



## **Health and Safety FAQ for Parents and Guardians**

### **PHYSICAL DISTANCING**

#### **Are protocols being put in place for entry, exit and recess?**

Schools are establishing one-way traffic patterns in hallways and entryways and working to define specific class entry and exit intervals to avoid cluttering of hallways. The District is providing all schools with floor decals to aid with physical distancing protocols and direction of travel.

The District is also establishing policies that dictate how and where students will be allowed to play at recess, and the degree of enforcement around physical distancing if multiple classes have recess at the same time.

#### **How will schools manage the transition between classes while adhering to physical distancing?**

The District is providing physical distancing floor decals to every school to encourage appropriate physical distancing in hallways and corridors. Schools may need to arrange for a staggered release of students to assist with this process.

### **GENERAL INFORMATION**

#### **What is the difference between social distancing and physical distancing?**

The practice of social distancing means staying home and away from others as much as possible to help prevent spread of COVID-19. The practice of social distancing encourages the use of things such as online video and phone communication instead of in-person contact.

Physical distancing is the practice of staying at least 6 feet away from others to avoid catching a disease such as COVID-19.

“Social distancing” is a term that was used early in the pandemic as many people stayed home to help prevent spread of the virus. Now as communities are reopening and people are in public

more often, physical distancing is used to stress the importance of maintaining physical space when in public areas.

### **What is a face covering? What does it do?**

Face coverings help prevent the spread of COVID-19 and help keep you and those around you safe. The use of facial coverings may reduce transmission of the virus by more than 50%. Facial coverings must be made of cloth, must cover your nose and your mouth, and must comply with the CDC recommendations. For CDC guidance on selection, use, and sanitization of face coverings visit: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/prevent-getting-sick/cloth-facecover-guidance.html>

### **Is there a difference between a mask and a face covering?**

**Yes.** Face masks are manufactured with medical grade materials and are used by our front-line healthcare workers and first responders. Face coverings are made out of any non-medical-grade material, such as t-shirts or other fabric.

## **PERSONAL PROTECTIVE EQUIPMENT**

### **What Personal Protective Equipment will be provided to schools?**

All schools are receiving a package with the following PPE supplies:

- Three-ply face coverings
- Thermometers
- 1 hand sanitizer dispenser for each classroom
- One-gallon hand sanitizer refill jugs for each classroom
- Clencide wipes for each classroom
- Gloves for each classroom

Additional packages tailored for the isolation room, ESE self-contained classrooms and extracurricular activities are also being provided to schools based on size and need. These packages will include:

- Reusable face shields
- Protective gowns
- Additional gloves
- Additional Clencide wipes
- Reusable clear face coverings (communicator masks)
- Facial tissue
- First aid kit
- Additional hand sanitizer

These supplies will be replenished, as necessary.

### **Will there be hand sanitizer stations in schools?**

**Yes.** Each classroom will receive a hand sanitizer dispenser and a one-gallon hand sanitizer refill jug. Additional hand sanitizer stations will also be made available in certain common areas throughout the school. The placement of these supplemental stations will ultimately depend on the layout of each school and fire code restrictions.

### **Will the District install Plexiglass shields?**

**Yes.** Plexiglass shields are being installed in high traffic areas (such as the single point of entry) based on CDC guidance. The CDC recommends face coverings as the most effective barrier for preventing the spread of disease and does not recommend the use of plexiglass shields in the classroom.

## **FACE COVERINGS**

### **Will everyone be required to wear a face covering at school?**

According to the District's Emergency Face Covering Policy 2170, no one will be admitted to a District school or facility without wearing a face covering. There may be exceptions, such as for:

- Infants
- Individuals with Medical Certification
- Individuals who are Outdoors (with Physical Distancing)
- For Identification Purposes
- Students with Approval
- At Regularly Scheduled Mealtimes
- Musical & Theatrical Performances
- Strenuous Physical Activity
- Demanding Circumstances
- Employees with Supervisor's Approval

For additional information about any of these exceptions, please refer to the School Board of Broward County's Emergency Policy 2170 pertaining to Face Coverings.

### **Will students have to wear face coverings on buses?**

**Yes.** According to Emergency Policy 2170 on Face Coverings each student, employee, visitor, vendor or other person will be required to properly wear a face covering while at or inside a school/facility, or other vehicle owned, leased or operated by The School Board. This includes school buses.

### **Will parents be able to get doctors' notes so children with sensory issues don't have to wear face coverings?**

According to Emergency Policy 2170 on Face Coverings, a face covering shall not be required for a student if school administration, IEP team or 504 team authorizes the student to remove her/his face covering during an activity provided that the student maintains physical distancing (six (6) feet minimum) from other persons when not wearing a face covering.

