



Town of Bedford

97 McMahon Road

Bedfordps.org

Superintendent Update

If you need this document translated, please call your child's school principal - Si necesita este documento traducido, por favor comuníquese con la escuela de su hijo - Se você precisa este documento traduzido, entre em contato com a escola dos seus filhos - Si vous avez besoin de traduire ce document, s'il vous plaît contacter l'école de votre enfant - 如果你需要这份文件翻译, 请联系您的孩子的 - 学校 - إذا كنت تحتاج /تحتاجين إلى ترجمة هذه الوثيقة إلى اللغة العربية، - 学校 - يرجى الاتصال بمدرسة طفلك/طفلاتك - Если вам нужна помощь с переводом этого документа, позвоните директору школы вашего ребёнка

Friday, February 11, 2022

Hello Bedford School Community,

DESE Mask Mandate

On Wednesday morning superintendents from around the state met with Elementary and Secondary Education Commissioner Riley where he released a memorandum that stated:

“After consulting with medical experts and state health officials, the Commissioner will not renew the state mask requirement after it expires on February 28, 2022. Effective Monday, February 28, the DESE mask requirement will be lifted statewide. The Commonwealth's high vaccination rates and widespread availability of COVID-19 testing for school personnel and students support this decision.”

The Commissioner stated that masking after February 28, 2022, will be an option for those who wish to continue to mask unless a local mandate is put into place. Masking is recommended for those who face a higher risk from COVID-19. DESE and DPH continue to strongly recommend unvaccinated individuals continue to wear masks in school settings. The Commissioner also stated that the department will continue to monitor health data, consult with medical experts and state officials, and issue further guidance and/or requirements as needed. In his announcement, the Commissioner also recommended people refer to [The joint DESE/DPH Protocols document updated on January 31, 2022](#). To read the commissioner's entire statement from today please navigate to [Commissioner's Memo 2/9/2022](#)

At a Wednesday morning press conference, Governor Baker announced the DESE decision and reiterated the importance of vaccinations and testing as two strategies that will assist us in keeping our schools safe. The governor discussed the desire to return to “normalcy” in the classroom. He was also quick to reiterate that mask-wearing is an individual decision and that a decision by a student or educator to wear a mask should be respected. Governor Baker also addressed the difference between the CDC’s national recommendations and DPH/DESE’s more localized recommendation. Both the Commissioner and the Governor mentioned the high vaccination rates in Massachusetts as well as the availability of pooled/safety testing and at-home antigen testing for all educators and students.

As we have throughout the COVID-19 pandemic the Bedford Public Schools will follow the DESE guidance. Therefore masks will become an individual choice on February 28, 2022. It is my hope and expectation that all personal decisions to or not to wear a mask will be respected. Please keep in mind that for infected individuals the current guidelines require masks be worn within the ten-day infection period.

In alignment with the DESE and DPH guidance:

- Anyone who tests positive for COVID-19 will need to wear a mask after a 5-day isolation and/or quarantine period when around others for an additional five days, except when eating, drinking, or outdoors.
- Individuals who experience COVID-19 symptoms should stay home and obtain testing. If they receive a negative result and their symptoms improve (including remaining fever-free for a 24 hour period without fever-reducing medication), they can return to school but should continue to wear a mask until their symptoms fully resolve.
- Unvaccinated individuals should continue to wear a mask in school settings.

Please note:

Masks will become an individual choice on February 28, 2022.

Masks are still required in all Bedford Public Schools through Friday, February 18, 2022.

Masks are also still required on all school buses and will continue to be required until and unless the Federal Department of Transportation lifts its Federal mask mandate. For more information see [US DOT FAQ](#).

DESE/DPH COVID Testing Program Opt-in Home Tests

[The DESE/DPH COVID-19 Testing Program](#) provides a test kit to anyone who opts into the program. This program is in addition to our pooled and symptomatic testing programs. Everyone who opts in will receive a new kit every two weeks. If you would like to opt-in to the program please navigate to the [At-Home Antigen Test Opt-In Google Form](#)

Next week all students and staff who OPT-IN will receive a home test kit (2 tests per kit). It is recommended that everyone use a test on their recommended home testing day.

Days are determined by the school attended and then also test on Sunday, February 27, 2022, prior to returning to school after the February break.

Please sign up by Monday afternoon by 5 PM, to set our distribution lists for each school. The home tests are meant to offset the testing days done at school so that there are two days a week of testing monitoring being done.

DESE Recommended Testing Schedule

School	In-school testing	At home testing
JGMS	Monday	Thursday
Lane	Tuesday	Friday
Davis	Wednesday	Sunday
BHS	Wednesday	Sunday

It is important to note that this program is available to all who opt-in regardless of whether you are enrolled in pooled testing or not. The link to the opt-in form will allow you access to a two-week (at a time) supply of in-home antigen COVID-19 tests. These tests will augment our pooled tests giving each of us the opportunity to have two COVID-19 tests per week.

To be clear, both programs are voluntary and both are independent of one another. You can sign up for one or both. The at-home test should be used weekly, regardless of whether you have symptoms. If your child tests positive on an at-home antigen test, they should stay home and you are asked to inform your school nurse of the positive result.

Click Here to opt-in to [At-Home Antigen Test Opt-In Google Form](#)

Click here to view a video on [How to use the iHealth COVID 19 Test](#)

Click here for instructions [on how to use the iHealth COVID 19 Test in multiple languages](#)

Click here to consent to the ongoing Pooled Testing [Pooled-Testing Consent Form](#)

NEW COVID-19 Email Addresses

Please continue to utilize the COVID-19 email addresses for all COVID-19 related inquiries.

