

# BRITTON-HECLA SCHOOL DISTRICT 45-4

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Superintendent Steve Benson, HS Principal Carrie James, Elementary Principal Kyla Richter, Business Manager Kayla Hastings  
*The mission of the Britton-Hecla School District is to promote a positive, challenging and safe environment for every student.*

## Safe Return to In-Person Instruction and Continuity of Services Plan

“Amendment to the “Starting Well Plan” originally adopted on July 15, 2020”

**The Britton-Hecla School District** will continue to follow safe return plans in conjunction, and cooperation, with the CDC, SDDOH, the South Dakota Department of Education (SDDOE), and the Britton-Hecla Board of Education (BHBOE) in developing and monitoring the following Safe Return to In-Person Instruction and Continuity of Services Plan. Our plan will continue to rely heavily on our parents, guardians, and community to facilitate continued success in the coming school year.

It is our intention to again start the school year as normal as possible given the data we possess, and hold in-person classes on campus. The importance of in-person learning is well documented. There is evidence showing the negative impacts on student achievement associated with not being in school; however, this could change quickly to remote/remote learning delivery if updates and guidance from the Center for Disease Control (**CDC**), the South Dakota Department of Health (**DOH**), the Department of Education (**DOE**), or risks associated with COVID-19 in our geographic area warrant a change in delivery method. The District will coordinate all mitigation efforts with the above-mentioned agencies to promote a healthy school environment.

### Guiding Principles of Plan:

- Schools will provide instruction this fall and throughout the 23-24 school year to the greatest extent possible.
- COVID-19 will continue to spread and be present in our communities, with or without a vaccine, through the 23-24 school year and beyond.
- Asymptomatic individuals can be infectious.
- The potential for exposure to the virus at some point is extremely high regardless of mitigation efforts.
- All COVID-19 prevention measures/practices put in place are designed to mitigate, NOT eliminate risk.
- Coordinated efforts between parents, students, and the school District will be essential to our efforts to reduce that risk.
- The District recommends following the guidance provided by the CDC and DOH, which include strongly recommending the students and staff to use face coverings, and being vaccinated against the virus.

- All elements of this plan are subject to IMMEDIATE change should the numbers of cases in our geographic area mandate a change. Any decisions made would occur only after consultation and guidance from the DOH, CDC, DOE, and Britton-Hecla Board of Education (BHBOE).

### **Expectations for schools:**

- Schools will continue their focus to be a safe environment for students.
- Schools will take reasonable steps within the context of COVID-19 spread in their geographic area to protect the school and community.
- School leaders will make reasonable judgements to limit the spread of the virus while still providing for continuity of learning.
- Every student, regardless of ability level, will have the opportunity to engage in a full year of learning regardless of spread of the virus through a variety of learning platforms.
- All information used by the District to make COVID related decision will be clearly communicated with the school board, staff, and community.

### **Facility preparedness:**

- The District will continue the enhanced cleaning regimen established for our facility, which will include a thorough deep cleaning over the summer. Those efforts will be meticulously continued during the 23-24 school year.
- We have purchased additional cleaning equipment to assist/enhance mitigation efforts and will continue to do so if warranted.
- We will make every effort to limit the need for physical contact by installing touchless equipment where possible.
- Ventilation filters will be changed more frequently to enhance air quality.
- The District will also ensure adequate supplies of soap, sanitizer, and supplies to accommodate the need to wash and sanitize.
- We will continue to make frequent hand washing by students and staff an area of focus, as well as, teaching/enforcing proper etiquette for suppressing coughs and sneezes and proper sanitation following the occurrence. .

### **Parent expectations for sending student to school:**

We will need parents to check their children daily prior to sending them to school as you would in a normal situation. If they have a temperature of 100.4 or higher, or any of the following symptoms: fever, chills, cough, shortness of breath, fatigue, muscle or body aches, headache, loss of taste or smell, sore throat, congestion or runny nose, nausea or vomiting, or diarrhea; please keep them home and contact your local healthcare facility with any questions or concerns.

### **Quarantine or Isolation**

**New Guidance from the CDC no longer recommends social distancing in K-12 schools, or the need to quarantine if identified, or self-identify, as a close contact. However, the CDC does recommend wearing a high-quality mask for 10 days if you were exposed to COVID-19, and further recommends testing after 5 days.**

**If you test positive for COVID-19, please follow the guidance and timelines determined and designated by the Department of Health or your local medical provider. (see link below)**

<https://doh.sd.gov/topics/diseases-conditions/communicable-infectious-diseases/reportable-communicable-diseases/covid-19/covid-19-your-health/>

The DOH asks that we remind all parents to keep sick kids home regardless of their level of sickness. If they have a fever, students should be kept home until they are fever free for 24 hours without medication, and recommend contacting your local medical provider for possible testing.

### Arriving at school:

We will continue to the following procedures for students arriving at school::

- Buses will drop students off at school at approximately **8:00 a.m.**
- **No students will be allowed in the building prior to 7:55.** Parents please be aware that if you drop off your student prior to 8:00 a.m. they will not be allowed in the building, regardless of weather.
- If your student is eating breakfast they will be asked to go directly to the lunchroom at 8:00 or as soon as they arrive.
- If your child is **NOT eating breakfast**, we ask that you **do not send** them to school or arrive at school **prior to 8:15 a.m.**

### Medical Testing or Screening

The Britton-Hecla School District will not be conducting any medical screening or testing on site, instead, we will coordinate all efforts with our local medical professionals for all diagnostics related to COVID-19. We will continue to support local vaccination efforts and encourage/promote that all eligible recipients be fully vaccinated to better protect our students and staff against illness. All staff are considered “Essential Workers” and may continue to work in the absence of symptoms or illness.