## What qualifies as an acceptable face covering?

The following face covering types are approved for compliance with Emergency Policy 2170:

- a. **Commercially Produced Face Coverings:** Commercially produced surgical masks or respirators are acceptable for compliance with this policy;
- b. **Cloth Face Coverings:** Cloth face coverings are acceptable for compliance with this policy provided that the face covering covers both the nose and mouth of the person and fits snugly against the sides of the person's face with no gaps. The U.S. Center for Disease Control has issued instructions on how to make a cloth face covering at: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/prevent-getting-sick/how-to-make-cloth-face-covering.html>

The CDC offers additional guidance on this topic at <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/prevent-getting-sick/about-face-coverings.html>

## Are there any restrictions related to masks or face coverings?

**Yes.** Students are not permitted to wear a face covering that has markings that are suggestive, revealing, indecent, associated with gangs or cults, encourage the use of drugs, alcohol, or violence, or support discrimination. Additionally, face coverings may not be worn that promotes a political party or an individual seeking an elected office.

## How should face coverings be worn?

Proper wearing of a face covering, should cover both the nose and mouth of the person and should fit snugly against the sides of the person's face with no gaps.

The CDC offers additional guidance at <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/prevent-getting-sick/how-to-wear-cloth-face-coverings.html>

## Can my child wear a face shield, instead of a face covering?

**No.** Face shields are less effective than commercial and cloth face coverings and may not be used by any persons to comply with Emergency Policy 2170, except under the following limited circumstances:

- Face shields may be worn when used in addition to an approved face covering to protect eyes, as well,
- Medical Certification: A face shield may be worn in lieu of other approved face coverings by persons who are observing physical distancing and present school officials with a certification from a health care provider that the person has a medical, physical or psychological contraindication that prevents the person from being able to safely wear an approved face covering; or,
- Instruction: Face shields may be used by school district employees in situations where physical distancing is observed and it is important for students to see how the instructor pronounces words (e.g., English Learners, early childhood instruction, speech therapy, foreign language, etc.) and/or an instructor may wear a clear mask (which is not a face shield) when it is important for a student to observe the instructors mouth.

### **What measures will be taken if a student shows up to school without an appropriate face covering?**

According to the District's Emergency Face Covering Policy 2170, no one will be admitted to a District school or facility without wearing a face covering. The District is providing a limited supply of three-ply face coverings to all schools for students in need.

### **Will schools have extra face coverings for students who don't have them or don't bring them?**

Each school is receiving a limited PPE Package including 500 three-ply face coverings for students. These supplies will be replenished as needed, but parents should not plan for or expect students to be presented a face covering.

### **What if a student takes off their face covering off or refuses to wear a face covering appropriately?**

According to Emergency Policy 2170 on Face Coverings, students who do not comply should be reminded of the policy and the student's parent will be called. If a student blatantly disregards the health and safety of others and/or refuses to comply with wearing a face covering, discipline will be in accordance with the Code of Student Conduct.

### **How can I prepare my child to get used to wearing a face covering all day and wearing it properly?**

We recommend beginning this education with your students now. [By order of Broward County](#), face coverings are required in all public spaces where physical distancing cannot be maintained.

## **ESE AND PARAPROFESSIONAL SAFETY**

### **Will paraprofessionals and ESE teachers be provided with additional PPE that is specific to their needs?**

**Yes.** In addition to the standard allotment of PPE every classroom will receive, the District is providing gowns, gloves, clear communicator masks, and face shields to all ESE self-contained classrooms. These materials are being disseminated separately from the general PPE packages for schools in order to ensure they are received by the appropriate staff members.

## **INDOOR AIR QUALITY**

### **Will the air conditioning in classrooms be maintained in good working order?**

**Yes.** The District is closely monitoring the Indoor Air Quality and working to ensure that all HVAC Systems are functioning at an optimal level. Prior to student return, the District will have replaced all air filters with maximum rated filters.

### **Will teachers be allowed to open windows?**

In order to keep the HVAC systems functioning at an optimal level, the District does not recommend that schools leave doors and windows open. The District is closely monitoring the Indoor Air Quality at all schools and outside air could negatively impact the HVAC performance.

The District's HVAC systems pull in the maximum recommended amount of fresh air and push out inside air. Opening windows impacts that process and also increases humidity which leads to mold and other indoor air quality issues.

