

Description of maintaining health and safety

Beaufort County School District (BCSD) has implemented several health and safety protocols since the onset of COVID-19 – dating back to 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) facilities modifications, 2) physical distancing, 3) hand washing and respiratory etiquette, 4) cleaning and maintaining healthy facilities, 5) improving ventilation, and 6) the universal and correct wearing of masks (for persons who choose to wear them).

During the 2021-2022 school-year, BCSD will resume 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 5 days of in-person instruction on January 4, 2021. In that effort, we also maintained a virtual option for families that desired an alternative instructional modality. It is worth noting that our full intent is to begin the 2021-2022 school-year with a continuation of in-person instruction while following safety guidance from local, state, and national health agencies.

Universal and correct wearing of masks (Description of Policies or Practices)

Beaufort County Schools will comply with Governor Henry McMaster's (SC) Executive Order issued on May 21, 2021 which disallows school districts [and local governments] from requiring students or residents to wear facial coverings. As a narrow exception, persons who occupy district spaces like nurse's offices or designated isolation rooms will be expected to take reasonable safety precautions and will be expected to wear a mask or face covering while being serviced.

Beaufort County Schools also recognizes the right of all persons who choose to wear masks or facial coverings and will strongly encourage their appropriate use pursuant to SC-DHEC's guidance for school operations.

Modifying facilities to allow for physical distancing (Description of Policies or Practices)

Within the limitations of each BCSD school site, facilities will be modified to allow for physical distancing up to three-feet or to the extent possible -- whenever circumstance will allow for it.

Modifying practices that BCSD will promote include 1) outdoor dining, 2) the use of alternative locations for school gatherings e.g. media center and/or other open spaces, and 3) making plexiglass barriers accessible to mitigate the effect of unavoidable close bodily contact.

- **NOTE:** Barrier usage will not be mandatory, but each school will have an adequate supply to distribute upon request.

Handwashing and respiratory etiquette (Description of Policies or Practices)

Students and staff will be encouraged to practice reasonable 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 tissues and 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 sustained 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 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 self-protective articles 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 – Beaufort County Schools 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.

Contact tracing in combination with isolation and quarantine (Description of Policies or Practices)

Beaufort County Schools follows *SC-DHEC Interim COVID-19 Guidance for Schools: Management of Known and Possible COVID-19 Cases*. The guidance is intended for K-12 schools to plan their response to known and possible cases of COVID-19 as well as known contacts.

Beaufort County Schools provides guidance on quarantine recommendations which are informed by DHEC. If that guidance changes, BCSD may make adjustments as necessary, but to date, quarantine practices are as follows:

The standard quarantine period will be 10 days after last contact without testing if -- 1) no symptoms are reported during daily symptom monitoring, and 2) reported DHEC Recent Disease Activity by County remains "low".

Diagnostic and screening testing (Description of Policies or Practices)

Hospitals and various of health organizations throughout Beaufort County provide significant opportunities for residents to be tested and/or screened for COVID-19. BCSD has not implemented an internal COVID-19 testing system due to the widespread availability of testing in the community.

Below is a non-exhaustive list of select COVID-19 testing locations throughout Beaufort County, SC:

- Beaufort Memorial Express Care and Occupational Health (Port Royal, SC)
- Beaufort Memorial Medical and Administrative Center (Beaufort, SC)
- CVS Pharmacy (Beaufort, SC; Hilton Head, SC; Bluffton, SC)
- Lowcountry Urgent Care (Lady's Island, SC)
- Beaufort Veterans Affairs (Beaufort, SC)
- Doctors Care (Port Royal, SC; Bluffton, SC; Hilton Head)
- Walgreen's (Beaufort, SC; Bluffton, SC; Okatie, SC; Hilton Head, SC)

Efforts to provide vaccinations to educators, other staff, and students, if eligible (Description of Policies or Practices)

To date, BCSD has partnered with Beaufort Memorial Hospital and Hilton Head Hospital to hold COVID-19 vaccination clinics for district personnel. BCSD has also partnered with Beaufort Memorial Hospital to reserve time slots for school-based staff to receive COVID-19 vaccinations at their facilities.

Leading up to the start of the 2021-2022 school-year, plans are currently in process for a mid-summer vaccination clinic specifically for students aged 12 and up and their families in coordination with Beaufort Memorial Hospital.

Appropriate accommodations for children with disabilities with respect to health and safety policies and practices (Description of Policies or Practices)

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, there are several practices already in place for the 2021-2022 school-year including:

- Maintaining a one to two adult ratio in high-needs classrooms
- Enacting protocols to help students adjust to using personal protective equipment if desired
- Placing visual cues in various spaces to help ensure social distancing
- Developing sensory room breaks to be utilized as needed

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

In sum, standard practice for accommodating students with specific disabilities and exceptionalities will remain a part of BCSD's plan for the continuity of services.

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

Beaufort County Schools has consistently partnered with local health agencies and officials. That practice will continue into the 2021-2022 schoolyear. 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	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Russell Baxley, CEO, Beaufort County Memorial Hospital• Jeremy Clark, CEO, Hilton Head Island Hospital• Allison Eckard, M.D., Infectious Disease Physician, Medical University of South Carolina

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 ensure the availability of resources for students and staff in need.

Beaufort County School District Safe Return to In-Person Instruction and Continuity of Services Plan

Beaufort County Schools has managed to provide a wide variety of relevant services through strategic partnerships. Those partnerships will continue through the 2021-2022 and the foreseeable future.

Examples of services provided that will continue:

Service Provider	Scope of Service
Hope Performance Systems	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.
Wright Directions Family Services	Provides rehabilitative behavioral Health Services for 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 ranges of mental health services to students and staff

Beaufort County Schools has also committed to a continuation of regularly scheduled food service distributions to communities within Beaufort County. Specifically, BCSD will provide breakfasts and lunches to students through the USDA Summer Feeding Program – and we expect to serve approximately 2,216 students on a daily basis through our Summer Reading Program and an additional 1,235 students through coordination efforts with community partners.

BCSD will also provide breakfasts and lunches for school year 2021-2022 to all students attending Beaufort County Schools (in-person students as well as virtual students). After-school snacks and dinners will be offered to our students at designated schools and through our community partners.

Periodic Review

Beaufort County Schools 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 when determining if revisions are to be made, and of what kind.

Tentative Review Schedule 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.

Beaufort County School District Safe Return to In-Person Instruction and Continuity of Services Plan

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

- The use of plain language
- Preparation in the pre-dominant languages spoken by citizens in Beaufort County, SC.
- Input and feedback from members of the larger Beaufort County community and district stakeholders
- Made available for review on the district website and social media platforms

Process of Development: Extensive public engagement was also utilized in the development of Beaufort County School’s 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.