



BETHANY PUBLIC SCHOOL DISTRICT

SAFE RETURN TO IN-PERSON INSTRUCTION AND CONTINUITY OF SERVICES PLAN - 2021

BASED ON GUIDANCE FROM THE CONNECTICUT STATE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION



We inspire and empower children to thrive
in the world of tomorrow.

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A Message from Bethany Public School Administration



(Updated Letter)

Dear Bethany Community,

Reflecting on the last two years, there is a lot to be grateful for. We have gratitude for the hard work of the staff here at Bethany Community School (BCS). We have gratitude for the flexibility and support of our families, the support of the Bethany Board of Education, and the resiliency of our students. Together, we made these past years a success, and we are grateful for each and every member of our community that made it possible.

To take a quote from *The Boy, the Mole, the Fox, and the Horse*:


“We have such a long way to go,” sighed the boy.
“Yes, but look how far we have come,” said the horse.

Indeed, we have come a long way during this pandemic. In March 2020, we closed our doors and provided remote learning to our students for the remainder of the school year. In June 2020, we were still unsure if we would be able to start the 2020 - 2021 school year in person, or even remain in person once we started. We did indeed open and were able to stay open throughout the year providing in-person and remote learning. We were even able to come together as a school community in the spring to hold in-person celebrations. The 2021 - 2022 school year brought a spike in positive cases, mask mandates, contact tracing, cohorting, vaccinations, home test kits, school testing, and other mitigation strategies, but because we worked together, we've been able to remain open providing in-person learning.


As we move forward, there are still challenges to be faced, but one thing we have learned over and over again is that the value of in-person learning cannot be replicated or replaced. To that end, in June 2021, we developed *The Safe Return to In-Person Instruction and Continuity of Services Plan*, a plan that prioritizes in-person learning as a non-negotiable starting point. From there we continue to use the most recent guidance from the Governor's Office (State of Connecticut), Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), the Connecticut Department of Health (DPH), the Connecticut State Department of Education (CSDE), the Quinnipiack Valley Health District (QVHD), and your feedback to develop plans that moves BCS forward throughout the 2021-2022 school year. The plan is reviewed at least every 6 months and gets updated, as necessary, per any new guidance that we receive.

While a major part of our work is to develop a plan for safely reopening our school and keeping it open, another part of our work is to re-establish our community here at BCS. The pandemic has taken a toll on all of us. We have become more distant, separated by masks, screens, and safety measures. But we are getting back to a place where BCS can again be that cornerstone of Bethany. It will take some time to get back to where we were, but make no mistake, we are determined to continue the hard work of safely returning to normal, to create a place where everyone is welcome, and everyone can participate in the education and celebration of our students. We look forward to continuing the work together of inspiring and empowering children to thrive in the world of tomorrow.

Sincerely,


Colleen M. Murray
Superintendent


Kai Byrd
Director of Special Services,
Curriculum, and Instruction


Tom Reed-Swale
Principal

Safe Return to In-Person Instruction and Continuity of Services Plan - 2021



As part of the American Rescue Plan (ARP) Act, 2021, the [United States Department of Education](#) (USDE), along with the [CSDE](#), have charged local education agencies (LEA) and Boards of Education (Board) with the task of reviewing all guidelines and recommendations from the [State of Connecticut](#), [CDC](#), and [DPH](#), to develop a *Safe Return to In-Person Instruction and Continuity of Services Plan* (Plan) for the Bethany Public School District (District) for the fall of 2021.

In planning for the fall 2021 safe reopening of BCS, it has been essential to envision the safest environment and the highest quality instruction for our school community. Based on guidelines available to school districts on June 23, 2021 from the State of Connecticut, DPH, CSDE, and QVHD, the District is currently planning for a full, safe, and appropriate return to in-person instruction and continuity of services for all BCS students and staff in the fall of 2021.

A “full” reopening refers to the desire to have all students and all staff return in the fall for a full-length traditional day of school in-person with necessary modifications, as needed, given the conditions of the pandemic.

A “safe” reopening refers to adherence to expectations and guidelines from the State of Connecticut, DPH, CSDE, QVHD, and other sources, that will be in place to ensure that the school’s environment supports learning during this extended time of COVID-19.

An “appropriate” reopening refers to high standards of academic achievement along with social and emotional support that will be in place for all students and staff.

As the District values the contributions and suggestions of all stakeholders in the decision-making process, during the final months of the 2020 - 2021 school year, the Superintendent engaged in a series of roundtable discussions with the Board, town officials, administrators, and department heads, staff and families to obtain public comment on the development of the Bethany Plan. In addition, surveys were distributed to staff and families to inform decision-making. A full copy of the District’s Plan will be posted to the [District website](#) on June 23, 2021. Per State guidelines, LEAs are required to periodically review and, as appropriate, revise their Plan at least every six months through September 30, 2023. It is the District’s desire to phase back in all aspects of school life in the safest and most appropriate manner possible. As additional guidance from the State of Connecticut and DPH is provided, the District will review, and if appropriate, revise the Plan. The District will make every effort to communicate changes in a timely manner. Stakeholders are asked to refer to the [District website](#) periodically for the most current information. For additional information and/or questions, please contact Superintendent, Colleen Murray, at (203) 393-1170 or cmurray@bethany-ed.org.