**Many schools have air conditioning units dedicated for individual rooms or dedicated to areas. Will the filters on these be replaced with filters that can filter out the COVID-19 virus?**

The District is closely monitoring the indoor air quality at all schools. Although the American Society of Heating, Refrigerating and Air-Conditioning Engineers (ASHRAE) does not recommend a specific Minimum Efficiency Reporting Value (MERV) filter rating for preventing COVID-19 transmission, the organization suggests upgrading systems in non-healthcare facilities to MERV-13 or the highest achievable level, can be a worthwhile step in emergency response plans. Across Broward County Public Schools, all filters used in air conditioning units are MERV rated. Most of the District's air conditioning units are large enough to accommodate MERV 13 filters. For those units too small to accommodate the MERV 13 filters, filters with either one or two inch thickness and rated either MERV 8 or 9 (depending on size) are utilized. Prior to student return, the District will have replaced all air filters with maximum rated filters.

**HEALTHCARE PROFESSIONALS AND ISOLATION ROOMS**

**What happens if my child or another student shows symptoms of COVID-19 while on campus?**

If your child or another student exhibits symptoms of COVID-19 while on campus, BCPS staff will escort the student to the school's designated isolation room where the school nurse will perform a focused assessment. Based on the assessment, the nurse will contact the Florida Department of Health, school principal and Coordinated Student Health Services. If the student is displaying signs and symptoms of COVID-19, the nurse will contact the student's emergency contact to pick up the student and any siblings attending the school.

**What is an Isolation Room?**

Isolation rooms are used to mitigate the spread of COVID-19 by a student suspected of having COVID-19 while they wait for his or her parent or guardian to pick them up. The room is sized to be able to maintain 6-foot physical distancing. When feasible, the room shall include a sink, soap dispenser, paper towels, and a designated restroom only to be used by isolated staff and students. The isolation room is equipped with proper PPE equipment including gowns in the event a nurse needs to administer assistance to the student.

**Will all schools have a school nurse?**

Yes.

**Will all schools have an isolation room?**

Yes.

**Will the nurse have training specific to COVID-19?**

Yes.

**Who will be responsible for overseeing the isolation room?**

There will be a healthcare professional assigned to oversee the isolation room.

**Will the same nurse handle possible COVID-19 cases and normal clinical duties such as treating students with diabetes and asthma?**

**No.** Each school will have a designated healthcare professional assigned to the isolation room. This individual reports to the clinic nurse and will conduct all assessments on individuals exhibiting symptoms of COVID-19.

**What protections will be put in place to protect the students from cross-contamination?**

Students exhibiting symptoms of COVID-19 will be directed to the isolation room for further assessment. The isolation room nurse will perform a focused assessment of the student and contact the student’s emergency contact for pickup if necessary. The student will remain isolated until he or she can be picked up. In the event there are multiple students in need of assessment at the same time, the students will be appropriately physically distanced and remain separated from other students and teachers.

**PREVENTATIVE MEASURES**

**Will tests be required for teachers or students?**

Any suspected cases will be referred to the Florida Department of Health in Broward County. They will make the determination if testing and/or quarantine is needed. The District is exploring rapid testing options for higher risk ESE classrooms.

**Will the school perform temperature checks?**

**No.** Students and staff are asked to perform temperature checks as part of a daily self-assessment each morning. Each school will receive a supply of five thermometers to check symptomatic student temperatures as needed.

**Will there be any requirements for COVID testing before returning to campuses?**

**No,** however students and staff are asked to perform temperature checks as part of a daily self-assessment each morning before proceeding to school or work.

**How do I conduct a daily health self-assessment?**

In order to enter Broward County Public Schools facilities, all individuals should answer the following self-assessment questions at home each morning prior to departure:

- Do I feel warm, have a fever or elevated temperature (100.4), or have the chills?
- Do I have a persistent cough, runny nose or sore throat?
- Have I recently had a loss of taste or smell?
- Has anyone in my household tested positive for COVID-19?

- Have I been in close, unprotected contact with anyone who has tested positive for COVID-19 (spent longer than 15 minutes within 6 feet of someone who was sick with a fever and cough or confirmed/suspected of having COVID-19?)
- Am I feeling otherwise sick or ill today?
- Am I awaiting test results for COVID-19?
- Have I tested positive for COVID-19?
- Have I been told to self-quarantine or self-isolate by a doctor or District administrator?

If you can answer “NO” to all of these questions, you may proceed to school or work. If any member of your family answers “YES” to one of these questions, please contact your school nurse for additional guidance.

## **SYMPTOMATIC OR ILL INDIVIDUALS**

### **What are the protocols in place for students who appear sick?**

In the event that a student presents as ill, staff should contact the clinic nurse. If the student’s symptoms are consistent with COVID-19 the clinic nurse will send the assigned healthcare personnel from the isolation room to escort the student to the isolation room for a focused assessment.

