

BWRSD School Reopening FAQs

Over the past several weeks, the BWRSD has held Town Hall meetings for each of our schools. These Frequently Asked Questions have been compiled to provide additional details and clarification of information within our School Reopening Plan submitted to the R.I. Department of Education on July 17, 2020. This document will be posted on the district website www.bwrsd.org and updated as needed. Please contact your school principal or the superintendent's office if you have additional questions about the reopening of BWRSD schools.

Will Students be Assigned to Stable Groups or Pods When They Return to School?

At the elementary and middle school level, we are able to keep students in a stable group (20-24 students plus staff who stay together for the day in one room or a limited number of rooms). At the high school level, it is not feasible to maintain stable groups due to the number of courses that include students or multiple grade levels.

Are Face Masks or Coverings Required?

Yes. All students, staff, and visitors are required to wear face masks or coverings when they are on any BWRSD property or grounds, including but not limited to all instructional areas, hallways, common areas such as offices and rest rooms, and outside of buildings. Face masks or coverings must also be worn by students and adults when on school busses.

Face masks and coverings are one of the best tools we have for reducing the spread of COVID-19 in schools. They provide a simple yet effective barrier to help prevent respiratory droplets from traveling into the air and onto other people. Face masks or coverings may include a face mask or bandana, separate from your clothing that stays securely in place and covers your nose and mouth. Disposable masks must be changed daily, while it is recommended that cloth masks are washed daily

The following exceptions apply:

- When students or staff are in an outdoor area in which they can consistently maintain a distance of at least 6 feet apart; the staff may instruct students that they can remove their mask or face covering if they choose.
- Masks may also be removed when students or staff are eating or drinking and maintaining a distance of at least 6 feet apart.
- Staff members may remove their mask when they are by themselves in their office or classroom.
- Exceptions to mask/face covering requirements must be made for those for whom it is not possible due to medical conditions, disability impact, or other health or safety factors.
- If a student or staff member is unable to wear a mask due to a documented medical condition, they should report this to a staff member or school administrator immediately, to determine if reasonable accommodations can be made by the school or district.

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What will Distance Learning look like?

At the end of the school year BWRSD reflected on our experience with distance, through surveys to teachers and families, teacher forums, and meetings with students. This information was used to develop the following expectations for K-12 distance learning.

All K-12 teachers are expected to:

- ❖ Hold a morning or beginning of class meeting to greet students, make social emotional connections, and explain learning expectations for the day.
- ❖ Use Google Classroom (or SeeSaw for grades K-2) as a learning management system, to post a daily agenda, assignments, and resources.
- ❖ Conduct daily interactive live lessons to introduce and reinforce learning concepts, check in on student progress, and explain assignments that students will be doing independently (with support as needed) for the remainder of the lesson.
- ❖ Provide more small group learning opportunities for students who are ready for a challenge or need additional support.
- ❖ Establish norms for distance learning, including students having their cameras turned on during live lessons, being dressed and ready to learn, fully participating in lessons and activities.
- ❖ Limit screen time by level:

<u>Grade Level</u>	<u>Daily Screen Time Limit</u>
Kindergarten to Grade 2	Limit of 1-2 hours daily
Gr. 3 to Gr. 5	Limit of 3 hours daily
Gr. 6 to Gr. 8	Limit of 3 hours daily
Gr. 9 - Gr. 12	Limit of 4 hours daily

This guidance, in conjunction with ongoing professional development will ensure all students have access to quality distance learning experiences.

During distance learning, teachers will use the same curriculum and programs used for in person learning to promote continuity and avoid learning gaps. We have also provided guidance to principals to ensure that there is adequate time for co-curricular classes such as art, music, health/PE, and library, as well as activity breaks, time for lunch, and recommended time for outdoor play.

Can Students Transition Between Distance Learning and In-Person Learning?

Families may request distance learning at the start of the year or on a quarterly or trimester basis. Distance learning classrooms will be established for each grade level. For grades K-5, classes may have students attending from multiple schools. Families should contact their school principal to discuss these changes and for more information on the process.

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Students who start the year in distance learning will remain with that teacher throughout the year, but may request placement in an in-person classroom during the year on a quarterly or trimester basis.

What Will Limited In-Person Learning Look Like?

Depending on changes in health conditions during the year, it may be necessary to move to limited in-person learning to reduce group size. In this scenario, half of the class will be in school for 2-3 days and half will be at home participating in lessons virtually. Classes will be split alphabetically.

