

Bolton Public Schools

Continuity of Learning Plan

Working Draft

District Guidelines and Planning Document



Revised June 2022

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SUPERINTENDENT'S MESSAGE

June 1, 2022

Dear Staff, Parents, Guardians, Students, and the Bolton Community,

In the summer of 2020, the Bolton Reopening Committee developed a comprehensive plan for reopening our schools. This plan addressed the requirements of the State of Connecticut and met the Bolton Public Schools expectations for teaching and rigorous engaging instruction for all learners, supporting health and wellness, community building, and maintaining equity across our school system.

Districts in Connecticut are required to review and, as appropriate, revise and seek public input on the plan at least every six months through September 30, 2023 pursuant to the American Rescue Plan Act of 2021, Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief Funds (ARP ESSER). The *Bolton Continuity of Learning Plan* describes current practices and addresses the requirements of the American Rescue Plan school grant program.

Our priorities continue to be the safety of our students and staff, high standards and expectations for all students, and fostering a caring, collaborative, and inclusive culture. We will continue to strengthen our use of blended learning practices, engage in learning and reflection on issues of race and equity, and focus on the social-emotional needs of all learners throughout the school year. Finally, the success of our school district continues to be the direct result of the hard work of our administrators, teachers, staff, students, parents, and the community. We are committed to partnering with you to ensure the success of all of our students.

Stay safe and be well,

Kristin B. Heckt

Kristin B. Heckt
Superintendent of Schools

PLAN DEVELOPMENT TIMELINE

The Bolton Public Schools established a timeline to permit the opportunity for the development, review, and revision of a shared district plan by stakeholders. A summary of the process is included below.

May 10, 2021

Receipt of Connecticut's ARP ESSER Guidance - Distribution to Administrative Team



May 12 – May 24, 2021

Plan Draft Development by Administrative Team



May 25 – June 1, 2021

Public Comment



June 2 – 9, 2021

Review Public Comment, Revise as Appropriate, and Formalize District Plan



June 10, 2021

Submission of BPS Safe Return to In-Person Instruction & Continuity of Services Plan



August, 2021

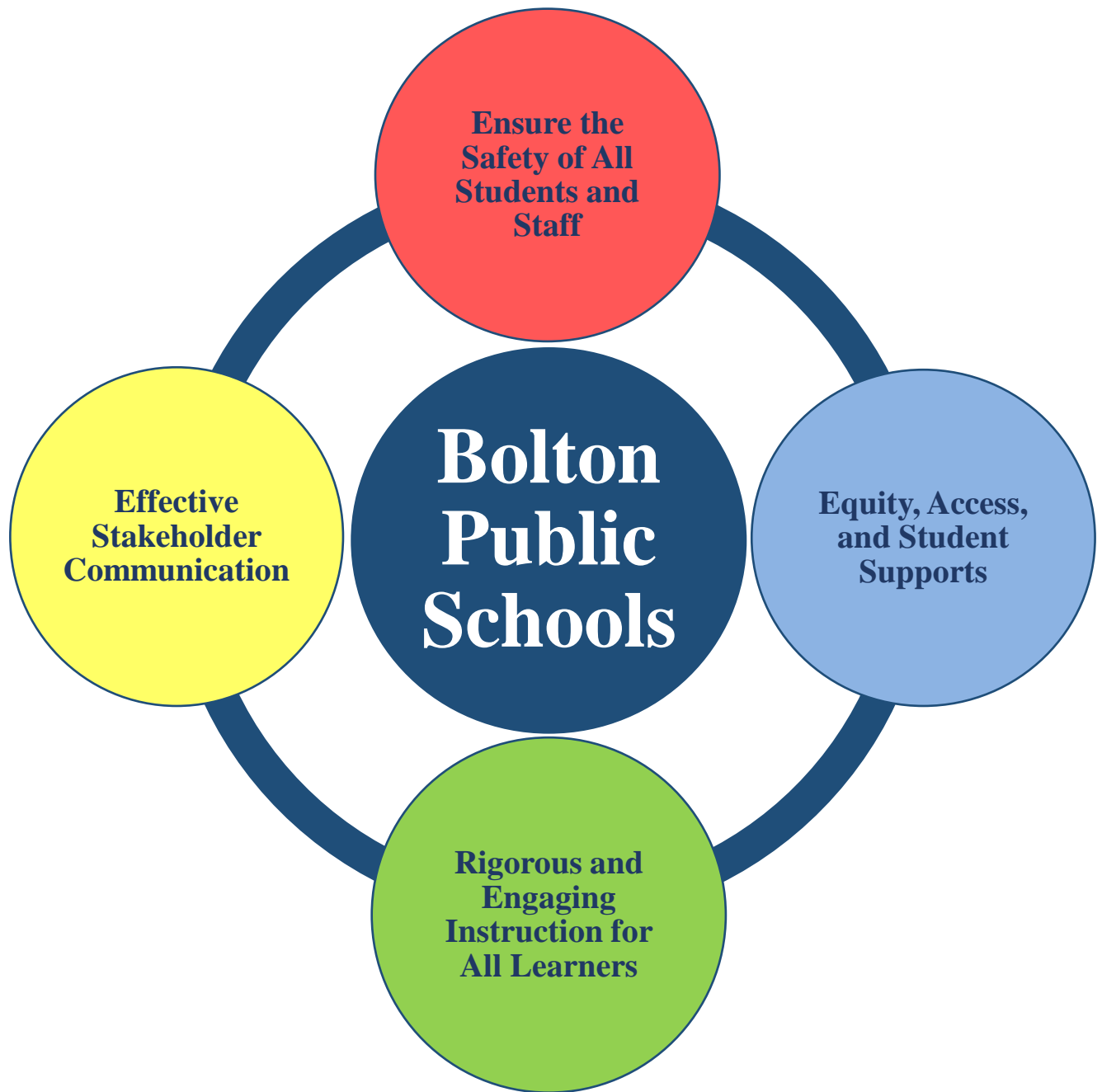
Submission of Bolton Public Schools ARP ESSER Grant