Health and Safety Strategies



Health and Wellness Checks (New Information)

Students and staff **MUST** stay home if they are feeling sick, have any symptoms consistent with COVID-19, or have had close contact with a person diagnosed with COVID-19 outside of the school setting or within their household. If parents/guardians are unsure if their child should stay home, they should contact the school nurse for guidance **PRIOR** to sending the student onto the bus or into school. In order to prevent transmission among the school population, [CDC Guidelines](#) strongly encourage parents/guardians to screen their students for infectious illnesses before they leave the house in the morning. If students report to the school nurse's office exhibiting any symptoms consistent with COVID-19 there is a strong chance they will be sent home and required to obtain a negative COVID-19 test before returning to school. On December 31, 2021, DPH released [Updated Considerations for Quarantine, Isolation, Testing, and Contact Tracing Policies and Procedures in PreK-12 Schools](#), and on February 18, 2022, released another document, [Transitioning to a Model of Routine Respiratory Disease Prevention and Enhanced Outbreak Management and Control for COVID-19 in PreK-12 School Settings](#), which provides districts guidance for responding to COVID-19 scenarios in CT school districts. When in doubt, the school nurse will consult with the District's medical advisor, pediatrician, Dr. Namita Wijesekera, for guidance.



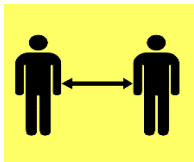

Mask Optional (New Information)

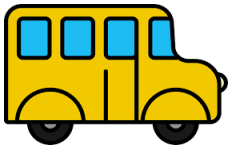
Effective on and after February 28, 2022, and pursuant to an order issued by the Connecticut Public Health Commissioner, [Conditions and Environments Requiring Universal Masking for the Prevention of COVID-19 on and after February 28, 2022](#), all individuals in Connecticut regardless of vaccination status, are required to wear face masks inside PreK-12 public or non-public school buildings, excluding residential dormitories, **if a local or regional board of education or similar body governing a non-public scholar schools requires the use of appropriate face masks.**

On February 23, 2022, the Bethany Board of Education voted to remove the universal mask mandate for staff, students, and visitors of BCS and District offices. **The decision to wear a mask, or not, is voluntary, effective Monday, February 28, 2022.** Parents should clearly communicate their expectations for mask-wearing at school with their children. Teachers, administrators, nurses, and support staff will not be responsible for enforcing student mask-wearing beginning Monday, February 28, 2022.

Per recommendations provided by the CSDE and DPH, masks will still be required in certain settings:

- For all students/staff when visiting the Nurses' Office. Teachers will have masks available in the classroom for nurse visits.

	<p>CDC recommendations:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Everyone ages 2 years and older should properly wear a well-fitting mask indoors in public in areas where the COVID-19 Community Level is high, regardless of vaccination status. • Wear a mask with the best fit, protection, and comfort for you. • If you are in an area with a high COVID-19 Community Level and are ages 2 or older, wear a mask indoors in public. • If you are sick and need to be around others or are caring for someone who has COVID-19, wear a mask. • If you are at increased risk for severe illness or live with or spend time with someone at higher risk, speak to your healthcare provider about wearing a mask at medium COVID-19 Community Levels. • People who have a condition or are taking medications that weaken their immune system may not be fully protected even if they are up to date on their COVID-19 vaccines. They should talk to their healthcare providers about what additional precautions may be necessary. <p>Parents/Guardians are responsible for providing students with face coverings or masks. The school and bus will have a reserve of disposal masks available for students whose parents/guardians are unable to provide a mask, or for those that might forget them at home. "Mask Breaks" will be provided throughout the school day.</p>
	<p>Physical Distancing (Updated Information)</p> <p>In elementary schools, the DPH recommends all students remain at least 3 feet apart in classrooms during low-intensity activities and to maintain 6 feet or more between individuals during high-intensity activities (e.g., physical education, performing arts, and lunch).</p> <p>At mid-year, students will continue to be cohorted by the classroom, and interaction between cohorts will be limited. Beginning in January 2022, students returned to the cafeteria for lunch with a modified and rotating schedule. Students are socially distanced 6 feet apart, in the cafeteria, and are monitored by lunch aides. In the classrooms, students are socially distanced 3 - 6 feet apart.</p>
	<p>Visitors (Updated Information)</p> <p>At this time, the CDC recommends that schools limit any nonessential visitors, volunteers, and activities involving external groups or organizations as much as possible - especially with people who are not from the local geographic area (for example, not from the same community, town, city, county). The school will consult with QVHD and our District medical advisor to make decisions regarding requirements for visitors on a case-by-case basis. All pre-approved visitors MUST complete a COVID-19 questionnaire prior to entering the building. Adjusting physical layouts in classrooms and other settings to maximize physical space, such as by turning desks to face in the same direction are other recommendations for consideration.</p>



Transportation (New Information)

On Friday, February 25, 2022, the CDC, issued new guidelines that **NO LONGER require masks to be worn on buses** or vans that are operated by public or private school systems.

