



### Orthodox Christmas

Today, January 7, 2022 marks Christmas for Orthodox Christians. Merry Christmas to all of our families celebrating today. This date is due to the use of the [Julian Calendar](#) as opposed to the [Gregorian Calendar](#). For more about Orthodox Christmas navigate to [Orthodox Christmas Day](#)

### Perihelion Day

Tuesday, January 4, 2022, was Perihelion Day. Perihelion Day is the day of the year when the sun is closest to the Earth. On January 4th, the center of the earth was 91,406,842 million miles from the center of the sun. On July 4, 2022, we will celebrate Aphelion Day. That is the day when the sun is farthest away from the earth. On July 4, 2022, the sun will be 94,509,598 miles away from the Earth. For more information about Perihelion Day navigate to [Space.com Perihelion Day 2022](#).

### Commissioner Riley

On Wednesday, we heard from Commissioner Riley about a variety of topics. Including that DESE will make a decision on the current mask mandate (set to expire on January 15, 2022) early next week. He also reiterated his appreciation for all that everyone is doing to keep our schools open, healthy, and safe. As part of his presentation, we heard from Dr. Westyn Branch-Elliam who reiterated the important role schools play in keeping our communities working. She talked about the important role schools play in protecting the healthcare system as part of a community network. The commissioner also told us that there would be new FAQ documents coming soon on the connection between CDC and DESE/DPH guidance and about potential changes to contact tracing. That document came out yesterday and can be accessed at [DESE COVID-19 FAQ January 6, 2022 Update](#)

### Child-sized KN95 Masks

Thank you to BEST (Bedford Elementary Schools Together) as they work to secure child-sized KN95 masks for Davis and Lane. As soon as those are available we will let you know. In the meantime, we do have a large selection of child-sized non-medical disposable masks at Davis and Lane for anyone who needs them. We also have a large selection of adult-sized non-medical disposable masks at all four schools for anyone who needs them.

### Adult-sized KN95 and N95 Masks

Adult-sized KN95 and N95 masks are available at all four schools and from the nurses at each school. Please feel free to take a mask if you need one.

Please note that masks are required in all of our buildings and that proper use of masks will be particularly important during the current Omicron surge.

### CDC Isolation and Quarantine changes

CDC changed its guidance on Isolation protocols. CDC: [CDC Quarantine and Isolation Update](#)  
These changes have prompted DESE and DPH to review their isolation and quarantining

protocols as well. Isolation is the time someone who is COVID-19 positive must spend in isolation and away from others. The protocol previously was ten (10) days and has been reduced to five (5) days. DESE/DPH has endorsed this change. DESE has updated the isolation and close contact protocols. This information can be found at [DESE/DPH Protocols COVID-19 Scenarios Updated 12/30/2021](#).

Isolation is for anyone regardless of vaccination status who has tested positive for COVID-19. Quarantine is for close contact with a positive COVID-19 individual. The current information from DPH is at [About COVID-19 isolation and quarantine](#) and the DESE update is at [DESE/DPH Protocols COVID-19 Scenarios Updated 12/30/2021](#).

If you test positive for COVID-19 (regardless of vaccination status) you should:

- Stay home and remain isolated for 5 Days
- Consider the first day with symptoms or the day you test positive as Day Zero (0)
- As long as you have NO SYMPTOMS
  - You may return to school on Day Six (6)
  - Continue to wear a mask around others for an additional five (5) days
  - You have been fever-free without fever-reducing medication for Twenty-Four (24) hours

As a reminder, isolation keeps someone who is sick and has tested positive for COVID-19 away from others (even in their own home) while quarantine keeps someone who is a close contact of someone with COVID-19 away from others.

Finally, to assist all of us DESE has created an updated FAQ document that can be found at [DESE COVID-19 FAQ January 6, 2022 Update](#)

### Safety Check Testing

It is important to note that our COVID-19 safety check testing protocol is up and running weekly at each school. We urge everyone to sign up to be part of our protective testing program.

This week with the surge in cases, there has been a delay in our receiving results from CIC Health. At JGMS the results from Monday were reported on Thursday and there were 5 positive cases as a result. Those individuals have been notified and are isolated at home. We have not received the results from Tuesday testing at Lane School or Wednesday testing from BHS and Davis School yet. Any individual positive cases that are identified will be notified directly via email.

If you have not done so already and would like to you can sign up for testing at

[BPS COVID-19 Testing Sign Up Link](#)

By signing up for testing you provide an additional layer of protection for your child, your family, and our schools. I cannot urge you strongly enough to participate in this free service. The percent of students and staff who are participating in Safety Check Testing has increased. At

Davis and Lane, we are at about 60% of students and staff, at JGMS we are at about 40% of students and staff, and at BHS about 15% of students and staff have signed up for testing.

### Contact Tracing

As you can imagine with the large number of cases that increased this week, the school nurses in conjunction with the Bedford Department of Health and Human Services are doing their very best to contact trace our school cases.

Please understand that our nursing staff will be triaging contact tracing in the following order:

- If your child tests positive you will receive notification if your child tests positive through our Safety Check Testing, or at school symptomatic testing
- For the elementary schools all families will be notified when someone in your child's class reports a positive test result for COVID-19
  - If your child is fully vaccinated you should monitor symptoms for 10 days
  - If your child is unvaccinated your notification will include information about options for participation in our Test and Stay Program or quarantine.
  - If there is a positive case at your child's school those cases will continue to be reported on the Bedford [COVID-19 Dashboard](#)
- For JMGS and BHS cases will be added to the COVID -19 dashboard daily.
- Due to the increase in cases that emerged this week, we will be working with the Bedford Health Department and their contact tracers. The contact tracers will follow up with the positive cases to determine close contacts. From there the priority of notification will be any close contacts that are not vaccinated and who have been within 0-3 feet of distance for at least 15 minutes.