Ongoing through September 30, 2023

Review and, as appropriate, revise the BPS Plan at least every six months

GUIDING PRINCIPLES



DISTRICT and SCHOOL LIAISONS

Ensuring effective communication methods between school district staff and community stakeholders is first priority in ensuring an effective and safe reopening to schools. Communicating points of contact for each school building on campus establishes effective two-way communication to answer questions, discuss potential concerns, and receive timely updates in a quick and efficient manner.

Plan Liaisons

The individuals indicated below will serve as the health and safety officers for the district and each school. The liaisons will be available to all school stakeholders to answer questions or concerns about health and safety requirements.

District Liaison: Beth Goldsnider, Director of HR and Student Support Services
72 Brandy Street
Bolton, CT 06043
bgoldsnider@boltonct.org
860-643-1569 x3405

School Liaisons: Bolton High School
Joseph Maselli, Principal
72 Brandy Street
Bolton, CT 06043
jmaselli@boltonct.org
860-643-2768

Bolton Center School
Darryl Giard, Principal
108 Notch Road
Bolton, CT 06043
dgiard@boltonct.org
860-643-2411

DAILY OPERATIONS HEALTH AND SAFETY STRATEGIES

The Bolton Public Schools will continue to follow CDC, State of Connecticut, and local health directives and guidance for schools during the period of the pandemic. As guidance changes, the plan will be revised to reflect the changes. The Connecticut Department of Public Health's latest guidance for PreK-12 schools, Version February 2022, is a model for COVID-19 management that focuses on response to clusters of cases, outbreaks, evidence of ongoing transmission in schools, and/or significant increase in community transmission risk. Further, school districts are encouraged by DPH to remain prepared to respond to new variants or other changes in COVID-19 conditions that would necessitate a local return to more enhanced mitigation strategies.