Therefore, **effective Monday, February 28, 2022, the students of the Bethany Public School District will not be required to wear masks when traveling on school buses or vans.**

CDC recommends that schools create distance between children on school buses (for example, seat children one child per row, skip rows), whenever possible. Students are assigned a seat on the bus which helps with contact tracing, if necessary.

BCS students will be expected to ride the same bus to school in the morning and the same bus to home in the afternoon every day.

To assist in the District's efforts to maintain social distancing, parents can voluntarily choose to transport their children to and from school every day and choose not to utilize bus transportation. The District will require one week's notice to resume bus transportation after making the decision to drive every day.



Handwashing Etiquette

According to the CDC, handwashing is one of the best ways to protect oneself and others from getting sick and recommends that students and staff engage in frequent hand washing or sanitizing upon arrival to school, before and after meals, after bathroom use, after coughing, or sneezing or after touching frequently touched items or surfaces such as door handles, carts, and public technology.

All classrooms will be equipped with handwashing and/or sanitizing stations. Classrooms will be provided with antiviral wipes for cleaning surfaces and shared resources and materials. Administration and teachers will review guidance/training and post signage on proper handwashing techniques with students, including the following:

- Scrub with soap for at least 20 seconds or use hand sanitizer.
- Staff and students should dry their hands thoroughly.
- Wash/sanitize hands when arriving and leaving home, entering classrooms, after having close contact with others, before and after using shared surfaces or tools, before and after using the restroom, after blowing nose, coughing, and sneezing, and before and after eating and preparing foods.

Administration, staff, and school nurse will ensure that students receive ongoing education on the expectations related to handwashing policies and protocols.



Respiratory Etiquette

Through ongoing health education units and lessons, the CDC recommends that schools teach children proper handwashing techniques, reinforce respiratory etiquette, and provide adequate supplies.

Administration, staff, and school nurse will ensure that students receive ongoing education in the expectations related to all public health policies and protocols. Students will be educated about how COVID-19 is spread, and how preventative actions help avoid the spread (for example, that masks keep droplets out of the air, and hand hygiene keeps the virus out of one's mouth/nose/eyes).

BCS Principal, Director of Curriculum and Instruction, and school nurse will assess the best approach to communicating wellness information for each age group and plan to set aside time at the beginning of the school year, as well as scheduling frequent reminders throughout the year, to review policies and protocols. These practices include, but are not limited to:

- social distancing,
- use of face coverings that completely cover the nose and mouth,
- respiratory and cough etiquette*, and
- enhanced cleaning/disinfection of surfaces.

The District will support healthy hygiene behaviors by providing adequate supplies, including soap, a way to dry hands (in most cases touchless), tissues, face masks, and no-touch trash cans. If soap and water are not readily available, the school will provide hand sanitizer that contains at least 60% alcohol (for staff and older children who can safely use hand sanitizer). Administration, Director of Curriculum and Instruction, and school nurse will oversee staff training on the protection of the whole school community. The school will provide required staff/student/parent training on the following as part of the reopening prior to the start of school:

- Physical distancing of staff and students.
- Symptom screening, including temperature checks.
- Proper use of protective equipment.
- The correct use of cloth face coverings/masks.
- Cough and sneeze etiquette.
- Keeping one's hands away from one's face.
- Frequent hand washing and proper technique.
- Confidentiality around health recording and reporting.

* Students and staff will be instructed to cover coughs and sneezes with a tissue, or into the crease of an elbow, when not wearing a mask and immediately wash their hands after blowing their nose, coughing, or sneezing. Some students with disabilities might need assistance with handwashing and respiratory etiquette behaviors.



Cleaning and Maintaining Healthy Facilities (Updated Information)

DPH reports that there is no indication that contaminated surfaces are any more of a risk for transmission of COVID-19 than with any other virus variants. DPH continues to recommend that schools engage in good universal cleaning practices, as outlined in the current [Adapt, Advance, Achieve](#) guidance for schools. The CDC continues to recommend that schools make changes to physical spaces to maintain a healthy environment and facilities, including routine cleaning of high-touch surfaces, improved ventilation, and modified spaces.

Cleaning and Disinfection

The BCS Facilities Director oversees cleaning and maintenance and specifically addresses high standards of cleanliness in all classrooms, bathrooms, hallways, and offices. The Superintendent and Principal conduct walkthroughs of the school building throughout the school year and review cleanliness expectations with appropriate staff.

