



BLIND BROOK PUBLIC SCHOOLS

BLIND BROOK-RYE UNION FREE SCHOOL DISTRICT
390 NORTH RIDGE STREET
RYE BROOK, NY 10573-1105
(914) 937-3600

PATRICK K. BRIMSTEIN, Ed.D.
SUPERINTENDENT OF SCHOOLS

Members of the Blind Brook School Community,

Thank you for your patience while the Blind Brook framework for school reopening was under development. I am grateful for the herculean effort of Blind Brook administrators, teachers, staff, parents, volunteers, and Board of Education.

Since assuming the superintendent position on July 1st, the majority of my time has been exclusively focused on development of our District plan. The NYS Education Department Reopening Guidance was released on July 16th with a deadline of July 31, and an understanding that all plans are subject to change up until the first day of school on September 8.

All plans are predicated on maintaining low COVID transmission rates in our Village and our County. The lower the community transition is, the more likely we will be able to welcome students and staff into the building using a hybrid model engineered to decrease density. It is in everyone's best interest to wear masks and practice social distancing throughout the summer so we can have a safe return to school in September.

The Blind Brook plan incorporates best practices derived from conversations and consultation with:

- area superintendents,
- school administrators and their representative professional groups,
- representatives of the Danish Ministry of Education,
- the District Medical Advisory group,
- teacher leadership,
- the Health & Safety Committee,
- parent survey instruments and other input,
- representatives from Westchester County and the NYS Departments of Health,
- County Executive George Latimer and Rye Brook Mayor Paul Rosenberg.

...along with scientific research from:

- the American Academy of Pediatrics,
- the Centers for Disease Control (CDC),
- Harvard School of Public Health,
- the New England Journal of Medicine,
- the NYS Department of Health and the New York State Education Department.

Each supports the District's goal that all schools should strive to bring children back to school, socially distanced, when possible.

Click [THIS LINK](#) to read the full plan as submitted in Draft to the NYS Education Department.

For those of you who prefer a summary, the following information can help you understand the plan specific to instructional practice, school schedules, special education, health and safety, cleaning protocols, transportation, and social-emotional health.

Return-to-School Plan

- K-5 students will be returning every day for either a morning or afternoon session with complementary e-learning during the opposite session.
- Secondary students (grades 6-12) will be on a hybrid schedule, separated into two groups (starting with A group on Monday and Tuesday and B group on Thursday and Friday. Instruction on Wednesday will involve live-streamed, synchronous learning with the whole class at home while the building is thoroughly cleaned between the different groups.
- The District will send a communication out to parents or guardians who will not be sending their children to school in the Fall with information about whom to contact for homeschooling or what to do if your child meets the criteria established by NYSED for remote instruction offered by the District.

Student Schedules

- Principals will send emails in the coming weeks with schedules specific to each student, training on how to stay safe, protocols for entering and exiting the building, as well as instructions for riding the bus.
- Every building schedule, although different from prior years, has been structured to provide consistency regardless of the remote or hybrid model so that any shifts between models due to community health indicators will be relatively smooth and less disruptive to the students.
- To the greatest extent practicable, in-person class time will focus on the students in the room and their academic, social, and emotional needs.
- Student movement between classes will be limited where possible to maintain the integrity of cohorts.
- Outdoor learning and mask breaks will be encouraged, and large group gatherings discouraged.
- Grouping middle school students in cohorts will be similar to best practices followed in the elementary school to limit contacts.

Training and Health Monitoring

- Video training will be provided to all families and staff members on safety, transportation, building protocols and other expectations by the principals in August.
- Staff will complete an electronic health self-check attestation each morning before work and will stay home and report their absence if symptoms are present.
- Parents/Guardians will check their child(ren) for symptoms each morning before sending them to school and will keep them home and report their absence if symptoms are present.
- Parents are asked to attest to the current health and recent exposure risks of each student, every day in the school building prior to arrival. A health questionnaire and temperature check will be required of each student not pre-screened by a parent at home.

Mask Requirement

- Masks must be worn by all K-12 students and by all district employees at all times. Staff members will direct students when to take mask breaks.