ELEMENTS OF A ROUTINE COVID-19 PREVENTION MODEL

During times when available COVID-19 data indicate that local conditions are improving and the risk of COVID-19 transmission in the community and schools is generally stable at a relatively low level, DPH advises schools to use the following routine strategies for COVID-19 prevention which include:

- Recommending COVID-19 vaccination for all eligible students and staff, including booster vaccine doses when appropriate.
- Supporting students and staff who choose to continue wearing a mask even when school policies do not require their use.
- Following isolation guidelines for students and staff who have symptoms associated with, or have tested positive for, COVID-19.
- Recommending COVID-19 transmission prevention strategies, including testing (self-testing and/or at provider sites) and masking for students and staff, following illness or exposures to COVID-19 cases.
- Continuing to advise parents to report all cases of COVID-19 to the school and subsequently schools continuing to report identified cases to their local health department and the Connecticut Department of Public Health.
- Being prepared to respond quickly to rapid increases in cases or clusters of cases in schools (including increases in absenteeism due to respiratory illness).
- Continuing to follow existing quarantine guidance for students and staff who have been notified of certain higher-risk close contact exposures (e.g., household exposures, crowded social gatherings).
- Continuing with the following mitigation strategies already in place:
 - Optional mask wearing except where required in certain settings including the nurses offices and preschool;
 - Social distancing by students and staff to the maximum extent possible;
 - Handwashing and respiratory etiquette;
 - Isolation and quarantine guidelines;
 - Limiting outside visitors to those necessary for instructional or student support purposes;
 - Cleaning and maintaining healthy facilities; and

- Notifying staff, students, and families of COVID-19 cases.

Source: *DPH Guidance February 2022 - Transitioning to a Model of Routine Respiratory Disease Prevention and Enhanced Outbreak Management and Control of COVID-19 in PreK-12 School Settings*

ENHANCED MITIGATION STRATEGIES FOR WORSENING COVID-19 TRANSMISSION CONDITIONS

According to DPH, surges in community spread of COVID-19 due to the emergence of new variants, waning immunity, and/or other factors can be expected to occur periodically, likely seasonally, and can have an impact on the risk of COVID-19 transmission in schools. Eastern Highlands Health District, in consultation with DPH, will assist our schools in determining if a COVID-19 outbreak is suspected and what, if any, outbreak response strategies are needed to control transmission. DPH recommends temporary COVID-19 school outbreak response strategies including:

- Universal masking for students and staff at the classroom, grade, school, and/or district level depending on the extent of transmission and structure of the school.
- Cohorting during meals, recess, and other gathering times. Cohorts shall not be based on any specific demographic or disability category.
- Notifying students, staff, and families of outbreaks occurring within their classroom, grade, or school level depending on the extent of transmission and structure of the school. School officials in coordination with EHHD, based on capacity and circumstances, may choose to implement testing for all students and staff regardless of vaccination status;
- Enhanced cleaning and continuing to maintain healthy facilities; and
- Communication to encourage heightened awareness by students, staff, parents, and members of the schools community regarding the enhanced mitigation strategies being utilized.

Source: *DPH Guidance February 2022 - Transitioning to a Model of Routine Respiratory Disease Prevention and Enhanced Outbreak Management and Control of COVID-19 in PreK-12 School Settings*

Hand Washing/Sanitizing

According to the CDC, to prevent the spread of germs during the COVID-19 pandemic, individuals should wash their hands with soap and water for at least 20 seconds or use a hand sanitizer with at least 60% alcohol to clean hands BEFORE and AFTER:

- Touching your eyes, nose, or mouth.
- Eating food.
- Entering and leaving a public place.
- Touching an item or surface that may be frequently touched by other people, such as door handles, tables, gas pumps, shopping carts, or electronic cashier registers/screens.

Respiratory Etiquette

Covering coughs and sneezes helps prevent the spread of COVID-19 and other airborne illnesses, according to the CDC.

- **If you are wearing a mask:** You can cough or sneeze into your mask. Put on a new, clean mask as soon as possible and wash your hands.
- **If you are not wearing a mask:**
 - Always cover your mouth and nose with a tissue when you cough or sneeze, or use the inside of your elbow and do not spit.
 - Throw away used tissues in the trash.
- Immediately wash your hands with soap and water for at least 20 seconds. If soap and water are not readily available, clean your hands with a hand sanitizer that contains at least 60% alcohol.

