

Bethalto Community Unit School District #8

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

EagleNation,

We are excited to welcome you back and hope you had a relaxing and enjoyable summer. While last year was unlike any other, we can't thank our students, staff, and entire community enough for all of their hard work and dedication. The staff worked hard to learn new methodologies and meet students where they were to help them grow. We also had students learning and growing over the summer as well at all levels and in several buildings across our district. Many of these students expressed their gratitude to our staff for taking time to help them prepare for the upcoming year.

We look forward to continuing that growth during the 2021-2022 school year. This plan will share information on maintaining the health and safety of our students and staff over the course of the year, as well as how we will meet the needs of our students academically and their social-emotional needs. At the end of the plan you can see an opportunity to provide public comment and feedback. We will be reviewing this plan every 6 months.

Respectfully,

Jill Griffin

Superintendent

Maintaining Health and Safety

Section A – Universal and Correct Wearing of Masks

The Bethalto School District recognizes the arduous nature around the topic of wearing masks in schools. The District also recognizes the parent(s) and guardian(s) responsibility for the health and safety of their own children. As we begin the 2021-2022 school year, masks are highly recommended, but not required during the school day. Per CDC and IDPH, masks are recommended for all students that are not vaccinated while indoors.

In addition, masks are still required on a school bus just as it is with any other form of public transportation. For situations such as students going to the nurse, etc...students should still bring a mask to school every day. There may be times during the school year due to increased positivity or quarantine rates in the specific buildings within the district that a mandatory mask policy will be implemented for a short time until transmission decreases. We will monitor and share information regularly over the school year.

UPDATE: Per the Governor's Executive Order, masks are required for all staff and students as of 8/9/2021. Masks must meet the requirements of the IDPH, ISBE, and the CDC.

Section B – Physical Distancing

A primary prevention strategy for all students is to continue to practice social distancing. The CDC and IDPH have updated guidance and are advising schools, as possible, to maintain 3 feet of distance between students. As possible, we will continue efforts to maintain 3 feet of social distance across the district. Our cafeterias and other common spaces will be arranged in order for students to maintain 3 feet of distance, as possible.

Section C – Handwashing and Respiratory Etiquette

In accordance with CDC guidelines, <https://www.cdc.gov/handwashing/when-how-handwashing.html>, staff, students, and visitors are encouraged to frequently wash hands for 20 seconds with soap and water or use a hand sanitizer. Hand sanitizer is provided in every classroom, office, and common areas and handwashing signs are placed throughout our schools. Students are recommended to frequently wash/sanitize their hands. Students and staff are reminded to use proper etiquette when they sneeze or cough.

Section D – Cleaning and Maintaining Healthy Facilities, Including Improving Ventilation

Bethalto CUSD8 will continue to follow the recommendations and guidance by the CDC and IDPH. We anticipate many changes/revisions/modifications to these health and safety protocols for the 2021-2022 school year as we continue to utilize practical measures to provide a safe environment for our students and employees.

- Staff and student training is provided to ensure adherence to the safety protocols.
- Signage and public announcements are used to inform the community of the expectations.
- The district will be installing and updating HVAC systems in three of our buildings to help improve our ventilation systems.

Cleaning

- COVID-19 approved disinfectants will continue to be used in all spaces.
- Surfaces and common spaces will be cleaned and sanitized daily.
- Hand sanitizing stations are placed in common areas, inside the entrance of buildings, and in classrooms.
- Students are encouraged to bring hand sanitizer with them to use at school.

Student Health

- If your student is sick, please keep him/her home.
- Students will wash and sanitize hands often.
- Non-essential visits to the school nurse's office will be minimized or eliminated.
- Parents should administer medications at home (if practical) to limit possible exposure.
- Parents will bring "as needed" medication to be used at school, only if absolutely necessary. (i.e. inhalers, EpiPen, Benadryl, etc.)
- Each school will identify an isolation area.
- The student will be asked to wear a mask while sitting in the isolation area.
- Isolation area will be disinfected regularly.
- If a student is experiencing COVID-19 symptoms, he/she will be escorted to an isolation area for further monitoring until he/she is signed out.

- If a student is sent home from school with COVID-19 symptoms, the parent will be informed of next steps for return to school.
- All positive cases will be reported to the Madison County Health Department.
- Schools will implement more frequent handwashing and/or hand-sanitizing opportunities.
- Sharing of food or any other item should not occur; this includes cupcakes or cookies for a celebration. Schools will be encouraged to communicate to parents that the only food allowed for celebrations should come in individual packaging.

