

Bledsoe County Schools

2021-2022

Plan in Response to COVID-19



Last Updated August 20, 2021 9:00 a.m.

This operations manual is a framework based on the most up-to-date public health recommendations given the evidence at the time of publication. Regular updates will be made to this plan based on information provided by the CDC, Tennessee Department of Health, and applicable federal, state and local agencies.

Message from the Director of Schools.

I want to welcome your child back to the new school year. Students benefit from in-person learning, and safely returning to in-person instruction in the fall of 2021 is a priority. I can assure you, as we begin this year, our teachers, administrators, classified employees and board of education are committed to providing the finest education possible for all our students in the safest environment possible.

- Mr. James Ellis

PPE (Personal Protective Equipment)

The Tennessee Department of Health states that it is critical that all district and school staff are prepared to help prevent, rapidly identify and reduce the spread of COVID-19 in Tennessee schools. The department recommends following the CDC guidelines. CDC recommends universal indoor masking for all teachers, staff, students, and visitors to K-12 schools, regardless of vaccination status. Children should return to full-time in-person learning in the fall with layered prevention strategies in place.

- In order to minimize exposure to COVID-19, PPE may be needed to prevent certain exposures. PPE can include:

Masks - Face masks are an important part of student and employee protection, as well as personal hygiene, social distancing, and frequent cleaning efforts.

- All masks **MUST** follow dress codes.
- In grades 3-12, masks for students will be required in all environments where social distancing is not feasible. Masks will be highly recommended for students in grades K-2. However, masks are required for all students (K-12) when riding the bus.
- All staff must wear a cloth or disposable mask, covering both the nose and mouth, when in close contact with students or other faculty members and when in common areas. K – 2 teachers will be allowed to wear a face shield while during literacy instruction. Any staff that cannot wear a mask due to medical or emotional condition may wear a face shield with a letter of recommendation from a medical doctor. Face shields are not considered a safe replacement for a cloth mask.
(<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/prevent-getting-sick/diy-cloth-face-coverings.html>)
- Staff may take “mask breaks” and remove their masks during mealtimes, when greater than six feet apart from others, and when outdoors and maintaining appropriate social distance practices.
- Visitors are required to wear a mask when entering the building during a school day.

Household Contacts

- Any staff or student who is living in the home with a confirmed positive case should remain at home until cleared by the Department of Health.

Vaccinated Individuals

- **Per the Department of Health fully vaccinated close contacts are not required to quarantine if they are fully vaccinated and have remained asymptomatic since the exposure to COVID-19. For a definition of fully vaccinated visit <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/hcp/infection-control-after-vaccination.html>**

The Bledsoe County Board of Education reserves the right to review and update these procedures monthly or by executive action.

Guiding Principles

Five principles should guide all planning, decision-making, and execution of the work of returning to school in Bledsoe County:

- We will be transparent. We will share what we know and what we don't know. We will be clear about what we can control and what is outside our control.
- We will be equitable. We will center decisions on what is best for all students, families, and educators, especially those most impacted by educational inequities and COVID-19.
- We will listen. We will bring together diverse stakeholders and experts to a) understand the realities on the ground and b) surface creative solutions.
- We will put safety first. We will leverage science, data, and public health leadership to inform the choices we make.
- We will be decisive. Given the size and scope of the challenge, we must move deliberately and make tough choices. We will make mistakes, and we will adapt quickly as variables on the ground change.

Safety of Students, Staff and Visitors

Illness Guidelines

If your child has a medical condition that might require special action, please contact the Coordinated School Health Office at 447-2914. Examples would be, but not limited to, diabetes, asthma, severe allergies with the need for an epi-pen, and seizures. We will assist you in the communication of those special needs and the appropriate responses at school and on the bus through an Individual Health Plan (IHP). Other medical conditions that might affect school work/attendance might meet other criteria for a 504 or safety planning.

This is intended to serve as informational guidelines in the prevention of the spread of communicable diseases in the schools. Please refer to these guidelines throughout the school year.

Nurse Clinic Guidelines (Non-COVID Situations)

Standard Guidelines for Utilizing School Nurse:

In order to prevent potential exposure to infectious diseases, promote isolation and decrease clinic office congestion, please try to limit clinic/nurse visits unless medically necessary.