Appropriate Accommodations for Children with Disabilities with Respect to Health and Safety Protocols

- The district will comply with all federal and state mandates and statutes.
- Staff will facilitate individualized and alternative means of support with respect to health and safety protocols based upon individualized student needs, present level of functioning, developmental levels, and student/parent input.
- Alternative protocols will be considered for students unable to wear protective personal equipment when required based on increased transmission levels.
- Programming decisions will be based on an individual student's needs.
- Protocols are established and staff training will occur around safety and PPE for students who need physical assistance with daily living activities such as feeding and toileting and for situations that require de-escalation strategies and emergency safety procedures.

Student Bus Transportation

- The district will partner with M&J Bus to provide guidance to familiarize transportation staff with effective disinfection procedures and signs/symptoms of COVID-19.
- The district will ensure that a supply of disposable masks are provided to each school bus as needed.
- Students may be assigned seats as needed.

Visitor Access

- Building access for parents may be limited due to school metrics.
- Visitors will not be permitted into the buildings without prior approval by administration.
- Any parent/guardian or previously approved visitor should cancel and reschedule appointments by phone should they be symptomatic (cough, fever, respiratory distress).
- Posted protocols for appropriate hygiene techniques and social distancing will be expected to be followed by all who enter the district/school buildings.
- Each school will provide a location for drop-off and retrieval of documents to limit in-person contact.

CLEANING AND MAINTAINING HEALTHY FACILITIES

The Director of Facilities in collaboration with members of the district leadership team have developed operational cleaning and disinfection plans to structure learning in a safe and organized manner for all students and staff. The district will continue to monitor health data to modify the plan to enhance or relax restrictions as appropriate. The district follows CDC guidelines for proper cleaning and disinfection in our schools to help safely and effectively reduce the spread of disease.

Cleaning and Disinfection Protocols

- Daily cleaning and disinfection of restrooms will occur.
- Clean high touch surfaces and objects (such as, door handles, sink handles, drinking fountains) at least once a day or as often as needed.
- All cleaning products utilized on surfaces should follow [Connecticut School Green Cleaning Law](#).
- Cleaning and disinfecting products should follow the manufacturer's stated instructions for use including contact time and surface application.

Ventilation

Ventilation Guiding Document: [CDC Guidance for Ventilation in Schools](#)

- All ventilation systems will be functional and current on inspections and maintenance.
- All ventilation systems will be operated at full capacity one week prior to the reopening of school.

HEALTH AND SAFETY

Diagnostic and Screening Testing

The Department of Public Health (DPH) and the Connecticut State Department of Education (CSDE) may in the future be offering schools the opportunity to fund COVID screening and provide additional resources for school screening testing to support and maintain in-person learning.

- Parents, caregivers, or guardians are strongly encouraged to monitor their children for symptoms of infectious illness every day through home based symptom screening.
- Students who are sick should not attend school.

Health and Safety Equipment

All schools will be provided with appropriate PPE (including masks and gloves) for staff use.

- Students and staff arriving to school and either in need of and/or requesting a mask will be provided a disposable mask.
- Students and staff will be provided with access to facial tissues.
- All schools and buses will be provided with a supply of cleaning and disinfectant products in accordance with CDC, DPH, and CSDE guidelines.
- School health offices utilize no-touch scan thermometers.
- Hand sanitizer dispensers are placed at points of entry and other high traffic areas.

Health Assessments

In accordance with CT General Statutes Section 10-206, the Bolton Public School BOE must require each pupil enrolled in public schools to have a routine physical (Health Assessment Record/ HAR) prior to school enrollment, entering grade seven and again entering grade eleven. The HAR requirement is an important element in ensuring a healthy and safe learning environment. Boards are permitted to deny attendance to a student who does not have the appropriate HAR on file.

Immunizations

The Bolton Public Schools will continue to follow State of Connecticut laws and guidelines regarding immunizations. Children need to be up to date on their immunizations at the start of school. Parents and guardians of students who are in need of vaccinations should contact their primary care physician or health care provider to schedule a visit for the required immunizations and to discuss any concerns.

Vaccinations for Educators, Staff, and Students (if eligible)

The Bolton Public Schools will continue to partner with the Eastern Highlands Health District (EHHD) and the Town of Bolton to offer the COVID-19 vaccine and/or boosters.