Transportation

- Students that are ill should not be permitted on the bus by the parent.
- Buses will be disinfected following unloading of students.
- Personal protective equipment will be distributed, based on need and availability.
- Each student will be assigned a seat on the bus. Each driver will maintain a seating chart as documentation of the students' location on the bus. When possible, members of the same household will be assigned the same seat.
- The driver will maximize the circulation of outside air to the extent practicable. The opening of roof vents and windows will be utilized as weather permits.
- COVID-19 prevention information will be posted in prominent areas on school buses.
- Training options will be made available for cleaning.
- No notes will be accepted for a student to ride with another student on a bus other than their assigned bus for any reason.
- Parents are encouraged to educate their students on positive behavior at bus stops, to include all general safety rules.
- School building guidelines and disinfecting protocols will be followed.
- Per the Illinois Phase 5 guidelines, **masks and face coverings ARE required on school buses** due to the number of students on the bus and the lack of regular ventilation.

Extracurricular Activities

- Schools will offer extracurricular activities consistent with student, classroom, and school building guidelines.
- Before and after school programs will operate when school is open to students.
- Schools will monitor long, congregate activities such as dances, assemblies, and field trips regularly and those decisions will be made as those times/dates get closer.
- Programs will adhere to the IDPH guidelines and the Safe Return to In-Person Instruction and Continuity of Services Plan approved by the Bethalto Board of Education.

Athletics

- Health and safety guidelines for athletics are provided by the IDPH. BCUSD8 will follow Board Policy and the Safe Return to In-Person Instruction and Continuity of Services Plan approved by the Bethalto Board of Education.
- Mask guidelines will follow those provided by the IHSA.

Visitors

- Visitor access to our schools will be limited.
- Visitors will be required to check in at the office and may be screened before they may access our building.
- We will regularly monitor data as we plan for activities that may have numerous visitors in our building(s).
- Please reach out to your building principal with any questions.

Section E – Contact Tracing in Combination with Isolation and Quarantine, in Collaboration with State and Local Health Departments

Keeping students in school is a primary focus of the District's plans. However, there could be times where students who are not able to maintain social distance would have to be quarantined by the Madison County Health Department from school for a period of time if it is determined that they were in close contact with a COVID positive individual. The Bethalto School District will share positive cases as well as close contacts with the Madison County Health Department and they will facilitate contact tracing. The CDC and IDPH have confirmed that vaccinated individuals will not have to be quarantined from school even if they are a close contact. Current guidelines provided by the Illinois Department of Health regarding isolation and quarantine will be followed. As more details or updates are provided to the District from IDPH with regards to quarantining students from school, we will provide parents with this information as quickly as possible.

Section F – Diagnostic and Screening Testing

As was the case in the 2020-2021 school year, the Bethalto School District will continue to ask parents to keep their student(s) home that are exhibiting COVID symptoms. Keeping students and adults out of school when they are sick remains the number one way to prevent the spread of COVID as well as other illnesses. All parents are asked to ensure they are not sending symptomatic students to school. If a student is symptomatic, they need to notify the school nurse immediately. Information on symptoms will be shared regularly. Staff members will be asked to do the same. Anyone exhibiting symptoms should not attend school and should seek an appointment for COVID-19 testing at their earliest convenience.

As a district we will continue to provide antigen testing for our students who are symptomatic. If your child is symptomatic, your school nurse can help set up an appointment. One significant change for the 2021-2022 school year is that students that are exhibiting some of the COVID symptoms at school may not automatically be excluded. Upon receiving parent permission, District nurses will be able to administer a BinaxNOW COVID-19 Antigen rapid test within the building. Please know that depending on the symptom(s) your child has, he/she may still be required to remain out of school until those symptoms improve or are gone. The three symptoms that will require your child to stay out of school for at least 24 hours are fever over 100.4, diarrhea, and/or vomiting. At this time the remaining symptoms will be at the nurse's discretion.

SHIELD IL is a COVID screening program designed by University of Illinois to assist schools in identifying asymptomatic cases and preventing outbreaks. The test is a non-invasive, saliva-based collection that is self-administered at each supervised school site. At the start of the school year, screening will be made available to students once per week and will take approximately 5 minutes to complete the process. Saliva samples are collected, transported,

and analyzed by a CLIA-certified lab partner and results are provided in less than a 24-hour period. This screening targets specific COVID (PCR) markers and can be used to detect the presence of COVID for individuals who are displaying symptoms or are asymptomatic. Once completed, all samples that have been collected are permanently destroyed.

In the coming days, parents will be notified of a form to complete that will allow them to opt-out of the weekly COVID screening program.

Section G – Efforts to Provide Vaccinations to School Communities

The CDC and IDPH continue to promote vaccination as the leading health prevention strategy to end the COVID-19 pandemic. Vaccination remains the most effective way to keep our students safe and in-person throughout the school year. According to CDC and IDPH guidelines, vaccinated students and staff will not be required to be quarantined from school even when they are identified as a close contact to a positive COVID-19 individual. This means that vaccinated students can continue to attend school and participate in extracurricular activities even if they are a close contact to a COVID positive person.