Please note that students should be sent to the clinic/nurse for the following concerns:

- Hit in the head
- Tripped and fell onto hands and/or knees

- Larger abrasions or cuts that have moderate bleeding
- Vomiting
- Diarrhea
- Ongoing ill feeling
- Sore throat
- Severe headaches
- Severe abdominal pain
- Daily or as needed medication
- Daily procedures- diabetic management, tube-feeding, catheterizations
- Bug bites/stings with a history of allergy
- Nosebleeds from being hit in the face

Please call the nurse to the student's location for the following concerns:

- A student has fallen from a height
- Student complains of back, neck, or head pain after a fall
- A student is having an allergic reaction
- Student possibly has a broken bone
- A student has passed out or feels like he/she is going to pass out
- A student is having difficulty breathing
- Student reports dizziness that affects walking
- A diabetic student is having blood glucose level problems
- A student is having a seizure

While these lists are not all-encompassing, we have tried to list as many scenarios as possible. Please use your judgement for any other scenario that comes up.

If a nurse is working with an individual in isolation, a student might be asked to return to the clinic at a later time unless it is an emergency. Please be patient and allow the nurse time to clear the clinic/isolation room if that happens.

Nurse Clinic Guidelines (COVID Situations)

When an individual in the school is showing signs or symptoms or has been diagnosed with COVID-19, the following procedures will be implemented:

- Immediately place a cloth face covering or a surgical mask on the ill individual and move him/her to the place your school has identified as a safe area to isolate that individual.
- School nurses assisting the individual should put on a cloth face covering or a surgical mask, shield/eye protection, a gown and gloves, if possible.
- Limit the number of people who are in direct contact with the ill individual.

- Ensure the individual is safe and does not need emergency medical attention. If the individual appears to be seriously ill, call 911 and inform them that you are calling about a possible case of COVID-19.
- Notify the emergency contact of the ill individual. If the individual is deemed stable, ask that he/she is picked up from school. If the individual requires emergency medical attention, call 911 and inform them of the situation.
- School nurses will contact the local health department to report any possible communicable disease.
- Identify those who have been within three feet of the individual for fifteen minutes or more at any time within 48 hours before the individual's onset of symptoms until the individual has left school property. All efforts will be made to contact guardians of those individuals who are deemed "close contacts."
- The isolation area and suspected individuals' work area/classroom must be thoroughly cleaned and disinfected, in addition to all other common surfaces recently touched by the employee or student.
- All employees will self-monitor for symptoms each day prior to coming to work. If an employee develops symptoms during the school day, they should notify the nurse and leave as soon as possible.
- Asthma treatments should be provided via metered-dose inhaler (MDI) with a spacer or spacer and mask rather than a nebulizer, when possible. Nebulizer treatments should be performed in a space that limits exposure to others and with minimal staff present. Staff should wear a N95 face mask, gloves, and eye protection. Rooms should be well-ventilated or treatments should be performed outside. The room should undergo routine cleaning and disinfection after the use of a nebulizer.
- Peak flow meters should not be used unless health staff are wearing gloves, a N95 face mask, and eye protection.

Hand Sanitizer

Hand sanitizer will be provided (as long as supplies are available) in all classrooms and common office areas.

- Wash hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds. Use hand sanitizer with at least 60% alcohol if soap and water are not available.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth.
- Cover your mouth and nose with a tissue when you cough or sneeze, or use the inside of your elbow.

Social Distancing

Social distancing is an effective way to prevent potential infection. BCS employees, students, parents, and visitors should practice staying approximately three feet away from others and eliminating contact with others when possible. Masks will not be required, but highly encouraged to be worn by staff, teachers, and students during transition times and in common areas to help prevent potential infection. Classrooms will be structured in such a way as to facilitate distancing to the extent possible. Student pick-up and drop-off plans will be developed by each individual school.

PPE (Personal Protective Equipment)

In order to minimize exposure to COVID-19, PPE may be needed to prevent certain exposures. PPE can include:

Masks

Masks will not be required, but highly encouraged to be worn by staff, teachers, and students, **and visitors**. All masks MUST follow dress codes.

