



## Preparing for Back to School Fall 2021

As much as we hoped that our world would return to 'normal' this Fall, sadly the threat of COVID-19, and its variants, has not made it possible.

We will continue to monitor community trends, consult with the Bedford Health Department, the Massachusetts Department of Public Health and the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education to modify our policies as necessary to insure the safety of our staff, students, their families and our community

In order to maximize protection from the Delta variant and prevent possibly spreading it to others, to start the 2020-2021 school year, the Bedford Public Schools will adhere to the following protocols as outlined below. The status of the virus will be monitored closely and modifications to these protocols will be adjusted in collaboration with the Bedford Health Department.

### **Student and Staff Daily Self Monitoring**

As we start the school year it continues to be extremely important that students and staff complete the daily screening checklist each day prior to coming into the schools.

COVID-19 is a highly contagious respiratory, droplet-borne virus. Families play a critical role in supporting schools and helping to mitigate COVID-19 transmission within the school community. Students should not come to school if they are presenting any symptoms of COVID-19 or any infectious illness.

Parents and guardians please check each of your children each day BEFORE school at home before sending your child to school.

If your child is absent from school, please indicate the reason on the absence line. If your child has symptoms on the COVID screening checklist, or your child is a close contact or your child has tested positive for COVID-19 please reach out to your school nurse directly.

### **[Daily Screening Checklist](#)**

### **Vaccination**

If your student or family member is eligible please get vaccinated. If you have questions or concerns about the safety and efficacy of vaccination please reach out to your primary care provider to discuss this very important method of safeguarding your child, family, school staff and community against the COVID virus and its variants. We encourage all who are eligible to become vaccinated.

### **Masks**

All Bedford Public Schools students and staff are required to wear a mask while indoors at school and on the bus. This is for everyone both vaccinated and unvaccinated. Masks are not required outdoors

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At this time, it is believed that COVID-19 spreads mainly from person to person through respiratory droplets produced when an infected person coughs, sneezes, talks, shouts or sings. These droplets

can land in the mouths or noses of people who are nearby or possibly be inhaled into the lungs. Masks or face coverings are one of the critical components of risk reduction. Wearing a mask/face covering acts as a barrier and helps to prevent spread of the virus. To reduce the spread of COVID-19, at this time, the Center for Disease Control (CDC), the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE), and the Massachusetts Department of Public Health (DPH) recommend that face masks be worn in PK-8 schools and 9-12.

## Mask Guidelines

- Fit snugly but comfortably against the side of the face
- Cover your **mouth AND your nose**
- Be secured with ties or ear loops
- Include multiple layers of fabric
- Allow for breathing without restriction
- Be able to be laundered and machine dried without damage or change to shape if cloth
- Disposable masks are permitted, but must be new one daily (Not reused)

## Face Coverings NOT allowed School

- Bandanas
- Gaiter face coverings
- Face masks that have an exhalation valve

## Hydration

Please supply your student with a water bottle for use at school. Water bottle refill stations are available at the Middle and High Schools. Please be sure to label your child's water bottle.

## Testing

We are planning to continue with weekly pooled testing for students and staff. We are currently investigating how this will be set up and will update families as soon as possible. Covid Safety Checks (pooled COVID testing) is another valuable mitigation strategy.

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### Need to reach your school nurse?

Please do not hesitate to contact your school nurse with any questions. Please be sure to reach out if your child is ill, has been identified as a close contact to someone with COVID-19, or has tested positive..

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<b>Tracy Fernald</b>	JGMS	<a href="mailto:Tracy_Fernald@bedfordps.org">Tracy_Fernald@bedfordps.org</a>	781-275-3165
<b>Kathy Webster</b>	Lane	<a href="mailto:Kathy_Webster@bedfordps.org">Kathy_Webster@bedfordps.org</a>	781-275-7623
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For Information on DESE COVID Protocols in schools please refer to the following links:

[DESE Protocols for Responding to COVID-19 Scenarios](#)  
[COVID-19 Protocols Flowcharts August 30, 2021](#)

