

# **BLUE HILL COMMUNITY SCHOOLS**

## **2023-2024 School Year**

### **SAFE RETURN TO SCHOOL PLAN**

#### **MAINTAINING HEALTH AND SAFETY**

##### **Universal and correct wearing of masks**

Masks will be optional, encouraged and supported on school grounds. Unvaccinated individuals are encouraged to wear a mask per guidance from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). Vaccines are now currently available to those under the age of 12.

##### **Modifying facilities to allow for physical distancing**

Social Distancing may be practiced to the extent possible. Student desks/tables might face in the same direction, where possible. Non-essential visitors and volunteers may be limited. Parents visiting during school hours will: Sign in and out at the school office and Follow Protocols.

##### **Handwashing and respiratory etiquette**

Proper handwashing, cough and sneeze etiquette will be taught, reinforced and monitored. If handwashing is not feasible, hand sanitizer will be provided and used.

##### **Cleaning and maintaining healthy facilities, including improving ventilation**

The protocols for cleaning and disinfecting will be enhanced to allow for greater frequency when caring for high touch areas and restrooms within our facilities. Teaching staff will have supplies to clean and disinfect surfaces as needed. Heating, Ventilation and Air condition settings will maximize ventilation and bring in as much outdoor air as possible. Air filters will be changed at least once per semester.

##### **Contact tracing in combination with isolation and quarantine**

Blue Hill Community Schools (BHCS) will continue to collaborate with South Heartland District Health Department (SHDHD) on recommendations for contact tracing, including when to isolate and quarantine potentially infectious individuals. In addition, school-related contacts to a positive COVID-19 case who remain asymptomatic are not currently recommended for quarantine. If these practices are reinstated, BHCS will cooperate with all efforts. Students and staff who are sick must stay home. Students and staff must be fever free for 24 hours (without medication) before returning to school. Students and staff will be encouraged to test for COVID if they have been exposed or they exhibit symptoms. Students will continue to be excused for COVID-related absences.

### **Diagnostic and screening testing**

Students and staff who exhibit COVID-19 symptoms will be encouraged to stay home. If COVID levels rise, BHCS will consult with SHDHD to determine if screening testing should be offered to students and/or staff.

### **Efforts to provide vaccinations to school communities**

Blue Hill Community Schools will provide information to parents and students regarding when/how they could receive vaccinations within the community. BHCS will continue to monitor information regarding vaccinations and provide updates to staff, students and parents, when necessary.

### **Appropriate accommodations for children with disabilities with respect to health and safety policies**

Student's IEPs and 504 Plans will be followed. These may include accommodations that apply to the health and safety of students, relative to COVID-19. Students with underlying health conditions may participate in remote learning if the school is provided with medical documentation indicating that this is necessary. Students with disabilities may be prioritized for in-person learning if cases rise to the level where hybrid or home-based learning is required.

### **Coordination with State and local health officials for support and technical assistance to implement strategies consistent with the CDC**

BHCS will continue to collaborate with our local and state health department on a regular basis, monitoring case levels and new guidance, and implementing or revising strategies when necessary. Information about levels of community transmission will be combined with information about cases in schools and implementation of prevention strategies to guide decision-making. Implementation of prevention strategies could be intensified if indicators worsen.

### **ENSURING CONTINUITY OF SERVICES**

Our goal is to continue to provide in-person learning to all students, addressing their academic, social, emotional, and mental health via the many programs in place within our school. We will return to a regular school year schedule that follows our normal curriculum, and assessment. If COVID cases rise significantly and we are required to close a school, every effort will be made to provide these services virtually, all special education services will be provided according to students' IEPs. Additional Chromebooks and online learning materials have been purchased in order to ensure equitable access for students.

## **PUBLIC COMMENTS REQUIREMENT**

July 14, 2021: Draft of Return Plan shared at School Board Meeting which is a public Meeting and Public input was accepted.

July 15, 2021: The revised plan was posted on our website with a [link](#) for public Feedback. BHCS is seeking feedback on the proposed plan from medical professionals, staff, students, families and community members via the [survey](#) until July 31, 2021.

August 16, 2021: The revised plan is presented to the BHCS Board of Education at a public meeting where public comments are accepted.

Reviewed on: July 18, 2022 the Reviewed Plan is posted in a prominent place on the district's website with a [link](#) for public feedback

Reviewed on: Jan 12, 2023 the Reviewed Plan is posted in a prominent place on the district's website with a [link](#) for public feedback

Reviewed on: July 13, 2023 the Reviewed Plan is posted in a prominent place on the district's website with a [link](#) for public feedback