

BCPS MITIGATION PLAN & GUIDANCE AUGUST 2021

COVID-19 infection remains a concern in Baltimore County. Although rates have decreased from the high levels seen in winter and spring of 2021, COVID-19 infections continue to occur. By late July 2021, infection rates showed a steady increase. Health experts attribute this increase to infections that continue to spread in unvaccinated persons. The predominant strain of virus circulating in Maryland by late July is called the *Delta variant*; this strain of virus is more contagious than the strains circulating in the fall and requires a more cautious approach to ensure that rates do not continue to climb.

On July 27, 2021, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) released a recommendation that students and staff in schools wear masks, regardless of their vaccine status.

In light of the updated guidance and increases in COVID-19 transmission, Baltimore County Public Schools (BCPS) has updated guidance for schools and offices. BCPS will continue to monitor disease trends and guidance from the state and update the mitigation plan accordingly. As in the past, BCPS will also continue to monitor COVID-19 transmission and use CDC, Maryland Department of Health, and local expert input to guide its mitigation plan. This plan will be updated on a regular basis as conditions dictate.

Mitigation Measure	Plan & Requirements
Promoting Vaccination	<p>All students and staff who are eligible for vaccine (aged 12 and older) are strongly encouraged to become vaccinated.</p> <p>Vaccines are available through the Baltimore County Department of Health and many other community providers.</p>
Consistent and Correct Mask Use	<p>In accordance with the February 1, 2021, CDC order, masks must be worn by all occupants on school buses unless the driver and attendant are alone.</p> <p>In accordance with the July 27, 2021 recommendations of the CDC, all students and staff must wear a mask <u>inside</u> schools.</p> <p>Exceptions to this requirement include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Persons with a documented physical or developmental disability for whom wearing a mask unsafe • Children under the age of 2 • Persons who are alone in a private space • Persons who are eating/drinking

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Student athletes who are playing the sport in the field of play. <p>In accordance with updated CDC guidance for vaccinated persons, masks will be required to be worn in BCPS Offices by all staff and visitors when Baltimore County’s transmission rates are in CDC’s substantial or high categories.</p> <p>Unvaccinated persons are encouraged to wear masks when in crowded outdoor spaces.</p>
Physical Distancing	<p>In accordance with CDC guidance, provide maximal physical distancing between students to the greatest extent possible, considering school enrollment and facility constraints.</p> <p>Physical distancing is encouraged in offices as much as possible to reduce the risk of becoming a “close contact.”</p> <p>No restrictions for occupancy of restrooms and elevators or use of lockers.</p> <p>Communicate and provide supervision to prevent congregation of persons in restrooms, locker rooms, and by lockers.</p>
Screening Testing	<p>Provide COVID-19 testing in all BCPS schools by school nurses to students (with parent permission) and staff who develop COVID-19 symptoms during the school day.</p> <p>Continue to pursue resources for screening testing. When these resources are available, offer screening tests to higher risk groups (such as unvaccinated staff, adult volunteers and athletes in high-risk sports) and schools (such as schools with outbreaks and/or high community transmission.)</p>
Ventilation	<p>Calibrate ventilation systems in BCPS schools and offices for maximal air exchange and filtration.</p> <p>Immediately report any ventilation system malfunction or concerns to the Department of Physical Facilities.</p>

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	<p>In alignment with guidance from the Maryland Department of Health, schools should “avoid(ing) the use of temporary barriers, particularly desk partitions, because they reduce ventilation and have not been shown to protect users from COVID infection.”</p>
<p>Handwashing & Respiratory Etiquette</p>	<p>Have handwashing/hand sanitizing supplies available in all classrooms.</p> <p>Fully stock bathrooms with soap and paper towels.</p> <p>Provide hand sanitizer in areas with shared high touch items, such as reception desks and copier rooms.</p> <p>Promote respiratory etiquette in schools and offices.</p>
<p>Staying Home When Sick</p>	<p>Students and staff should stay home:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If they are sick, and should consult with their healthcare provider whether testing is needed • If they have COVID-19 infection, and should notify their supervisor or school nurse • If they have had recent contact with a person with COVID-19 infection, and should notify their supervisor or school nurse • If they are awaiting COVID-19 test results.
<p>Cleaning and Disinfecting</p>	<p>Daily cleaning of buildings using EPA approved products that kill COVID-19 virus.</p> <p>Shared items permitted with handwashing or hand sanitizing by users before/after use. Discontinue designation of clean/dirty pens.</p> <p>Daily cleaning of high touch materials shared by multiple classrooms.</p> <p>Daily cleaning of high touch surfaces on playground as required by MSDE.</p>

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	Water fountains closed for use. Provide supply of drinking water for all staff and students.
Contact Tracing	<p>Contact tracing for all reported cases of COVID-19 infection in students and staff.</p> <p>All persons with COVID-19 infection must isolate at home for at least 10 days and until symptoms have improved and fever has been gone for 24 hours.</p> <p>All unvaccinated close contacts of persons with COVID-19 infection must quarantine at home for 10-14 days in accordance with CDC guidance.</p> <p>All vaccinated close contacts of persons with COVID-19 infection must wear a mask for 14 days or until they receive a negative test result.</p> <p>Close contact is defined as follows: Persons who are within six (6) feet of a person with COVID-19 infection for 15 or more total minutes, with this exception: Masked students who are within 3 feet of a masked student with COVID-19 infection for 15 or more total minutes</p> <p>Employees and students should continue to report positive tests and close contact to their supervisor or school nurse.</p> <p>Sign-in sheets required for visitors and for staff visiting schools/offices that are not their primary work location.</p> <p>Daily attendance records for all staff and students.</p> <p>Contact logs for itinerant, related services and student support service providers</p> <p>Seating charts/logs for students in the classroom, bus, meals, special events.</p> <p>Assigned seats encouraged on the school bus.</p>

Special Topics

Field Trips –

Day field trips are permitted and must adhere to BCPS mitigation requirements and provide the mitigation plan for the site(s) to be visited. (BCPS' mitigation plan must be followed, even if not required by the site's mitigation plan.) Extended day and overnight field trips are prohibited at this time. Weekend and evening school activities are permitted and must adhere to the mitigation requirements.

Visitors to Schools/Offices -

Virtual visits are encouraged, when appropriate, based on the purpose of the visit/meeting. Indoor visits and volunteers are permitted. Plans for indoor visits and volunteers should provide for physical distancing. Volunteers must follow the established BCPS volunteer guidelines as outlined in [Superintendent's Rule 1260](#).