We will continue to work with the Madison County Health Department and offer future clinics at our schools as we anticipate the vaccine will become available for our younger populations. [To schedule a vaccination appointment at CMHS or any other clinics in Madison County, please visit the Madison County Public Health Department website.](#) Efforts to provide vaccinations to educators, other staff, and students, if eligible, will continue to be shared.

Section H – Appropriate Accommodations for Children with Disabilities with Respect to Health and Safety Policies

The district will work to ensure that the specific needs of students with disabilities are addressed regarding any necessary health accommodations in the classroom, as it relates to in-person instruction. For the 2021-2022 school year, only those students who have a documented medical condition which prevents them from attending school in person will be exempt from attending school in person. These decisions will be made on a case-by-case basis and those parents should reach out to Dr. McClain in the Central Office for further information. For those students, homebound instruction will be provided in accordance with [District Policy Number 6:150](#).

Ensuring Continuity of Services

Section A – How will the LEA (Local Education Agency) ensure continuity of services, including but not limited to students’ academic needs.

The district has been open for in-person instruction since March of 2021. The district will continue to offer the academic programs it did prior to the onset of the pandemic. The district continues to evaluate students’ progress and provide academic interventions during the school day to those students in need. In addition, the district has offered After-School Study Tables and Summer School for recommended students during the Spring and Summer of 2021. Supplemental after school programs will be offered again. More information to follow.

For the 2021-2022 school year, Bethalto Community Unit School District #8 will be in-person, five days a week, for all students in grades PreK-12. BCUSD8 will address Learning Loss among students and implement evidence-based activities to meet the comprehensive needs of students using our MTSS model.

Section B – How will the LEA (Local Education Agency) ensure continuity of services, including students’ and staffs’ social, emotional, mental health needs

The district remains focused on mental health concerns and will continue coordinating programs through the School Counseling and Social Work Programs.

Social and Emotional and Mental Health Needs:

- The district utilizes Positive Behavior Intervention and Supports (PBIS) K-12.
- The district will begin implementing a new, more extensive universal Social-Emotional Learning Curriculum and will continue to expand upon mindfulness K-12.
- Students periodically take a universal screening survey via Fastbridge, SAEBRS, to measure and track emotional intelligence development.
- Staff periodically fill out an assessment on students in their classes via Fastbridge, SAEBRS, to provide feedback on student’s social-emotional needs.
- The district has a nurse in each school, social workers and/or school psychologists in our schools, as well as school counselor(s) in our 6-12 schools.
- We already have a section of our website that is designated to SEL supports.

Section C – How will the LEA (Local Education Agency) ensure continuity of services including students’ health and food services.

Food Services:

- The district has, during times of remote instruction, provided meals to all students and also has provided meals during summer school. Bethalto will continue to offer free meals to all students utilizing the USDA waiver allowing the SSO program for the 2021-2022 school year.
- All students will receive free breakfast and lunch for the 2021-22 school year through the USDA. If school is closed due to a pandemic, the district will assess its ability to distribute meals to students utilizing the same process it used during the spring of 2020.

Student Health:

- The district employs a full-time nurse in each school building.
- We will continue to monitor student health as we did before and during COVID to ensure we are meeting CDC and IDPH guidelines, as well as Board policy and guidelines and the Safe Return to In-Person Instruction and Continuity of Services Plan.
- Bethalto School district provides a full-time athletic trainer to support student health during extracurricular activities. The trainer assists in the assessment, identification, and assessment of illness.

Section D – How will the LEA (Local Education Agency) ensure continuity of services including any other student needs.

Bethalto School District will remain vigilant in the efforts to identify other student needs as they emerge and respond to them in a timely fashion. All plans will continue to be followed for Individual Health Plans, 504 Plans, and Individualized Education Plans (IEPs).

- Students will continue to receive their specialized instruction and related services (if applicable) through special education teachers and related service providers.
- School teams will follow district guidelines and safety precautions.

Public Comment

Section A – How did the district seek public comment on its plan?

This plan was created in July of 2021. The district will continue to assess and adjust procedures in accordance with state and local guidelines. The plan will be reviewed at least semi-annually. Public comment was also welcomed at the July 29th Board of Education meeting and during all Board Meetings in the Public Comment portion of the meeting. The plan, as well as another portion of the plan, has also been posted on our website for public comment. Parents and community members are welcome to email return@bethalto.org with their comments and feedback.

Section B – How will the district ensure the plan is understandable for parents?

The district has adopted the basic plan template provided by the Illinois State Board of Education. Following local Board approval, the plan will be posted on the district website. The plan will be posted in English but copies in other languages will be made available upon request to the Superintendent. Accommodations will also be made to provide the information in alternate forms to address the needs of parents with disabilities as defined by the Americans with Disabilities Act.

LINK TO PRESENTATION ON PROPOSED SPENDING:

[GRANT INFO 2021](#) (last updated May 2021)