Teachers will use Google Meet during lessons to include students who are at home. They may also use a document camera to share writing that is on the board or other documents that students in the classroom are using. This will ensure continuity in learning, provide live interactive lessons while students are at home, and keep students connected to their classmates. This will also be used in the event a student is at home for several weeks due to illness or quarantine.

What Will Physical Classrooms Look Like?

Classrooms will look a little different this upcoming school year! We are working with principals and custodians on ways to maximize space in classrooms so that desks can be spaced 6 feet apart. Desks will be placed in a checkerboard pattern. Principals and custodians are looking at desks as an option for rooms that have tables, and/or table top plexiglass partitions to divide the space and/or other flexible furniture options that can be easily cleaned.

Rugs will be removed from classrooms, as well as other fabric covered items that cannot easily be disinfected.

Will All Learning Be Online?

Students will use a combination of online and print resources for both in-person and distance learning. Based on the new distance learning guidance and limitations on screen time, at the elementary level we are purchasing workbooks for students.

Based on the current research on sharing books and input from our school librarians, teachers will be able to send books home with students and then quarantine them (keep out of use) for 2-4 days. Classroom libraries will not be opened for students to self-select books; instead, teachers will distribute books to students for in class or at home reading. We will be providing guidance on this to teachers and adjust the plan as new information becomes available.

Will Support Services Be Provided During Distance Learning?

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Students with an IEP, 504 plan, or are on an Intervention Plan will continue to receive services with adjustments made, as necessary, for distance learning.

Will Breakfast and Lunch Be Available at School?

Yes, Chartwells, our food service provider, will have breakfast and lunch options available for students.

In grades K-8, students may be eating lunch in their classrooms, to minimize exposure to other students. To the extent possible, within group size limitations, principals will schedule groups to eat in the cafeteria or other locations such as an outdoor learning area. Students may bring their lunch or purchase lunch from our food service provider. Information will be sent home prior to the start of school.

Students will be required to wash their hands or use hand sanitizer before and after lunch. Desks and tables will be cleaned before and after, as well. Students will be spaced 6 feet apart during lunch and may remove their masks to eat.

How Will Recess Be Handled?

Daily recess is important to students' wellbeing and provides an opportunity for movement and socialization. Elementary schools will schedule a minimum of twenty (20) minutes per day for recess, although additional time is recommended. Recess will be based on the following protocols:

- Weather permitting, recess will be held outdoors.
- Students must wash or sanitize their hands before going out to recess.
- Students will stay within their stable groups during recess.
- Face masks and coverings must be worn if social distancing of six (6) feet cannot be maintained.
- Up to two (2) stable groups may be scheduled for recess outside, provided that groups can be distanced fourteen (14) feet apart.
- Recess equipment, such as balls and hoops, may be shared only within a stable group, not shared between two (2) groups. Recess equipment must be cleaned after group use.
- All playground equipment will be sanitized after each recess.
- Students must wash or sanitize their hands when they return to the classroom.

Will Students and Staff Need to Complete a COVID Screening?

All students and staff will complete a daily COVID-19 screening. This must be completed before leaving home and may be submitted electronically, or on a school provided paper form, or by other means as necessary.

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Students and staff must stay home if they:

- have any of the symptoms listed on the COVID-19 screening,
- have tested positive for COVID-19, or
- have been in contact with anyone who has tested positive for COVID-19.

Families should contact the school nurse immediately if their child has tested positive for COVID-19. Staff members should notify their principal and the Human Resource office. Our staff will confirm that the COVID-19 screening has been completed before students get on a school bus or enter a school. Families will be notified if the screening has not been completed and students will be isolated.

What Are The Procedures for School Arrival and Dismissal?

Schools have established staggered start times for students who walk, drive, or get dropped off at school and those who take the bus. Specific times will be sent to families by the school principal. Different entrances and exits will be used, to mitigate exposure.

Students and staff must wear face masks or coverings as they enter the school building and use hand sanitizer that will be available at all entrances.

Families are asked to complete a COVID-19 screening each morning, before their child leaves for the bus or for school. School staff on the bus will check a report to see if all families have completed the form. They will contact the family if it has not been completed and have the student sit in an isolated seat at the front of the bus. They will be escorted into the school to be screened.

For students who walk or are dropped off at school, staff will check a report to see that the COVID screening has been completed.

It is strongly recommended that the same adult drop off and pick up students each day.

How Will Schools Be Cleaned and Sanitized?

