masks, frequent hand-washing, and practicing social distancing.
- Administrative Controls - Processes and policies that keep people safe. This includes school practices and procedures for shared workspaces, mask wearing on campus, signage for social distancing and other COVID-19 related protocols.
- Engineering Controls - Physical structures put in place to distance people from hazards. This includes reduced classroom and dining hall seating capacity to ensure social distancing and use of HEPA filter units in areas used for high aerosol dispersing activities.

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GENERAL/SCHOOLWIDE CONSIDERATIONS

Why don't all South Carolina schools or all Governor's Schools have the same plan?

Each school/district is uniquely situated and must respond to their local needs and conditions. Each of the Governor's Schools has its own Board of Directors/Trustees to oversee school operations. Molly Spearman, State Superintendent of Education, has authorized each school to develop the plan that is most appropriate to its needs.

I've heard that John de la Howe and/or GSSM are opening fully in the spring. Why isn't SCGSAH?

Each Governor's School has a unique campus and needs. The specialized curriculum of each school drives its offerings and options. Our arts curriculum requires extensive collaborative experiences and specialized spaces to support students' needs. In Dance, Drama, and Music, students and faculty are engaging in work that produces high rates of aerosol spread, so current research on best practices for the performing arts was a vital part of our planning and decision-making. Additionally, John de la Howe currently enrolls less than 35 students yet has a 1,200 acre campus with extensive infrastructure. GSSM has approximately 18 acres for a student body of 288 and is planning a mix of in-person and virtual experiences. We are also mindful of the current health data for the Greenville/Upstate, which shows far higher incidence rates of COVID-19 than McCormick and Darlington counties. As noted in GSSM's plan, modifications may be made if Darlington County reaches a high rate of incidence; the number of confirmed COVID-19 cases in the Upstate continues to outpace other South Carolina regions. Greenville County reported the most new positive cases in South Carolina on Saturday, November 28.

Many colleges are allowing faculty to choose where to teach. Why don't you just let faculty teach from home?

The nature of a boarding school requires many individuals to support life on campus. This round-the-clock responsibility necessitates in-person faculty for supervision during the day, Student Life staff in the evenings and overnight, and many operational roles to support the work. Unlike colleges and universities, boarding high schools have the additional responsibility of working with minors. Additionally, there is not physical or technological capacity for all academic classes to be taught remotely.

Many/most South Carolina schools have resumed five-day in-person instruction. Why doesn't the Governor's School do the same?

At this time, most South Carolina school districts are continuing to use hybrid models of instruction. A current survey of districts' operational status may be found at <https://ed.sc.gov/districts-schools/schools/district-and-school-closures/operational-status>. Districts using hybrid models include Greenville County Schools and its affiliated Fine Arts Center, at which students attend two days per week. With the current rise in cases, some schools/districts are considering returning to virtual instruction.