The custodial staff regularly cleans high-touch surfaces and objects (e.g., door handles, handrails, bottle fillers, sink handles, restroom surfaces) in the school building throughout the day, whenever possible. Each classroom will have a container of antiviral wipes available for disinfecting of desks or other surfaces by non-custodial personnel as desired by the room's occupants. Each classroom will also have available hand sanitizer for use by the room's occupants. Room occupants can request additional disinfecting wipes, soap, and hand sanitizer from the main office. The Facilities Director will have a plan for cleaning desks after lunch in the classrooms, and in the cafeteria.

The Facilities Director will continue to obtain and install touchless bathroom fixtures, wherever possible. The school will maximize the use of disposable towels and touchless paper towel dispensers. Bathrooms should be sanitized at least twice a day. Cleaning logs will be used to track cleaning frequency of areas including bathrooms. The Facilities Director and custodial staff will use products that are approved for the State of Connecticut that are labeled to be effective against emerging viral pathogens, following label directions for appropriate dilution rates and contact times.

Ventilation

Improving ventilation in school buildings is just one part of a system of procedures that will safeguard the health and safety of students, teachers, and school staff during the COVID-19 pandemic. The CDC recommends improving ventilation to the extent possible to increase circulation of outdoor air, increase the delivery of clean air, and dilute potential contaminants. This can be achieved through several actions:

- Bring in as much outdoor air as possible.
- Ensure Heating, Ventilation, and Air Conditioning (HVAC) settings are maximizing ventilation.
- Filter and/or clean the air in the school by improving the [level of filtration](#) as much as possible.
- Use exhaust fans in restrooms and kitchens.
- Open windows in buses and other transportation, if doing so does not pose a health or safety risk. Even cracking windows open on the bus a few inches improves air circulation.

Before School Opens

- Obtain an updated HVAC assessment from a certified and licensed vendor.
- Operate all ventilation systems at full capacity for one week prior to the reopening of school buildings.
- Discuss with the entire facilities team and school administration the general principles in regards to the changes planned to the usual ventilation system operation for the coming year.
- Create and implement a full preventive maintenance program on all HVAC units to include cleaning of the units, changing of filters, lubrication of motors and tension belts, and ensuring all dampers are operating as they should.

After School Opens

- Flush the air inside the building for a minimum of two hours prior to occupancy and one hour after occupancy (after the night-shift custodians leave), with the dampers open as fully as possible (i.e., to maximize fresh air intake) during this flushing period.
- Program and lock fan schedules to align with the building occupancy schedule (i.e., provide flushing ventilation starting two hours before building occupancy and one-hour post-occupancy).
- Keep the ventilation system running during all hours that the building is occupied.
- Keep bathroom exhaust systems running all day, every day (24 hours a day/7 days a week).

In addition, the health department does not recommend separate, free-standing air cleaner or HEPA filter units for individual classrooms. These units are highly variable in their effectiveness in larger open spaces such as classrooms and in general, any effect on indoor air quality is likely insignificant and greatly outweighed by the additional costs to school systems.

Modifying Space

The Facilities Director will continue to oversee plans for BCS that specifically address setting up learning spaces that maximize physical distancing, per CDC guidelines. Student workstations will be set up to achieve a 3-foot distance. Individual desks will be arranged facing forward. If tables are used in any area of the school, students will sit on one side of the table, spaced apart. Individual desk shields will be available for students and staff. Whereas, physical distance guidelines are greater for music, such classes will be relocated to one-half of the gymnasium. Physical Education classes will occupy the other side of the gymnasium and the teacher will conduct classes outside whenever possible. Special area teachers (Spanish, Art, and Library) will conduct class in their respective classrooms, and students will traverse through the school. Where necessary, administration will assess other spaces that may be repurposed for instruction in the school including outdoor locations.

An isolation room has been created within the school nurse’s office to separate students and staff exhibiting symptoms of illness from the rest of the school community until they are assessed by the school nurse, and either returned to class or sent home for further observation.

Food Service

Throughout the 2021 - 2022 school year, students will be offered breakfast and lunch free of charge. Breakfast will be served in the classrooms and lunch will be served in the classrooms and the cafeteria on a rotating basis. School cafeteria and meal service plans will be reviewed and adjusted throughout the year, based on guidance from DPH and our local health department, QVHD.



Contact Tracing, Isolation, and Quarantine

Contact Tracing (New Information)

According to DPH, because individual-level contact tracing is a tool that becomes less effective when community transmission levels are high, they recommend that schools begin to refocus the activities of health staff away from the investigation of relatively low-risk in-school exposures and toward the identification, early isolation, and clinical management of students and staff with active symptoms that could be related to COVID-19.

