

Description of maintaining health and safety

Beaufort County School District (BCSD) has implemented several health and safety protocols since the onset of COVID-19 – beginning in August 2020. Each of these protocols have been informed by recommendations prescribed by national, state, and local health agencies including the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and The South Carolina Department of Health and Environmental Control (SC-DHEC).



Some of the health and safety practices that BCSD will continue to prioritize include 1) formal 20-second hand washing and respiratory etiquette; 2) cleaning and maintaining healthy facilities; 3) improving ventilation; and 4) the universal and correct wearing of masks (for persons who choose to wear them).

During the 2022-2023 school-year, BCSD resumed the prioritization of these focus areas, with certain modifications to be considered as circumstances may change. BCSD further acknowledges the variable nature of COVID-19 and will remain flexible in our adoption and application of policies focused on maintaining the health and safety of students, educators, and various other district personnel.

Beaufort County Schools returned to five days a week of in-person instruction on January 4, 2021. We began the 2022-2023 school-year with a continuation of in-person instruction while following safety guidance from local, state, and federal health agencies.

Handwashing and respiratory etiquette (Description of Policies or Practices)

Students and staff will be encouraged to practice formal 20-second hand-washing and respiratory etiquette as determined by SC-DHEC.

- *Clean hands* -- BCSD will continue to provide “sanitation stations”. These stations will be placed throughout district facilities to enable increased sanitizing opportunities. These stations will contain alcohol-based sanitizer and will be prioritized for use as much as shall be practicable. Notwithstanding the increased use and availability of hand sanitizer, formal handwashing with soap and water will be prioritized when toileting, when hands are visibly soiled, and following the use of high-touch accessories or equipment.
- *Respiratory practices* – BCSD will encourage all students, staff and guests to follow reasonable respiratory and cough etiquette principles. BCSD will provide trash receptacles throughout all entry points and other high activity areas of buildings to encourage hand hygiene after sneezing or coughing. School and district facilities will also post visual alerts such as “Cover Your Cough” or “Practice Good Hygiene” to encourage respiratory etiquette awareness.

Cleaning and maintaining healthy facilities, improving ventilation (Description of Policies or Practices)

Frequent cleaning of high touch spaces will remain a common practice in BCSD’s efforts to reduce the spread of germs and to mitigate the spread of COVID-19. Custodial personnel will thoroughly clean facilities and common areas. Disinfectant spray will also be available for use in all classrooms and learning spaces. Custodial personnel will ensure regular cleaning practices during the school day, with

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scheduled deep cleaning to be completed by use of whole room disinfectant foggers.

Beaufort County Schools will apply the varied practices necessary to ensure the maintenance of healthy and safe spaces.

For example:

- Cleaning: Removing germs, dirt, and impurities from surfaces or objects.
- Disinfecting: Killing germs on surfaces or objects.
- Sanitizing: Reducing the numbers of germs on surfaces or objects to a safe level.

Appropriate Cleaning Practices – BCSD custodial personnel will utilize appropriate cleaning practices to help maintain healthy facilities. In all instances, soap, water, or specified disinfectants will be used depending on the kind of cleaning required.

All relevant personnel will be encouraged to wear personal protective equipment when cleaning or disinfecting, which may include gloves or face coverings as necessary. Additional safe-use practices will be honored to include, but not limited to 1) avoiding the mixing or unauthorized use of chemicals, and 2) using products as directed.

Healthy Ventilation Practices – BCSD has promoted and will continue to make use of bipolar ionization, a technology used in HVAC systems that helps remove viruses from the air and facilitate surface disinfection of surfaces within a treated area. All district HVAC units purchased in the last five years have this technology.

Student Accommodations

Beaufort County Schools will continue working to meet the needs of all students, especially those with identified disabilities and others characterized as medically fragile. In response to their needs, several practices will be in place for the 2023-2024 school-year.

Additionally, BCSD schools will take into consideration the full spectrum of a student's special circumstances and will make every effort to respond to those circumstances in a way that is appropriately responsive to the needs of the student.