### Activities and Electives and Facility Use

Parents will need to make the decision whether or not to allow their students to participate in activities (extra-curricular such as football and volleyball) and electives (such as physical education, band, and chorus) sponsored by the District. The District may require a signed waiver acknowledging the potential risks associated with these activities and/or electives if/when COVID-19 is considered an immediate or substantial threat.

Use of the facility by outside organization will be granted or denied based on current spread of the virus and consultation and recommendation of the School Board, Administration, and state and local health officials.

### Transportation:

**Again, the District will be relying on the parents to ensure that their student or students do not have any symptoms or are healthy prior to allowing them on the bus.** The bus drivers cannot be expected to check them and potentially deny them access to the bus and leave a student home alone and unable to care for themselves. If a student is sick, they should stay home and we recommend contacting your local medical professional. We will continue to implement the following:

- We will make every effort to maintain distance between individuals that are not family.
- We will require assigned seating or students may be required to sit with family members during transport.
- Students boarding the bus will be asked to sit in the back of the bus and additional riders will fill from back to front. When dropping off we will reverse the order and ask that those getting off earliest sit toward the front and fill front to back.
- The use of face coverings will not be required, but PPE is strongly encouraged and recommended for those with higher risk or simply as a preventative measure.

## Remote Learning:

There remains the possibility that we may have to transition between on-site and off-site learning, or remote learning, dependent on potential cases in the District, data available, and risks associated to our geographic area.

Expectations for remote learning:

- Students will have the same level of responsibility as on-site students to submit work on time.
- Remote learners should not expect the same level of interaction or availability from their instructors as the on-site students due to classroom responsibilities. A communication schedule will be worked out between remote students and their instructor.
- Both instructors and students should plan for little or no notice between on-site, and the need to transition to remote learning as this will be determined case by case with no ability to predict future cases or duration of the off-site/remote learning.

We were able to remain on-site during the 2020-2021, 2021-2022, and 2022-2023 school years, and expect to do so again in 2023-2024 with all students including our special needs population. Just as with our regular education students, we will make every effort to meet the needs of our special education students as required by law, and a personal expectation/obligation placed on ourselves to meet those needs. The District will use each student's IEP or 504 plan as a basis for meeting those needs and will expound as necessary.

## Social, Emotional, and Mental Health of Students and Staff

The social and emotional wellbeing of our staff and students is the highest priority of the Britton-Hecla School District. The District will work with our mental health professionals, teachers, and counselor to provide families and staff with the necessary resources needed or identified. The counselor and Special Education Director will work with the staff and parents/guardians to provide individual services or, if needed, services in a group setting to assist with or address students/staffs social and emotional needs. These services may include, but are not limited to, strategies for managing stress and appropriate response, self-care, symptom identification, coping strategies, and individual guidance sessions.

## Food Services

All students will have staggered lunch periods to limit the amount of contact with other students and provide for increase space for social distancing.

The Britton-Hecla School District will once again be offering meals to students residing in our district that are remote/remote learning or excused due to illness. In the event that a student would like to participate in the program while off-campus, a parent or guardian needs to contact the school secretary, 448-2234, ext. 1, and make that request. Student meals may be picked up outside of the guidance office doors adjacent to the cafeteria on the west side of the HS/MS. Serving times for meals are as follows: Breakfast from 7:55-8:15, and Lunch from 11:00-12:45. Meals may be picked up by the student or parent/guardian only.

***This plan can, and will, be modified and adjusted throughout the school year as we respond to the potential spread of COVID-19. These changes will happen quickly with little or no time to prepare. I will rely on the Britton-Hecla School District notification system to communicate any/all updates or changes to the plan. Please plan accordingly and be prepared if we are forced to suspend or shut down IN-PERSON instruction during the coming year. These continue to be unprecedented times and there is no way to develop a "perfect" plan that works for everyone. We will do the best we can with the information we continue to receive and again ask for your help and patience in assisting us with those efforts. It will take all of us working together in an attempt to provide our students with the best instruction possible given the circumstances as we move forward.***

*As required by the South Dakota Department of Education, public input will be sought during our regularly scheduled School Board Meetings December 2021, June 2022, December 2022, June 2023, December 2023, and June 2024. During those meeting our plans will be reviewed, discussed, and amended if necessary based on feedback received.*

*The Britton-Hecla School District uses Apptegy to design and manage our webpage. Apptegy is ADA compliant and is able to be translated into several languages upon request. If you would like our content to be translated in a language other than English, please contact the district.*

Sincerely,

**Steve Benson**  
**Superintendent**  
**Britton-Hecla School District**

Adopted: August 9, 2021  
Updated: December 13, 2021  
Updated: June 13, 2022  
Updated August 15, 2022  
Updated December 12, 2022  
Updated June 12, 2023  
Updated December 13, 2023