COVID-19 ILLNESS AND GUIDELINES

Illness Monitoring

- Parents should check their children and staff should check themselves prior to coming to school each day to be sure they do not have symptoms consistent with COVID-19.
- Families and staff may refer to following CDC links for specific updated illness guidelines:
 - [“When You Can Be Around Others After You Had or Likely Had COVID-19”](#)
 - [CDC Symptom-Checker](#)

When to Stay Home

Students or staff with symptoms consistent with COVID-19 will be required to remain home. These will include, but are not limited to:

Fever or chills	Sore throat
Cough	Congestion or runny nose
Shortness of breath or difficulty breathing	Nausea, vomiting, and/or diarrhea
Fatigue	Headache
Muscle or body aches	New loss of taste or smell

If someone is showing any of these COVID-19 emergency warning signs, seek emergency medical care immediately:

Trouble breathing	New confusion
Persistent pain or pressure in the chest	Inability to wake or stay awake
Bluish lips or face	

Source: [CDC Symptoms of COVID-19](#)

Illness Reporting Protocols

- Parents and staff are to inform the school nurse if their child (or the staff member) is sick with COVID-19 related symptoms, or if they had a known contact with someone diagnosed with COVID-19.
- Parents/guardians/staff will be encouraged to seek medical evaluation and COVID-19 Polymerase Chain Reaction (PCR) or rapid test.
- If students or staff receive a confirmed diagnosis of COVID-19, the school nurse will notify the district liaison.
- Schools will maintain a confidential document to be located in the school health office to report and track COVID-19 cases at each school site for staff and students.
- The district will maintain all information about the employee or student illness as a confidential medical record.

Monitoring Symptoms Related to COVID-19 during School Protocols

- Students showing symptoms consistent with COVID-19 while in school will be placed in the isolation room.
- Dismissal will occur when a student exhibits symptoms consistent with COVID-19 as detailed below **or** at the nurse's discretion.
- Parents/guardians/staff are encouraged to seek medical evaluation and an at home, rapid, or COVID-19 PCR test.
- Staff showing symptoms consistent with COVID-19 while in school will be dismissed immediately from the school. They are expected to test 2 days after symptom onset. They may return with a negative test or with alternate diagnosis and an improvement in symptoms. These symptoms include, but are not limited to:

Fever or chills

Cough

Shortness of breath or difficulty breathing

Fatigue

Muscle or body aches

Sore throat

Congestion or runny nose

Nausea, vomiting, and/or diarrhea

Headache

New loss of taste or smell

- If someone is showing any of these COVID-19 emergency warning signs, the school will seek emergency medical care immediately:

Trouble breathing

Persistent pain or pressure in the chest

Bluish lips or face

New confusion

Inability to wake or stay awake

Source: [CDC Symptoms of COVID-19](#)

COVID-19 Quarantine and Isolation Guidelines

As part of the routine disease prevention model, staff and students are asked to self-screen daily for any COVID-19 symptoms before coming to schools. Current guidance regarding symptomatic individuals will continue to be followed.

- Any individual with COVID-19 like symptoms should stay home, isolate, and get tested.
- Any individual who exhibits COVID-19 like symptoms at school will be sent home, should isolate, and get tested. The individual can return to school with a negative test result or alternative diagnosis from a medical professional.
- For those individuals who have tested positive, they will be required to isolate from school for five (5) full days. Day zero (0) is the day symptoms began or the day of the positive test result in alignment with current CT DPH and CDC guidance. Students and staff may return on day six (6) if there are no symptoms; however, it will be mandatory to wear a mask at school on days 6-10 after a positive case.
- We will continue to follow existing quarantine guidance for students and staff who have been notified of certain higher-risk close contact exposures (e.g., household exposures).
- We ask parents to notify the school nurse if their child or a household member tests positive for COVID-19.
- People who have tested positive for COVID-19 within the past three (3) months and recovered do not have to quarantine or get tested again as long as they do not develop new symptoms.
- People who develop symptoms again within three (3) months of their first bout of COVID-19 may need to be tested again if there is no other cause identified for their symptoms.

CONTAINMENT PLAN

The purpose of a local containment plan is to mitigate potential spread of the virus.

Symptom-Based Response

Students that exhibit symptoms consistent with COVID-19 will be immediately sequestered to a designated isolation room within each school building that is monitored by a school staff member. Staff members will immediately be sent home. This room will be separate from the school health office.