- SPED and general education teachers will collaborate to provide specific accommodations to students as outlined in prescribed Individualized Educational Plans (IEPs).
- School Psychologists will conduct evaluations as appropriate and necessary.
- All accommodations and/or services will be provided to students as outlined in their 504 plan

Staff members will be provided accommodations as needed to be in compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act.

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Coordination with state and local health officials (Description of Policies or Practices)

BCSD has consistently partnered with local health agencies and officials. That practice will continue into the 2023-2024 school year. Priority partners include:

Medical and Healthcare Institutions	Medical and Healthcare Professionals
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Beaufort County Memorial Hospital• Hilton Head Island Hospital• Medical University of South Carolina (MUSC)• SC Department of Health & Environmental Control (SC-DHEC)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Russell Baxley, CEO, Beaufort County Memorial Hospital• Hilton Head Island Hospital• Allison Eckard, M.D., Infectious Disease Physician, Medical University of South Carolina• Beth Franklin, BSN, RN, Infection Control RN II-Lowcountry Region, S.C. Dept. of Health & Environmental Control

Continuity of Services

Description of how LEA will ensure continuity of services, including, but not limited to services to address students' and staff social, emotional, mental health and other needs, which may include student health and food services.

Since the onset of COVID-19, BCSD students and staff have been significantly impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic. The range of issues that have been identified include threats to personal and/or family health, learning challenges, emotional distress, and various other personal and professional changes. As a consequence, our priority has been focused on developing targeted strategies and support systems to partnerships. Those partnerships have continued through the 2022-2023 school year.

Examples of services provided that will continue:

Service Provider	Scope of Service
Wright Directions	Provides mental health counseling services for students and staff.
Coastal Empire Community Mental Health	Provides school-based and clinic-based mental health services for students.
HelloHero	Provides rehabilitative behavioral Health Services for employees and students with behavioral and emotional needs.

- **NOTE:** Each of the above service providers operate pursuant to a district-wide BCSD initiative called 'You Matter', which is focused on bringing a range of mental health services to students and staff

Periodic Review

BCSD will comply with state expectations of reviewing, as appropriate, our Safe Return to In-Person Instruction and Continuity of Instruction Plan at least every six months through September 30, 2023. Furthermore, we will seek public input and weigh all varied considerations if determining revisions are to be made, and of what kind.

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Tentative Plan Review Schedule

Review #1	March, 2022
Review #2	September, 2022
Review #3	March 2023
Review #4	September, 2023

(*beginning with initial date of plan adoption, September 2021)

Public Input

Beaufort County Schools will comply with the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) mandate which requires that school districts make their Safe Return to In-Person Instructional and Continuity of Services Plan available to the public online and that the plan is written in an understandable and uniform format – among other considerations.

To comply with this expectation, the development of BCSD’s plan has involved:

- The use of plain language
- Translation for multilingual families
- Input and feedback from members of the larger Beaufort County community and BCSD stakeholders
- Made available for review on the district website and social media platforms

Process of Development: Extensive public engagement was utilized in the development of BCSD’S original reopening plan.

STEP 1	Engage the BCSD Teacher Forum <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The BCSD Teacher Forum, consisting of teacher leaders from each of the district’s 32 schools were organized to share perspective and offer input on the district plan based on the prescribed categories to be addressed.
STEP 2	Engage Varied Personnel <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • District office personnel representing several *departments and divisions were engaged to share perspective and offer input on the district plan based on the prescribed categories to be addressed. (e.g. *finance, human resources, student services, transportation, teaching and learning, health and safety)
STEP 3	Initial Draft Preparation <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Based on feedback and input from the BCSD Teacher Forum and multiple district departments/divisions, an initial draft was prepared.
STEP 4	Survey Distribution <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The prescribed categories to be addressed in the BCSD reopening plan were posted online for public review and accompanied with solicitations for feedback and suggestions in a survey format.
STEP 5	Review, Analysis, Categorization <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Survey results were reviewed, analyzed, and categorized – and strategically incorporated into the final draft.
STEP 6	Final Draft Preparation <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The BCSD Final Draft was prepared - having included the input, feedback, and recommendations of multiple stakeholders from the larger BCSD community.