At this time, given:

1. the current level of community transmission throughout our state;
2. the experience of Connecticut school districts that have conducted in-person learning throughout the past two years of the pandemic, even in the setting of very high community transmission;
3. the infrequent conversion of close contacts; and
4. the need to prioritize available resources in PreK-12 schools, **the position of DPH is that routine contact tracing of individual exposures that occur inside schools or during school-organized and supervised activities can be discontinued without posing a significantly increased risk of negative impact on in-school transmission of COVID-19 or access to in-person learning.**

Please note: Contact tracing will continue for activities outside of the traditional school day (i.e., household contacts, contact during athletics, before and after school programs, etc.)

Reporting Positive Cases (Updated Information)

The CDC recommends that schools collaborate with local health departments when investigating cases and exposures to COVID-19 and ensure compliance with applicable laws related to privacy and the collection/sharing of information as they undertake investigative practices.

Schools are required to report all positive cases (no matter which type of test returns the positive result) among students and staff to DPH and QVHD in accordance with applicable privacy and other laws, as soon as they are informed.

Communication (New Information)

The Bethany School District will continue to appropriately notify staff and parents/guardians of students regarding positive cases occurring in the school community. In place of daily notifications regarding positive cases at BCS, a [COVID-19 Dashboard](#) has been added to the District website and will be updated every Friday. Students' families and staff members testing positive with COVID-19 will continue to receive communication from the District outlining isolation requirements and return to school/work dates. Examples of other appropriate communication will include staff, classroom, and bus notifications.

Isolation (New Information)

Individuals who are even mildly symptomatic with any of the symptoms associated with COVID-19 should immediately isolate at home, test for the virus that causes COVID-19 (SARS-CoV-2) with a PCR, antigen, or self-test, and remain away from activities outside of the home until they are fever-free without the use of fever-reducing medication for at least 24 hours and other symptoms are significantly improved.

Students, teachers, and staff who have symptoms and test positive for COVID-19 are required to isolate for at least 5 full days. To calculate the 5-day isolation period, day 0 is the first day of symptoms. Day 1 is the first full day after their symptoms developed. Further guidance includes:

- They can end isolation after 5 full days if they are fever-free for 24 hours without the use of fever-reducing medication and other symptoms have improved (loss of taste and smell may persist for weeks or months after recovery and need not delay the end of isolation).
- **They should continue to wear a well-fitting mask around others at home and in public for 5 additional days (day 6 through day 10) after the end of their 5-day isolation period.** If they are unable to wear a mask when around others, they should continue to isolate themselves for 10 days.
- Avoid people who are immunocompromised or at high risk for severe disease, and nursing homes and other high-risk settings, until after at least 10 days.
- If they continue to have a fever or other symptoms have not improved after 5 days of isolation, they should wait to end isolation until they are fever-free for 24 hours without the use of fever-reducing medication and their other symptoms have improved. They should continue to wear a well-fitting mask and contact their healthcare provider with questions.
- Please visit CDC's [COVID-19 Quarantine and Isolation](#) page for more specific guidance on isolation outside of the K-12 setting.

Students, teachers, and staff who test positive for COVID-19 and never develop symptoms should isolate for at least 5 days. Day 0 is the day of the positive test (based on the date of testing) and day 1 is the first full day after the specimen was collected for the positive test. Further guidance includes:

- If they continue to have no symptoms, they can end isolation after at least 5 full days.
- They should continue to wear a well-fitting mask around others at home and in public until day 10 (day 6 through day 10). If they are unable to wear a mask when around others, they should continue to isolate themselves for 10 days.
- Avoid people who are immunocompromised or at high risk for severe disease, and nursing homes and other high-risk settings, until after at least 10 days.
- If they develop symptoms after testing positive, the 5-day isolation period should start over. Day 0 is the first day of symptoms. Follow the recommendations above for ending isolation for people who had COVID-19 and had symptoms.
- Please visit CDC's [COVID-19 Quarantine and Isolation](#) page for more specific guidance on isolation outside of the K-12 setting.

Quarantine

Quarantine is used to keep someone who might have been exposed to COVID-19 away from others. Quarantine helps prevent the spread of the disease that can occur before a person knows they are sick, or if they are infected with the virus without feeling symptoms.

Quarantine of Unvaccinated or Partially Vaccinated Persons (Updated Information)

Unvaccinated or partially vaccinated individuals who are notified that they have had a close contact with an individual outside of the school day who has confirmed, or suspected COVID-19, should immediately quarantine at home from school, extracurricular activities, and other activities for 5 days from the last exposure to the COVID-19 case, and test for COVID-19 (either self-test or at a test site) 5 days after their last exposure to the COVID-19 case, and wear a mask at all times during any activities when around others for an additional 5 days (i.e., through day 10). This is especially important in situations where extended high-intensity exposure may have occurred, such as with household contacts, in unmasked social settings (e.g., sleepovers, parties), and/or during athletic activities.