### COVID Case Updates

Please check the link below to review current and past cases of COVID-19 cases within our school community. Thank you to our school nurses who have been working to update the case numbers from Thursday, December 23, 2021, through Thursday, January 76, 2022. In that time period, we have had a total of 184 cases. Our case information is broken out by school below:

Davis School had 17 cases during break and 9 cases this week  
Lane School had 32 cases during break and 19 cases this week  
JGMS had 27 cases during break and 21 cases this week  
BHS had 24 cases during break and 35 cases this week  
BPS had a 100 total cases during break and 84 cases this week

[Link to COVID-19 Cases in the Bedford Public Schools This Week](#)

### COVID-19 Symptoms Reminder

As a reminder, please keep in mind that people with COVID-19 have had a wide range of symptoms reported. Symptoms can range from mild symptoms to severe illness. Symptoms

may appear 2-14 days after exposure to the virus. Anyone can have mild to severe symptoms. People with these symptoms may have COVID-19:

- Fever or chills
- Cough
- Shortness of breath or difficulty breathing
- Fatigue
- Muscle or body aches
- Headache
- New loss of taste or smell
- Sore throat
- Congestion or runny nose
- Nausea or vomiting
- Diarrhea

This list does not include all possible symptoms. The CDC continued to update this list as they learn more about COVID-19. For more information please navigate to the [CDC Symptoms Web Site](#)

#### Superintendent's Blog

Please take a moment to review the latest news on the [Superintendent's Blog](#). Assistant Superintendent Dr. Tricia Clifford has outlined our continuous focus on student learning and our use of the [DESE Acceleration Roadmap](#) this academic year.

#### Budget

On Tuesday, December 21, 2021, we presented the FY23 Budget to the School Committee. We will continue our discussion at our next meeting on Tuesday, January 11, 2022. The process will continue with a line item review on Tuesday, January 18, 2022. A budget hearing and final vote are scheduled for Tuesday, January 25, 2022, with a presentation to the Bedford Finance Committee on Thursday, January 27, 2022. Please feel free to join us virtually for the meetings. If you are not able to join us, know that all of the presented materials will be posted to our BPS website later next week.

#### Bedford Embraces Diversity, Parent Diversity Council, and Bedford METCO Events

##### Monday, January 17, 2022 at 9:30 am

Please join Bedford Embraces Diversity, the Parents Diversity Council, and Bedford METCO for a virtual Martin Luther King Jr. Day event beginning at 9:30 am on Monday, January 17, 2022. The event will feature Regie Gibson of Lexington, a poet, songwriter, author, workshop facilitator, and educator who has been teaching and performing for the past generation. BED and PDC are working with Akil Mondesir, our METCO coordinator, to assemble a panel of current and former METCO parents. The question-and-answer format will explore the families' assessment of the strengths of the program in Bedford and what could be improved, as well as

ways in which local residents can learn from their fellow students and families from Boston. To obtain the Zoom link email: [bedfordembracesdiversity@gmail.com](mailto:bedfordembracesdiversity@gmail.com).

Friday, January 21, 2022 at 6:30 pm

Saturday, January 15th marks Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.'s 93rd birthday, and January 17th is the federal holiday recognizing the Civil Rights leader. In partnership with Bedford Public Schools METCO Director/DEI Coordinator Akil Mondesir, our school communities will honor Dr. King's life and legacy with a virtual event on Friday, January 21, 2022, at 6:30 pm on Zoom.

Our keynote speaker is Ron Jones, an Emmy Award winner and Executive Director/Artistic Principal of [Dialogues on Diversity](#). Mr. Jones will present a performance lecture titled: MLK and the Strength of Shared Dreams. Through live character portrayal and video, MLK and the Strength of Shared Dreams depict how MLK's "Poor People's Campaign" was a turning point in intersectional advocacy. I hope that you will join us for this event on January 21st. Please [click here for the event flier](#), and [RSVP in order to receive a zoom link in advance](#). If you have any questions or concerns, please contact Andrew K. Nyamekye, Director of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion for Concord and Concord-Carlisle Public Schools at [anyamekye@concordps.org](mailto:anyamekye@concordps.org).

January 27, 2022, at 7:00 pm

Please join the Parents Diversity Council for a special workshop for parents and caregivers entitled The ABCs of Racism: Fostering Conversations about Race and Action with Kids. This virtual event will be held on January 27, 2022, from 7 until 9 PM, via Zoom. This program is geared for all audiences as it explores fundamental concepts of systemic racism, the barriers that block us from engaging with kids around race and racism, the social science of race awareness in children, and strategies to start and sustain antiracist action in school and at home. Presented in collaboration with Wee the People. To RSVP for the zoom link, email [pdcbedford@gmail.com](mailto:pdcbedford@gmail.com)

Positions available

The Bedford Public Schools are seeking substitute teachers and Special Education Teaching Assistants. If you are interested please apply at [BPS Substitutes](#) or to [BPS Special Education Teaching Assistants](#).

As always, thank you for your patience, your participation, and your continued commitment to our schools.

Sincerely,

Philip Conrad  
Superintendent