- Each isolation room will have a specific restroom space assigned to it for student use during isolation.
- If multiple students are confined to the space at any one time, all students will continue to maintain social distancing and face coverings.
- The school nurse will maintain a log of information including student name, date, time of entry, time of dismissal, and time the room was disinfected and sanitized.
- A log will be kept with names of all persons who entered the isolation room.
- The student will remain in this location until a parent or guardian arrives to sign the student out of school.
- Staff or students symptoms consistent with COVID-19 will be isolated and dismissed immediately as detailed above from the school setting. These will include, but are not limited to:

Fever or chills

Cough

Shortness of breath or difficulty breathing

Fatigue

Muscle or body aches

Sore throat

Congestion or runny nose

Nausea, vomiting, and/or diarrhea

Headache

New loss of taste or smell

- If someone is showing any of these COVID-19 emergency warning signs, the school will seek emergency medical care immediately:

Trouble breathing	New confusion
Persistent pain or pressure in the chest	Inability to wake or stay awake
Bluish lips or face	
- Disinfection and cleaning procedures will be initiated following student release from an isolation room or staff dismissal from school in compliance with CDC Guidelines. These guidelines include:
 - Close off areas and allow a period of time to occur before entering the area to enact disinfection.
 - Open any windows or turn on ventilation systems to assist in the process.
 - Soiled surfaces should be cleaned with soap or appropriate cleaner prior to disinfection.
 - All disinfectant products should be utilized in compliance from the approved list of agents provided by the Director of Facilities.
 - The use of the school health office will continue to be utilized to treat and consult with students exhibiting other illnesses or injuries.
- The District Liaison will be contacted by the School Nurse immediately upon identification of symptoms consistent with COVID-19 in a student or staff person. All health information will be treated as private and confidential. The school district will confer with the EHHD on any interim actions or control measures necessary.

Confirmed Case Based Response (Positive Test Result)

- Upon notice from a staff person, parent, guardian of a positive test result for a student or staff member, the school nurse will immediately notify the District Liaison. The District Liaison will notify the Superintendent of Schools.
- School administration shall confer with EHHD and DPH should there be an increase in cases regarding a possible outbreak and the merits of a short dismissal period for the classroom, school, and/or district.
- Disinfection and cleaning procedures will be initiated following the identification of a confirmed case in compliance with CDC Guidelines. These guidelines include:
 - Close off identified areas and allow a period of time to occur before entering the area to enact disinfection. Open any windows or turn on ventilation systems to assist in the process.
 - Soiled surfaces should be cleaned with soap or appropriate cleaner prior to disinfection.
 - All disinfectant products should be utilized in compliance from the approved list of agents provided by the school facilities.
 - The use of the school health office will continue to be utilized to treat and consult with students exhibiting other illnesses or injuries.

Source: [CDC Guidance for Schools](#)

Return to School or Work Criteria

The ability for students or staff to return to school will be determined based upon research-based guidance from the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) and communicated by the school district and/or Eastern Highlands Health District staff. Additional guidance can be found [here](#).

All students and staff returning to school will immediately report to the school nurse for a health screening upon arrival to the school building.

COVID-19 Response Team Roles and Responsibilities

School Nurses: Assessment of symptoms, medical interventions, and notification to parents.

Building/District Administrators, District Liaison: Notification to health officials and Superintendent, supervision of containment room, and dissemination of information.

Custodians: Cleaning and disinfecting.

Administrative Assistants: Communicate with school nurse that parents have arrived for pick-up.

CONTINUITY OF SERVICES

PLAN FOR CONTINUOUS LEARNING

Classroom learning and instructional activities will continue to be adjusted to provide the safest learning environment possible for students and staff including in-person learning and district distance learning determined by the district if necessary due to COVID-19.

Teaching and Learning Continuum

Instruction will be delivered Monday-Friday in school with all CDC, CT Department of Public Health, and State Department of Education guidelines and expectations in place. The continuum of learning includes, but is not limited to:

- Evidence-based practices will be utilized to ensure academic success for all students and to mitigate the impact of learning loss.
- Learning will be assessed by teacher(s) including formative and summative assessments.
- State summative assessments will be administered.
- Attendance will be taken.
- Students who participate in homeschooling are not enrolled in the Bolton Public Schools. In this situation, parents choose all instructional materials and are solely responsible for student learning.
- As a result of legislation that was passed in May, 2022, districts are no longer permitted to provide simultaneous instruction by a teacher to students' in-person in the classroom and students engaged in remote learning.

