

COVID-19 Safe Return to School Protocols

August 1, 2023

Recent Updates: N/A

Recommend Best practice for Students and Staff

- The Centers for Disease Control (CDC) states that wearing a well-fitted mask consistently and correctly reduces the risk of spreading the virus that causes COVID-19. Students and staff may elect to wear a mask during school hours or on school transportation, but it is not required.
- Face masks are recommended but not required for all individuals inside school buildings or on transportation when community spread is at high levels.
- Regular handwashing and use of hand sanitizer are recommended. Students and staff should wash their hands and or use sanitizer before meals. Teachers will train/reinforce respiratory etiquette (covering coughs and sneezes) to prevent the spread of illness.

Visitors

- Visitors should self-monitor prior to arrival for a temperature greater than 100.0, cough, congestion, shortness of breath, loss of taste or smell, sore throat, headache, or body aches each day. If any of these symptoms are present, the visitor should not enter the building, and the appointment should be rescheduled.
- Visitors are allowed inside school buildings during the day and should follow the school visitation guidelines. Visitors may attend after-school events such as PTA activities, Open Houses, sporting events, etc.

Response to Illness of Students

- Children are considered contagious if they experience any of the following: fever, vomiting, diarrhea, or conjunctivitis. The student should be fever free for 24 hours without medication and improving symptoms before coming back to school.

Response to COVID related illness for students and staff

- Parents should monitor their child for a temperature greater than 100.0, cough, congestion, shortness of breath, gastrointestinal symptoms, loss of taste or smell, sore throat, headache, or body aches each day. If any of these symptoms are present the student should:
 - Stay home and be fever free (without medication) for 24 hours with symptom improvement before returning to school.
- Staff are expected to follow these same procedures should they develop COVID-19 symptoms or test positive for COVID-19.

Attendance – Quarantine & Isolation

Isolation

- As with other illnesses, students or staff who test positive for COVID-19 or are exhibiting symptoms of COVID-19 may return once they are 24 hours fever free (without medication) with improving symptoms. Should a parent/guardian choose to follow the TDOH recommendations for isolation*, the student's absence will be marked excused once the parent provides one of the following:
 - Doctor's excuse
 - Confirmed positive test result

Quarantine – Close Contact to COVID

- The CDC no longer recommends quarantine for students/staff who are exposed to COVID-19, regardless of vaccination status.
 - The CDC recommends that vaccinated and unvaccinated people who were exposed to COVID-19 (contacts) take precautions for 10 days after their exposure by wearing a mask, watching for COVID-19 symptoms, and getting tested for COVID-19 (5) days after exposure.

Athletic Activities & Other Events

- The above protocols apply to all athletic activities and extracurricular programs. Athletic activities will also follow all applicable TSSAA, SCRHD, and First Tennessee Region Superintendent Study Council regulations.

Cleaning Procedures

- Frequently touched surfaces will undergo cleaning often and no less than daily. Staff will perform additional disinfecting of more frequently touched surfaces and equipment throughout the day if possible.

Ventilation Systems

- BTCS has taken numerous measures to ensure the air quality in buildings exceeds standards while reducing the spread of COVID-19 particles. Prior to the pandemic, BTCS exceeded the American Society of Heating and Refrigeration Engineers (ASHRAE) standards and building codes regarding introducing fresh air into our schools. During the pandemic, BTCS met or exceeded ASHREA and CDC recommendations for ventilation. Filters are changed on a more frequent basis than pre-pandemic. Special attention is given to filters in areas of suspected COVID-19 exposures. The filters in the HVAC units have the highest MERV rating possible before causing operational issues with the HVAC unit to maximize filtration.

Protocols are subject to change based on community spread of COVID and changes to public health policy. If you have input regarding the COVID-19 Operating Procedures, please email studentservices@btcs.org.

* Tennessee Department of Health Cases and Contacts (including TDH Release from Isolation and Quarantine): <https://www.tn.gov/content/dam/tn/health/documents/cedep/novel-coronavirus/Isolation-QuarantineRelease.pdf>