- Masks will be provided, although students are expected to bring their own masks. Parents are encouraged to check the fittings of the masks for proper protection with a healthcare professional.
- Employees will be provided with masks but may prefer to use their own. While gloves are not required, they will be available (non-latex). Frequent handwashing and use of hand sanitizer are recommended and disease mitigation guidelines issued by the CDC and the DOH will be followed.

Transportation

- Protocols for loading, seating, and unloading buses are under development.
- Students on a school bus must wear face masks and they should practice social distancing to the extent possible.
- Parents are asked to attest to the current health and recent exposure risks of each student prior to boarding a bus.

Social Distancing

- Space use/density restructuring will be in effect throughout each school. All students working at desks in shared spaces will be spaced six (6) feet apart, unless safety, care functions, or the core activity necessitate a closer distance, in which case additional personal protective measures will be in place.
- Students and employees will avoid congregating in common areas, and bottlenecks in student flow throughout the building will be reduced by using additional entry and exit routes to and from the building among other strategies.
- Circulation routes through the school, signage, and floor markings to direct foot traffic and ensure safe social distancing will be established by the staff.
- Employees should also maintain a six (6) foot distance from one another when possible. Any time the distance between persons is less than 6 feet, employees must wear a face covering.
- Each grade level has been split into two main groups and further divided into cohorts to both reduce building density for greater social distance. This will also limit broader interactions between larger groups of students.
- Large school assemblies will not take place.
- Holding classes outdoors or in larger areas to include the gym, library, and cafeterias will occur when possible and at the discretion of each teacher.
- Larger special area classes such as physical education and music may be substantially different in form, function, and content.

Visitors

- Adjustments to parental involvement in school activities will occur, with the elimination of parents entering school buildings. Additionally, new processes for dropping off or picking up students before, during, and after school will be in place.
- Non-employees who are working in the District must submit a self-attestation and have their temperature checked before entering any building.

Hygiene

- Signs will be posted by building administrators to remind everyone of the signs of COVID-19, to wash hands frequently, to wear a mask, to limit the density of people in any one space. We hope to include signs made by our students as well.
- Staff will set schedules for frequent handwashing for students.
- Hand sanitizer will be provided at building entry, in common areas and on the desk of each teacher.

Cleaning & Ventilation

- The District will use disinfectants specifically formulated for use against COVID-19.

- Custodial cleaning protocols and a checklist schedule for cleaning all building spaces, especially high-touch areas, will be in place to protect staff/students.
- Designated areas and classroom surfaces will be cleaned multiple times throughout the day.
- Classrooms will have cleaning wipes available.
- Air exchange handlers in the B.M.P. Ridge Street School building are currently in construction. We continue to evaluate the readiness status of the ongoing building project. Classrooms are equipped with UV air purifiers.
- MERV 13 filters have been installed throughout the middle and high school. These are replaced on schedule in all HVAC units. The air flow rate through these higher-grade filters is balanced in the units.

Contact Tracing

- If a student or staff member present in a building is later confirmed with a diagnosis of COVID-19, then the Department of Health (DOH) will be notified immediately. Specific notification procedures must be taken, as indicated by the DOH, while maintaining confidentiality in accordance with the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA), privacy expectations (HIPAA), and the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA).
- Contact tracing is a function of the DOH. Whenever indicated, it will be responsible to trace all contacts of confirmed cases of COVID-19. The District will support DOH efforts to trace all contacts with accurate attendance records, logs of employees and visitors.
- If a student or staff member becomes sick or symptomatic, notification to exposed individuals will occur pursuant to the contact tracing protocols designated by the DOH. The District will not notify the broader community unless directed to do so by health officials.
- Staff or students with signs or symptoms of COVID-19 are recommended to notify their medical practitioner immediately. Under no circumstances should any person experiencing illness attempt to enter a school building or ride a school bus with other students.

In closing, Governor Cuomo is scheduled to make an announcement regarding school reopening across NYS next week. We can expect that school plans may change at any time between now and when schools are scheduled to start based on community transmission rates of COVID-19. Because of the unpredictable nature of navigating through a pandemic, we are prepared with multiple scenarios.

To be safe, please practice responsible protective measures. Your health and well-being is directly associated to the health of those around you, and their health to yours. Together, we can assure a safer community in which our schools can reopen sooner, safer and more responsibly.

Most Respectfully,

Dr. Patrick Brimstein