After stopping quarantine, all individuals should:

- Watch for symptoms until 14 days after exposure.
- Immediately self-isolate, test, and contact their local public health authority or healthcare provider, if symptoms occur.
- Stay at least 6 feet from others, wash hands, avoid crowds, and take other steps to prevent the spread of COVID-19.

Quarantine of Vaccinated Persons

Individuals who have been fully vaccinated (2 weeks after a single Johnson & Johnson vaccine or 2 weeks after the 2nd dose of the Moderna or Pfizer vaccine) are not required to quarantine if they are identified as a close contact, as long as they are asymptomatic. It is strongly recommended, however, that exposed vaccinated individuals obtain a COVID-19 test 3-5 days after exposure and adhere to mask-wearing, out of an abundance of caution. If a student or staff member is notified as a close contact but has been fully vaccinated, they should inform the person conducting the contact tracing, and be prepared to show proof of vaccination.

Quarantine within 90 days of COVID-19 (Updated Information)

For individuals who recently tested positive for COVID-19, quarantine is not recommended if another exposure occurs within 90 days after the date of symptom onset from the initial COVID-19 infection. If a student or staff member is identified as a close contact but was diagnosed as COVID-19 positive within the past 90 days, they may not need to quarantine if they are asymptomatic. Please contact the school nurse and be prepared to show evidence of the positive COVID-19 diagnosis.

For additional guidance please refer to DPH's [Updated Considerations for Quarantine, Isolation, Testing, and Contact Tracing Policies and Procedures in PreK-12 Schools](#).

Diagnostic Screening and Testing (New Information)





Self-Test Kits

To help curb the transmission of COVID-19, the State of Connecticut is distributing Self-Test Kits (kits) to all public and private schools throughout the state in phases. Kits have been distributed to all families and staff at BCS for home testing. Students who present themselves with COVID-19 symptoms in the nurse's office may be sent home with a kit and directions for return to school. Additional kits are available in the BCS nurse's office.

Project COVID DeteCT

DPH, along with the CSDE, offers free weekly COVID-19 screening testing to all PK-12 public and private schools through the Project COVID DeteCT testing program. Weekly screening testing, using individual PCR tests, is conducted by a state-approved lab assigned to the District.

	<p>Project COVID DeteCT is available at BCS with open enrollment. Parents and guardians must complete the Project COVID DeteCT Consent Form for their child to participate in the voluntary program. Once signed, the consent form will cover testing throughout the year, or until a parent or guardian notifies the District otherwise.</p>
	<p>Vaccination Efforts (New Information)</p> <p>According to federal, state, and local health officials, COVID-19 vaccines are effective at preventing individuals from getting sick and are highly effective at preventing severe illness, hospitalizations, and death. Getting vaccinated is the best way to slow the spread of SARS-CoV-2, the virus that causes COVID-19. The CDC strongly recommends that everyone who is eligible, stay up to date on their COVID-19 vaccines, including booster vaccine doses, when appropriate.</p> <p>Throughout spring 2021, the District partnered with QVHD to provide closed vaccination clinics for all school staff including contracted food service and transportation personnel. Through these closed clinics, all staff who wanted to receive a COVID-19 vaccination were able to do so. At this time, the elementary school population is eligible for vaccination. Several pediatric vaccination clinics have been offered by the District for the 5-12-year-old population since November/December 2021.</p> <p>The District will use vaccination rates to make informed decisions, therefore, once students are vaccinated, parents/guardians are asked to please upload Proof of Vaccination and Attestation. Parents wishing to schedule a vaccine appointment for eligible children are encouraged to work with their pediatrician or to access ct.gov/COVID-19, type in your zip code into the box that says “Find a COVID-19 Vaccine Site” and click “Go” to schedule a vaccination appointment.</p>
	<p>Accommodations for Special Populations</p> <p>Appropriate accommodations for children with disabilities with respect to the health and safety policies:</p> <p>Throughout the 2020 - 2021 school year, the District continued to offer a Free Appropriate Public Education (FAPE) to our students. The school oversaw programming throughout the 2020 - 2021 school year with the understanding that there was no change to requirements under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) for the provision of FAPE in the least restrictive environment (LRE). The District provided FAPE for all students by offering full in-person instruction for the 2020-2021 academic year. Any families that elected for the remote learning option received all Individualized Educational Plan (IEP) support and services via the Learning Model IEP Implementation Plan.</p> <p>The Learning Model IEP Implementation Plan described the manner in which a student’s IEP was implemented, within the context of the three learning models (Full In-Person, Hybrid, Full Remote). These plans were also used to describe any differences in the delivery of IEP services as the District moved from one learning model to another based upon current health data.</p>

In terms of the 2021 - 2022 implementation, the District will treat students eligible for special education and other special populations as general education students first. Guidance and policies related to school reopening plans apply to all students, including students with special needs who qualify for individual education programs under the IDEA and accommodation plans for eligible students under Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act. If students with disabilities are unable to access the reopening plan as designed, the District will act in accordance with IDEA and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act to consider each case to determine individualized and alternative means of re-entry based upon student need, present levels of functioning, developmental levels, and student/parent input.