Bus Driver Covid-19 Procedures

1. Masks will be provided as long as supplies are available.
2. Drivers will be responsible for self monitoring their own symptoms. Any driver with a temperature of 100.4 F or greater will immediately report to the transportation supervisor that they will be unable to perform their duties that day. Each driver should be able to answer NO to the following questions each day. If a driver answers YES to any of the following questions, they must immediately report to the transportation supervisor.
 - Have you been in close contact with a person with a confirmed diagnosis of COVID-19 within the past 14 days?
 - Have you had an unusual cough or shortness of breath?
 - Have you had a sore throat or other flu-like symptoms?
 - Have you had a new loss of taste or smell?
 - Have you had vomiting or diarrhea in the last 24 hours?
 - Do you have an unexplained rash?
3. Drivers are required to come to the bus garage after their morning run to clean and disinfect their bus. Drivers who perform other duties within the school system, will also be required to disinfect and clean their bus at the school in

which they are assigned. Drivers will disinfect their bus at the garage when they return from their evening route. Drivers who do not return to the garage after their evening route will be provided cleaning supplies and will be required to disinfect their bus when all students have exited the bus and the driver has parked the bus for the evening.

4. Drivers will ensure that masks and hand sanitizer are available before transporting students.
5. Drivers will keep windows open to increase air exchange, weather permitting.

Cleaning

The safety of our employees and students is our first priority. Upon reopening, our schools have been completely cleaned and disinfected, and we will continue to adhere to all necessary safety precautions. In addition to the deep clean of the office and school before employees and students return, the cleaning steps outlined below are to be taken to disinfect workplace surfaces, chairs, tables, etc. to protect our employees and reduce the risk of spread of infection. Custodians will receive training and become certified in GBAC (Global Biorisk Advisory Council) before the students come back to the buildings.

Area	Frequency
Workplaces (classrooms/offices)	Clean at the end of each use/day
Appliances (copy machines, etc.)	Daily
Electronic Equipment (shared computers, etc.)	At the end of each use/day and/or between use.
High Contact Areas (handles, light switches, sinks, restrooms, etc.)	Disinfect frequently throughout the day.
Common Areas (cafeteria, library, conference rooms, gyms, playground equipment, etc.)	At the end of each day
Shared Workspaces	Employees are encouraged to disinfect shared workspaces multiple times throughout the day, giving special attention to commonly touched surfaces. BCS has alcohol-based hand sanitizers throughout the workplace and in common areas. The BCS custodial team will clean all workspaces at their designated

	cleaning times.
Locker Rooms	BCS will follow the TSSAA locker room protocols.

Bledsoe County School (BCS) Protocols for Self-Screenings and Facility Entrance Expectations and Health Guidelines for Parents/Guardians at all Schools

While no single action will eliminate the risk of transmission of the COVID-19 virus within a school or school district, implementation of several coordinated interventions may significantly reduce that risk.

Before Leaving Home

Parents/Guardians should take their child’s temperature and ask the following questions of your child or on behalf of your child before leaving home each day:

- Have you been in close contact with a person with a confirmed diagnosis of COVID-19 within the past 14 days?
- Have you had unusual cough or shortness of breath?
- Have you had a sore throat or other flu-like symptoms?
- Have you had new loss of taste or smell?
- Have you had vomiting or diarrhea in the last 24 hours?
- Do you have an unexplained rash?

If your child’s temperature is 100.4°F or greater or if you/your child answer(s) yes to any of the questions, please keep your child at home.

Entering Campus

- All school buildings will open at 7:10 a.m. to students. Students will not be allowed to enter the building until after this time.
- When students arrive at school, there will be designated entrances into the building.
- All employees will self-monitor for symptoms each day prior to coming to work.
- All individuals entering the building will be encouraged to use hand sanitizer.

Students Getting Ill While on Campus

- Students who fall ill at school will be placed in a safe, designated area for treatment. They will be in direct supervision of either a nurse or another adult. A mask will be placed on the student until a parent/guardian picks up the child.

- If the student needs emergency medical attention and is seriously ill, 911 will be called along with the parent/guardian. If the student is stable, the parent/guardian will be called for pick up.

Returning to school after illness

Students and staff who have been diagnosed with COVID-19, or whom have been ordered by the Department of Health or Health Care provider to be in quarantine due to exposure to a confirmed/probable case of COVID-19, are NOT required to provide proof of a negative COVID-19 PCR test or a note of clearance from a health care provider or the Department of Health or Health Care provider prior to returning to school but MUST meet ONE of the criteria below.

Students may return to school if the answer to **ANY** of the following questions is **YES**:

 Did the individual have a positive COVID-19 PCR/antigen test (with or without symptoms), complete isolation for a minimum of 10 days from the onset of symptoms (or the date of the positive test, if asymptomatic) AND have resolution of fever (without fever-reducing medication) AND improvement in COVID-19 symptoms for at least 24 hours? If so, the individual may return to school upon being released by the Department of Health or Health Care provider.

