



Burlington County Special Services School District
www.burlcoschools.org

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Potential**

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March 3, 2022

Dear BCSSSD Parents and Guardians,

Based upon guidance from the Burlington County Department of Health and Department of Education, BCSSSD has determined that beginning Monday, March 7, 2022, **masks will be *OPTIONAL* for students, staff, and visitors based on individual choice**. Each person's decision--whether to wear a mask or not--will be fully respected by all in our learning community.

When we begin our mask-optional phase on March 7th, these conditions will **NOT** change:

- Students and staff members who present symptoms of communicable illness will be required to stay home until the symptoms are no longer present.
- Masks will still be required to be worn if an individual:
 - Has tested positive for COVID in the last ten days;
 - Has COVID symptoms and is waiting to leave the building;
 - Has been identified as an unvaccinated close contact within the last five days.
- Staff will be strongly encouraged to wear masks in the presence of students who are medically fragile or immunocompromised.
- All other health and safety protocols will remain in place: proper hand-washing, hand sanitizing, disinfectant misting, and the use of a barrier if requested.

****Masks will NOT be mandated on BCSSSD-provided buses.** Students who take their own district's transportation to and from school, should follow the guidelines of that district regarding mask wearing.

Making masks optional will also require subtle changes in our contact tracing and quarantining protocols. We will continue to implement practices to control the spread of communicable diseases as outlined in our District Policies. Our district contact tracers will contact any parent whose child is considered a close contact (3 feet or less), and explain the required procedures and any need to quarantine. Moving forward, we will continue to evaluate the situation in our schools and county, and consider all recommendations from our County Department of Health in determining the need for any additional modifications.

We have done a remarkable job working together as a school community over the last two years, making plans where circumstances and time have allowed, and making adjustments quickly where they did not. All of this requires a conscious effort on each of our parts to remain a community that focuses on common goals while also maximizing the opportunity to make individual choices. I thank you in advance for your collaboration and cooperation.

You will find answers to [frequently asked questions here](#).

Sincerely,

Dr. Christopher Nagy
Superintendent of Schools

Attachment

Westampton Campus
20 Pioneer Boulevard
Westampton, NJ 08060
(609) 261-5600, ext. 2218

Alternative School
1020 Briggs Road
Mount Laurel, NJ 08054
(609) 261-5600, ext. 2501

Lumberton Campus
71 Ark Road
Lumberton, NJ 08048
(609) 261-5600, ext. 4430

Transition Campus
20 Pioneer Boulevard
Westampton, NJ 08060
(609) 261-5600, ext. 3100



FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

As of March 7, 2022 are masks required in schools?	No.They are optional for all students and staff
As of March 7, 2022 are students or staff members being forced to remove his or her mask in school?	The district will support an environment that provides the option regarding wearing a mask. Each individual's choice will be fully respected by all in our learning community.
As of March 7, 2022 are students required to wear a mask on a school bus?	On February 25, 2022, CDC announced that the requirement for wearing of masks on buses or vans operated by public school systems has been lifted. NJDOH is currently updating guidance for K-12 settings with the expectation that NJ will follow CDC's lead for masking on buses. The practice of requiring a mask on a school bus in BCSSD/BCIT will no longer be in effect after school on March 4, 2022.It will be OPTIONAL for any students and staff.
Will there still be contact tracing protocols?	Given that we are now in a mask optional environment the ability to contact trace as we did in a 100% masked environment will be challenging. When feasible, we will contact trace but conditions may not be present as they once were for it to be a consistently executed practice. If symptoms develop at any time, persons should stay home.
What are the quarantine requirements for students who test positive for COVID-19?	Students who test positive will quarantine for 10 days regardless of vaccination status. Students who test positive and have proof of a negative COVID test taken on day 6 or after and test negative can return to school before day 11 pending documentation and approval from the school nurse. Home tests will not be accepted. Accepted Tests Include: Diagnostic Lab Test (PCR);



	<p>Rapid Diagnostic Test (molecular); Rapid Antigen Test (completed at a testing facility). Students should stay home if they have COVID compatible symptoms.</p> <p>Unvaccinated students' household contact that cannot isolate/wear a mask: 10 days plus five full days = 15 days quarantine.</p> <p>Unvaccinated students' household contact that can isolate/wear mask at home for 10 days- 5 full days, return on day 6</p>
Will children have to sit a certain distance from each other in the classroom?	Students continue to be spaced to 3 feet of distancing or to the greatest extent practicable. Students can be less than three feet apart in order to establish a small group instruction methodology or determine classroom configuration at teacher's discretion.
Will teachers be directed how to arrange their classroom seating?	No
Do visitors to our buildings have to wear a mask starting on March 7?	No; they will be able to choose whether or not they wear a mask.
Are we still testing unvaccinated staff members?	Yes, until further notice because Executive Order 253 is still in effect. The requirement for WEEKLY testing for unvaccinated staff members will continue until further notice.
Is there an expectation for handling students that wish not to sit next to an unmasked student?	No, there is not an expectation to accommodate requests.
Enforcement of Policy 5500 (Code of Conduct) and 5512 (Harassment, Intimidation and Bullying)	Please note that there are protections if anyone is making fun of a person's choice to continue to wear (or not wear) a mask embedded into BCSSSD Board of Education policy 5600.A (Code of Conduct) and 5512 (Harassment, Intimidation and Bullying).



Staff Quarantine Protocols	Staff who test positive will quarantine for 10 days regardless of vaccination status. Staff who test positive and have proof of a negative COVID test taken on day 6 or after and test negative can return to school before day 11 pending documentation and approval from the school nurse. Home tests will not be accepted. Accepted Tests Include: Diagnostic Lab Test (PCR); Rapid Diagnostic Test (molecular); Rapid Antigen Test (completed at a testing facility) Staff should stay home if they have COVID compatible symptoms.
Does this pertain to pre-school?	Yes
Are there potential for increased mitigation factors if public health declines?	Yes, there is a potential for an increase in mitigation strategies should the public health situation in our schools warrant it.
How will lunches change?	At this point our lunch program will remain as is in all schools and will be reviewed through the month of March. Any changes will be communicated as soon as possible.
Quarantine Instruction Information	Quarantine instruction will be reviewed throughout the month of March. Any changes will be communicated as soon as possible.
Medically Fragile Student Information	If there are inquiries to medically fragile students please refer those to school administration so a 504 plan or IEP can be examined/developed. We will encourage staff to wear masks in the presence of medically fragile students.