Continuity of Services

The following summary describes how the District will ensure continuity of services including but not limited to services to address the student's academic needs, and students and staff's social, emotional, mental health, and other needs.

Throughout the 2020 - 2022 school years, continuity of services was not an issue in Bethany. The District provided FAPE to all students as the result of being full, in-person, all year long with only a few pre-planned remote learning days. Whereas, the District is currently planning for a full, safe, and appropriate return to in-person instruction for all BCS students and staff in the fall of 2021, continuity of services will continue. The following events are planned in addition to regular programming:



Academic Supports

Quarantine/Isolation Learning Opportunities (Updated Information)

All members of the Bethany Public School District are committed to working in partnership with our students and their families so that students can fully benefit from learning experiences when required to quarantine or isolate. When there is a documented and verified need for a student to quarantine/isolate, the classroom teacher will contact the student's parent/guardian to make arrangements for the continuation of education which may include the posting of assignments (via Google Classroom) or, if applicable, the provision of paper copies to be picked up at the school for the student to complete asynchronously. The classroom teacher will make arrangements with the parent/guardian to check in with the student at least once a day. Other BCS staff members will be available throughout the day, to the best of our ability and when staff are available, to offer additional check-in opportunities for students to ask questions, receive support, and obtain guidance with regard to assignments. The classroom teacher will review assignments and provide direct feedback to students during the quarantine period. In the event that a whole class is quarantined, the classroom teacher will deliver synchronous virtual instruction. A child in quarantine will be marked "Remote Present" as long as they complete the assigned work by the due date determined by the teacher.

Students who are exposed to a positive COVID-19 case may be required to quarantine.

If a student is exposed to a verified positive COVID-19 case outside of the school setting, the student's parent/guardian must contact BCS Administration or the school nurse immediately. School personnel will work with the parent/guardian to complete a contact tracing form and consult with QVHD to discuss the health concern, verify the positive case, and receive direction if there is a need to quarantine. Once the school receives confirmation that quarantining is required, the student will be placed on temporary asynchronous learning and the parent/guardian will be contacted by the classroom teacher to make necessary arrangements.

Thrive Summer Scavenger Hunt

A Thrive Summer Challenge was provided to all BCS students on June 14, 2021. All students, Pre-K to 6, have the opportunity to engage in a summer-long THRIVE Scavenger Hunt. The THRIVE Summer Scavenger Hunt aims to:

- Engage students of all ages through a self-directed academic challenge.
- Reinforce skills and standards taught in school.
- Provide a physical outlet for students while practicing problem-solving skills.
- Motivate students as it meets a wide range of abilities and interests.
- Promote family fun.

The Thrive Summer Scavenger Hunt offers students the opportunity to complete a series of activities on an individualized, grade-appropriate, game board. After completing an activity, students scratch off corresponding coordinates and lock code. Using Google, students plug in the coordinates and reveal the designated location in Bethany and unlock the marked box in order to collect a puzzle piece. Students will have an opportunity to collect all nine puzzle pieces. Along the way, students are encouraged to take pictures and submit them to thrive@bethany-ed.org to be posted to the District website. Once all puzzle pieces have been collected, students will put the puzzle together and decorate to their liking. Completed puzzles will be displayed in the school lobby at the start of the 2021 - 2022 school year.

Summer Boost Academy

Summer Boost Academy is a virtual summer program designed to support identified intervention students in grades K - 5. The program runs from July 6th to August 5th, and staff will be available to support students on assignments Monday through Thursday from 8:00 am to 12:00 pm. The Summer Boost Academy provides identified intervention students an opportunity to participate in synchronous and asynchronous learning opportunities. Students participating in the program receive one hour of live instruction per week with a certified Boost Teacher and are assigned personalized learning tasks to complete independently throughout the week. Boost Teachers provide feedback on all assignments and the materials for the program are provided to students in order to help facilitate the teaching and learning.

Boost Academy After School Tutoring Program

The Boost Academy After School tutoring program provides all identified students with weekly, in-person after-school tutoring to address weaknesses in academic performance through individualized learning plans.

Parent Academies

The District will provide six parent academies throughout the 2021 - 2023 school years to empower parents to support their students academically, socially, and emotionally.