 Was the individual ordered by the Department of Health or Health Care provider to quarantine due to exposure to a confirmed/probable case of COVID-19 and have been formally released by the Department of Health or Health Care provider? If so, that individual may return to school upon release by the Department of Health or Health Care provider.

Note that household contacts of a confirmed/probable case may be required to quarantine for a longer period, per CDC guidance:

<http://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/if-you-are-sick/quarantine.html> No medical evaluation or proof of negative COVID-19 test is required.

 Does an individual who was ill with symptoms of COVID-19 have written documentation from their medical provider confirming their illness was not due to COVID-19 because another explanation was identified? If so, the individual may return to school at the direction of their medical provider if they have been without fever (without the use of fever-reducing medications) for at least 24 hours and symptoms have been improving. Examples of acceptable diagnosis would include fever due to urinary tract infection, strep throat confirmed by a positive strep test, rash from poison

ivy, etc. Diagnoses of respiratory and viral conditions such as upper respiratory tract infection (URI), pneumonia, pharyngitis without positive strep test, viral illness, etc. DO NOT exclude the diagnosis of COVID-19 and should not be considered adequate to authorize return to school until another criterion is met. Individuals with symptoms consistent with COVID-19 who are without an acceptable alternative diagnosis must be cleared by either the Department of Health or Health Care provider.

_____ Does the individual who was identified by the Department of Health or Health Care provider as a close contact of a confirmed case have a positive SARS-CoV-2 antigen or PCR test within 90 days of the last contact with the case?

If so, the individual is not required to self quarantine.

BCS Response to Reported, Positive COVID-19 Case of BCS Student/Staff Member

- In the event of a positive case within BCS, the classroom or areas exposed should be immediately closed until cleaning and disinfecting can be performed.
- The local health department will be notified. A decision will be made regarding a classroom/school building closure, based on Health Department guidance.
- If the building is closed, parents will be notified through the BCS phone/email notification system.
- BCS will assist the Health Department with contact tracing as requested and needed.
- The Health Department and/or Bledsoe County School nurse will contact close contacts (those who spent more than 15 minutes within three feet of the student). Classmates should continue to self-monitor for any symptoms.
- Students and parents should follow quarantine advice given by the Health Department.
- If a student within the class of a positive case starts to exhibit any of the listed symptoms, that student should stay home and consider COVID-19 testing.
- After sanitization of the school and/or classroom, students and staff not quarantined by the Department of Health or Health Care provider will be able to return to school.
- Cleaning staff will wear appropriate PPE as referenced in the CDC guidance for disinfecting and cleaning.
- All students missing school for medical reasons should have an excuse on file in the main office.

Bledsoe County Schools has available COVID-19 antigen and PCR tests upon request for faculty and students. Students will only be tested with parental permission.

COVID-19 contact for Bledsoe County Schools, COVID-19 School Nurse,
423-309-2957.

Definitions

- **Isolation:** is used to keep an individual who has been infected with SARS-CoV-2 away from people who are not infected in order to slow the spread of the disease.
- **Quarantine:** is used to keep close contacts (within three feet of someone who has been diagnosed with COVID-19 for fifteen or more minutes) of infected individuals away from people who have not been exposed in order to slow the spread of the disease. Individuals who have been exposed may become infectious at any time within 14 days of their last exposure to an individual with COVID-19.
- **Identification of Contacts (contact tracing):** refers to the process through which the close contacts of an individual who has been diagnosed with COVID-19 are identified and instructed to quarantine. As it is critical that contacts are identified as quickly as possible to prevent further spread of the virus.
 - All classes are encouraged to have **assigned seating** to facilitate the rapid identification of contacts should the school become aware of an infectious individual.
 - All seating charts should be on file in a central location in each building where all are easily accessible. When the school is notified of an infected individual, the Department of Health or Health Care provider will be notified.

If you are ordered by the Department of Health or Health Care provider to be isolated or quarantined, that individual is not to be present on school property until that time has passed.

Please call your school nurse if you have questions.

Bledsoe County High School, 447-6851

Bledsoe County Middle School, 447-3212

Pikeville Elementary School, 447-2457

Mary V. Wheeler Elementary School, 881-3394

Cecil B. Rigsby Elementary School, 447-2891