English Learners (EL)

- All language instruction education programs for English Learners will continue.
- Students who are dually identified as EL and having a disability will continue to receive their EL and special education supports.
- Communication with parents and guardians that have limited proficiency in English will occur in their native language and/or through translation and/or interpretation services.
- All established processes for identification, parental notifications, assessment requirements, and provision of services will be followed.

Special Education

- The district will comply with all federal and state mandates and statutes.
- Staff will facilitate individualized and alternative means of re-entry based upon individualized student needs, present level of functioning, developmental levels, and student/parent input.
- Alternative protocols will be considered for students unable to wear protective personal equipment when required.
- Programming decisions will be based on an individual student's needs.
- Protocols will be established and staff training will occur around safety and PPE for students when required who need physical assistance with daily living activities such as feeding and toileting.
- Protocols will be established and staff training will occur around safety and PPE when required for situations that require de-escalation strategies and emergency safety procedures.

Athletics and Extra-curricular Activities

- Interscholastic sport activities will adhere to all Connecticut Interscholastic Athletic Conference (CIAC) guidance unless it is determined in collaboration with the Eastern Highlands Health District that based on the prevalence of cases in the state and the region that additional COVID precautions are warranted and said precautions will be determined by the district.
- The Athletic Director will provide regular updates to the Superintendent of Schools regarding modifications that will need to occur for student participation in athletic practices and exhibitions.
- Decisions regarding extra-curricular activities will be made in consultation local health officials.

SOCIAL EMOTIONAL LEARNING AND MENTAL HEALTH

Social-emotional learning (SEL) supports continuity of learning, academic growth, and student connectedness which are all essential elements of student well-being. The focus on social-emotional learning (SEL) will continue to promote a positive sense of well-being and healthy connections between peers and adults. Social-emotional learning (SEL) will be integrated into academic content.

- Communicate with families that SEL is essential to the success of the school community.
- Administrators and/or staff will reach out to families and students for those students that are not engaged in learning.
- Address the social emotional needs of students and provide appropriate supports.

- Continue to implement programs and activities designed to help children manage their emotions, establish positive relationships with others, and make responsible decisions.
- Continue to support teachers and staff with the implementation of social-emotional supports (i.e., Zones of Regulation).
- Provide SEL support and activities for staff.

CHILD NUTRITION

Compliance Assurances with NSLP and SBP

- The Director of Food Services will continue to follow National School Lunch Program (NSLP) and School Breakfast Program (SBP) program guidelines.
- The Director of Food Services will continue to determine eligibility for students needing free and reduced price meals and milk maintaining relevant documentation for claiming methods.
- The Director of Food Services will continue to adhere to guidelines for the United States Department of Agriculture's (USDA) policies for school meals and milk including meal pattern requirements.

Meal Distribution Services

- In collaboration with building principals, the Director of Food Service will outline protocols for student meal access on campus.
- Tables will be cleaned in between each lunch wave in each location.

FAMILY SUPPORT AND COMMUNICATION

BPS will continue to maintain a focus on fostering two-way communication with the school community including staff, students, and families through clear and ongoing communication regarding the Bolton Public Schools Safe Return to In-Person Instruction and Continuity of Services Plan including updates at least every six months. Regular updates will be provided by the Office of the Superintendent and/or building principals. Communication will include:

- Guidance on the school policies, protocols, and relevant information related to health and safety guidelines via the School Messenger Notification System (phone, text, and email), district website (<https://www.boltonpublicschools.com/>), videos, and/or social media.
- A link on the district website to the Bolton Public Schools Safe Return to In-Person Instruction and Continuity of Services Plan.
- Resources to support families as appropriate.
- Versions available in the preferred language of families.
- Versions accessible for those with visual and/or hearing impairments.

The Bolton Public School District is committed to maintaining a multi-modal approach for communication of policies and protocols with staff, students, and families.