Our custodial and maintenance staff have been trained in new procedures for ongoing clearing and disinfection of common areas, hallways, and restrooms. High touch surfaces such as railings and doorknobs will be cleaned on an hourly basis. In addition, all classrooms will be fully sanitized each night.

Playground equipment will be sanitized after each recess and recess equipment will be cleaned after each recess, as well.

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Before having snacks or lunch in the classroom, students will wipe their desk using a sanitizing wipe or spray that will be provided. Next, they will wash their hands (or use hand sanitizer if a sink is not available in their classroom). After eating lunch, students will wipe their desks again with sanitizing wipes or spray and wash their hands.

Will Rooms Be Well Ventilated?

All of our ventilation systems are routinely cleaned and high efficiency pleated filters are replaced two to three times a year, depending on vacation periods. This exceeds federal ASHRAE standards, which requires filters to be changed twice per year. The systems are vacuumed and inspected at the time of the filter change. The system works continuously to provide continuous air exchange in each space throughout the school day.

What Happens if a Student or Staff Member Has Symptoms or Tests Positive?

Procedures for Students Who Test Positive

Any students experiencing symptoms of COVID-19 before the school day begins should stay home. If a student develops COVID-19 symptoms while at school, the child will be immediately taken to the isolation room and be evaluated by the school nurse. Parents/guardians will be notified to pick up the student within the hour. Parents/guardians should seek medical advice for the student within forty eight (48) hours and schedule a COVID-19 test as needed. If the test result is positive, individuals must complete a period of isolation as directed by RIDOH. Symptomatic students will not be permitted to return to school until documentation from a medical provider indicates testing was negative, there are no other medical restrictions, there is no evidence of illness restricting attendance, or it is documented that the individual is no longer contagious.

Procedures for Staff Who Test Positive

BWRSD staff members who feel ill before the school day begins should stay home. If a staff member develops symptoms of COVID-19 while at school, they will contact their school administration and go home immediately. Within forty eight (48) hours, they should seek medical advice by consulting with a healthcare provider. The staff member should get a COVID-19 test, as needed, and notify their employer as soon as the result of the test is known. Symptomatic staff will not be permitted to return to work until documentation from a medical provider indicates testing was negative, there are no other medical restrictions, there is no evidence of illness restricting attendance, or it is documented that the individual is no longer contagious. If the test result is positive, individuals must complete a period of isolation as directed by RIDOH. Our school nurses are actively involved in state discussions regarding what type of information may be requested for contact tracing.

How Will Students Complete Assignments if They Are Home Sick?

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If students are well enough, they will participate in distance learning with their regular teacher(s) when they are home for symptoms related to COVID-19 if they are well enough, or if they are home required quarantine. If they are not well enough they will complete assignments as soon as they are able.

What if My Child's Teacher is Absent?

Teaching and Learning Fellows (long term substitutes) will be hired for each school (1-2 each). They will be trained to provide substitute coverage when needed and support distance learning in the event a teacher is absent.

How Will I Be Notified if School Is Cancelled or Changed to Distance Learning?

Decisions regarding when schools need to shift from in-person to partial or limited in-person, or to distance learning will be made by the Governor in conjunction with the R.I. Department of Health and the R.I. Department of Education. Families will be notified using BWRSD Correspondence system (Connect Ed), via email/phone/text, as soon the district is aware of potential changes. Families must make sure their contact information is up to date and accurate in the Aspen Parent Portal.

Will Child Care (COZ) be Available?

Our COZ program will be available to families before and after school. The regulations for child care programs are slightly different than what is required for schools. They require the same level of ongoing cleaning and disinfecting, and maintaining small group size (12-15); however, there is some flexibility with mask wearing for some activities. We will be reviewing these requirements with the COZ director in the upcoming weeks.

The COZ program has adjusted their times to coordinate with the new arrival and dismissal times. We plan to provide child care services from 7:00 A.M. - 9:15 A.M. and 3:30 P.M. - 6:00 P.M. We are also discussing the option of offering child care during the once a month professional development days. Now that our Reopening Plan has been reviewed by the state, we will be getting information out to families as soon as possible.

What Will Students Need for In Person or Distance Learning?

Principals will send home a list of recommended supplies for each grade level. In addition to ensuring students have a mask to wear everyday, the list will include basic items such as:

- folders,
- notebooks,
- pencils, pens, crayons
- a Ziploc bag to store their mask during lunch

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During distance learning, students will need a quiet place to work at a table or desk, access to an electrical outlet, and earbuds or headphones if available.