### **Will students be required to disclose if they have tested positive for COVID-19?**

If the Florida Department of Health in Broward County refers a student for COVID-19 testing, the caretakers will need to send the test results to the school nurse.

### **What COVID-19 testing policies does the School Board plan to put into place?**

In the event that an individual exhibits symptoms of COVID-19, the isolation room nurse will conduct a focused exam. Based on the assessment, the isolation room nurse and school principal will consult with the Florida Department of Health in Broward County (FDOH) immediately and determine if the individual should be quarantined and anyone else who may have been directly exposed.

If determined by the FDOH, students and direct exposures should quarantine for 14 days. The principal will notify those individuals who may have had direct exposure to the suspected case (no names included) and recommend they monitor for symptoms, consult with healthcare provider, and get tested. The nurse will follow up with the student's parent/guardian regarding student’s disposition within 24-48 hours and provide resources. The areas of the school where the individual visited will undergo emergency cleaning.

The District continues exploring the option to make rapid testing available in schools.

### **What steps will the District and School take if a student or staff member tests positive for COVID-19?**

In the event that a student or staff member is suspected of having COVID-19 and referred for testing/quarantine by the Florida Department of Health in Broward County (FDOH), the principal will notify those individuals who may have had direct exposure to the suspected case (no names included) and recommend they monitor for symptoms, consult with healthcare provider, and get tested. The areas of the school where the student or staff member visited will

undergo emergency cleaning. In the event the individual receives positive test results, all family and direct exposures must continue to follow quarantine protocols.

After testing positive, students may continue to participate in e-learning. Teachers may continue teaching their classes virtually depending on the severity of their symptoms (the school will provide proper supervision in the classroom) – although this is strictly the employee’s decision to continue to teach or not. Once symptoms worsen or the teacher feels that the stress or lack of rest is not allowing their condition to improve, the District will immediately hire a trained substitute to continue face to face eLearning or have someone else in the District, who is certified, step in to continue face to face eLearning e.g., school instructional coaches, District staff, etc. If none of the above options can be done, then the school may have to divide up the students to other teachers in the school.

The individual’s family will need to schedule testing again once he or she has stopped showing symptoms. Once the individual and his or her family members receive negative results that individual may return in-person after his or her quarantine/isolation is completed.

### **What is the official policy on reporting COVID positivity for students, families, and staff?**

The District has published a COVID-19 Dashboard on the website which is updated weekly to indicate the number of cases that have been reported to BCPS. This dashboard contains the most recent 30 days of data.

## **NOTIFICATION PROCEDURES**

### **What should I do if one of my immediate family members is suspected of or confirmed to have COVID-19?**

Families are asked to report suspected and confirmed cases using the District’s online [Coronavirus Notification form](#). All students in your household attending a BCPS school must self-isolate a minimum of 14 days and provide proof of 2 negative test results and have no fever or symptoms before they return to school. Contact the FDOH immediately and get tested. Parents or guardians are required to inform the school nurse in the event there is a positive case in their household.

### **What are the protocols for reporting a positive COVID-19 case and informing those we have come in contact with?**

In the event that a student has symptoms of COVID-19 at school the isolation room nurse will conduct a focused exam. Based on the assessment, the isolation room nurse and school principal will consult with the Florida Department of Health in Broward County (FDOH) immediately and determine if the student should be quarantined and who else may have been directly exposed. The FDOH will assist with contact tracing, as necessary. If determined by FDOH, students and direct exposures should quarantine for 14 days. The FDOH will inform those who should quarantine.

**What steps does the school take to support contact tracing if a student or staff member is suspected of having or diagnosed with COVID-19?**

The Florida Department of Health in Broward County will complete the contact tracing investigation. Under the guidance of the FDOH, the school principal will notify all individuals who may have been directly exposed to the suspected case and all areas that were visited by the student will receive an emergency cleaning that night.

**SAFETY DRILLS**

**Will schools be required to still perform monthly Code Red and Fire Drills?**

**Yes.** In order to satisfy the State of Florida requirements for active assailant/code red drills during the COVID-19 Pandemic, the District has been working closely with the State of Florida, Office of Safe Schools to determine the most appropriate approach to educate our staff and students on this important topic during a time when traditional drills may not be appropriate. The District has been providing schools with specific guidance as to the exercises that may be used to replace traditional lockdown drills each month and will continue to do so. Specific guidance has also been provided to schools regarding the safe practice of fire drills. Physical distancing and adherence to COVID-19 related precautions will be followed during all District drills until such time that it is no longer necessary.