For the Davis School please email: daviscovid@bedfordps.org

For the Lane School please email lanecovid@bedfordps.org

For JGMS please email jgmscovid@bedfordps.org

For BHS please email bhscovid@bedfordps.org

All cases of COVID-19 (both home tests and tests from a medical provider) should be reported to your child's school nurse using the above-listed email addresses. When reporting a positive case of COVID-19 please include the following information.

- Name of child
- Grade of child
- Date of symptom onset or the date the positive test was taken
- Date of testing and type of test performed (PCR or antigen)
- If the positive test was obtained from a home test, if possible, please schedule a PCR lab test to confirm.
- Date the last time your child was present in school
- Does your child attend school activities or sports and list the activity or team

Case Update Information

Moving forward we will continue to track reported positive student and staff cases via self-administered home-style antigen tests, as well as point of care tests (either PCR, rapid PCR, or rapid antigen). DESE guidance has been updated, and with the shortage of testing available, self-administered home-style antigen tests with a positive result are accepted and treated as a positive case of COVID-19. The dashboard is now up-to-date and can be accessed here:

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

Please be sure to report any positive COVID-19 test results to the absence line or your school's covid email address listed above.

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.

Next week we will continue with the single swab collection, we are placing 2 swabs in a "pool" to be processed by the lab, and if the pool detects a positive result, the school nurses will retest those 2 individuals with rapid antigen tests, and if positive families will be notified and instructed on isolation procedures. If the rapid test is negative and the individual is symptom-free, they will be retested the following day, and if still negative and symptom-free, they can resume weekly COVID-19 testing.

Pooled Testing Results Week of February 7, 2022

BHS 105 students, 46 staff, 0 positive cases

JGMS 198 students, 51 staff, 0 positive cases

Lane 346 students, 46 staff 0 positive cases

Davis 285 students, 49 staff, 3 positive cases

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.

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 continuing to update the case numbers daily. From Friday, February 4, 2022, to Thursday, February 10, 2022, we have had a total of 17 cases reported. Please note that these numbers have been reported on the [Bedford COVID-19 Dashboard](#). Our case information to date is broken out by school below

BHS had 2 cases

JGMS had 1 case

Lane School had 0 cases

Davis School had 14 cases

BPS had 17 cases

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

Bedford Public Schools School and District ESSA Report Cards are [HERE](#)

I am pleased to distribute this year's Every Student Succeeds Act annual district and school report cards to all of our Bedford families. Our report cards include assessment and accountability data, teacher qualifications, and other information related to district and school performance. Our report card data highlights our strengths as well as our challenges in meeting the needs of all students. For more information please visit [ESSA Report Cards](#) type in Bedford or an individual school in the search bar and explore the information.

DESE Tiered Focused Monitoring

During the 2021-2022 school year, we participated in a Tiered Focus Monitoring Review (TFMR) conducted by the Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education. A team from DESE was in the district the week of January 3, 2022. The purpose of the Tiered Focused Monitoring Review is to monitor our compliance with regulatory requirements focusing on special education and civil rights. I am happy to report that DESE has found Bedford Public Schools to be in compliance with all of the criteria monitored during the TFM Review and no corrective action is required at this time. Special thanks to Dr. Tricia Clifford and Marianne Vines for their work to prepare for the visit and to produce the documents and data that were reviewed by DESE. To review the Tiered Focus Monitoring Report, please click [here](#).

Bedford Dollars for Scholars Trivia Night

Registration is now open for the Citizens Scholarship of Bedford Dollars for Scholars Trivia Night! Trivia Night will be held on Saturday, February 12, 2022, from 7:00 pm until 8:30 pm. Get your team ready for some Trivia Fun. Similar to last year, this will be a virtual event, brought to you by Stump! Trivia. Virtual Doors open at 7:00 pm, the Trivia game is from 7:30 pm until 8:30 pm. Teams of 6-10 players, \$25 per person. REGISTER EARLY, as this event sells out!

Proceeds go to scholarships for Bedford/Hanscom graduates who plan to continue their education. Team Captains, please register your team [HERE](#), for more information please visit the CSF of Bedford website at <http://www.bedfordma.dollarsforscholars.org>

Bedford Health and Human Services Department and The Massachusetts Partnership for Youth Workshop “Just Talk About It”

The Bedford Health and Human Services Department and The Massachusetts Partnership for Youth are pleased to present a workshop entitled “Just Talk About It” via Zoom on Monday, February 14th from 3-4:30 pm. The workshop is geared towards caregivers of adolescents facing mental health challenges. The goal of the program is to teach adults how to utilize inclusive and supportive strategies to identify, understand, and respond to adolescent mental health challenges. All are welcome. To view the flyer or sign up for the webinar please click [here](#). For more information please contact Mackenzie Comeau, Bedford Youth Social Worker at mcomeau@bedfordma.gov or at 781-918-4331.

Reading is Uproarious

On Tuesday, February 15, 2022, at 5:00 pm BedfordTV & The Happier Valley Comedy Show will present "Reading Is Uproarious!" a virtual, family-friendly, improv show with a literacy positive theme, geared towards children ages 4 to 13 and their adult caregivers. This is an interactive show where students will be introduced to the idea of improvisation. Audience participation will be used to inspire improvised games. The program is designed to engage students and enhance their love of reading, stories, and laughter. This is a free event, however, donations are accepted at [BedfordTV Donations](#). For more information please navigate to [Reading is Uproarious!](#) or see the event link at www.bedford.tv/zoom.

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.

Stay positive, test negative!

Sincerely,

Philip Conrad
Superintendent