Social-Emotional Learning

Social and emotional learning (SEL) remains the cornerstone of our work to engage students, empower families, support staff, build relationships, and create a solid foundation for academic learning. The District has worked to create supportive classroom environments, integrate common explicit SEL instruction across BCS settings, and implement a measurement system to monitor progress and identify student needs. The ultimate goal of the District's work in SEL is to create a cohesive and standardized system of SEL that allows members of the school community to integrate strategies and practices into the entire day. The BCS SEL Leadership Team will participate in Cohort 1 of the CSDE's Social Emotional Learning Assessment Initiative, Devereux Student Strengths Assessment (DESSA), with Aperture Education in fall 2021. The goal of this initiative is to train District staff on the implementation of the DESSA universal screening tool and Social-Emotional Interventions.

Trauma-Informed Professional Development

The District will continue to partner with Connecticut Behavioral Health (CBH) to provide professional development to all staff. Staff has received professional development in Basic Trauma Training, COVID-19 Related Trauma: Resources for Teachers, Administrators, and Staff to Reduce Anxiety Amid COVID-19 Pandemic, COVID-19 Related Trauma: Ways to Support Students Post COVID-19, Applied Trauma: Supporting Students Through Grief and Loss, Trauma-Informed Educational Practices, and Promoting/Building Resiliency.

Thrive Summer Scavenger Hunt for Staff

A Thrive Summer Challenge was provided for all BCS staff on June 14, 2021. All staff has the opportunity to engage in a summer-long THRIVE Scavenger Hunt. The THRIVE Summer Scavenger Hunt aims to:

- Engage staff in activities that promote social, emotional health and wellness.
- Motivate staff to prioritize their needs.
- Promote a sense of community and support school climate.

The Thrive Summer Scavenger Hunt offers staff the opportunity to complete a series of activities on an individualized game board. After completing an activity, staff are required to submit a picture participating in at least three activities for a chance to win various prizes in the fall. All participants will be celebrated at the start of the 2021 - 2022 school year.



Support Services

- During summer 2021, additional personnel will be hired to support the school climate and instructional efforts at BCS. The District will hire a Climate and Instruction Specialist, a Teacher of English to Speakers of Other Languages, and additional Instructional Aides.
- Ongoing professional development for staff will be offered to strengthen overall pedagogy and provide support for the social and emotional needs of students. The District will maintain its partnership with CBH and implement the Second Steps Curriculum.
- Daily SEL lessons are implemented in all BCS classrooms.
- The BCS Support Team, including two full-time school psychologists, a board certified behavioral analyst, and a registered behavior technician will continue to support the needs of students.
- Following the reopening of school, the District will complete another needs assessment to determine the need for any additional personnel. Any additional personnel will be funded using ARP funds.



Public Comment

As the District values the contributions and suggestions of all stakeholders in the decision-making process, during the final months of the 2020 - 2021 school year, the Superintendent engaged in a series of roundtable discussions with the Board, town officials, administrators, and department heads, staff and families, to obtain public comment on the development of the Bethany Plan. In addition, a [Safe Return Planning Staff Survey](#) and [Safe Return Planning Family Survey](#) were distributed to staff and families to inform decision-making. A full copy of the District's Plan will be posted to the [District website](#) on June 23, 2021. Per State guidelines, LEAs are required to periodically review and, as appropriate, revise their Plan at least every six months through September 30, 2023. It is the District's desire to phase back in all aspects of school life in the safest and most appropriate manner possible. As additional guidance from the State of Connecticut and DPH is provided, the District will review, and if appropriate, revise the Plan. The District will make every effort to communicate changes in a timely manner. Stakeholders are asked to refer to the [District website](#) periodically for the most current information. For additional information and/or questions, please contact Superintendent, Colleen Murray, at (203) 393-1170 or cmurray@bethany-ed.org.



Periodic Review Process

School districts are required to periodically review and, as appropriate, revise their Plan at least every six months through September 2023. Below are the dates that the District must submit a refreshed or updated plan to the CSDE:

- June 23, 2021
- December 23, 2021
- June 23, 2022
- December 23, 2022
- June 23, 2023



Understandable and Uniform Format

School districts are required to meet the unique needs of their audience and approach to ensuring this document is accessible.

The District values its community and strives to make sure that everyone who visits the District website feels welcome and finds the experience rewarding.

The District website utilizes the Web Content Accessibility Guidelines to make web content more accessible for people with disabilities, and user-friendly for everyone. The guidelines have three levels of accessibility (A, AA, and AAA). Bethany has chosen Level AA as the target for the District website. The Plan will meet the Level AA standards when posted on the District website.

BCS has a low population of non-English-speaking families requiring alternate languages. However, the District's email, text, and phone messaging system allows non-speaking families to convert these messages into their desired language. The District website has an easy-to-use language translation button to ensure all web content can be read in the desired language.

Please note this plan is subject to change based on guidance received from the Office of the Governor of the State of Connecticut, DPH, CSDE, and QVHD. The District will make every effort to communicate changes in a timely manner. Please refer to the [District website](#) periodically for the most current information. For additional information and/or questions, please contact Superintendent, Colleen Murray at (203) 393-1170 or cmurray@bethany-ed.org.