



BCS Reopen Plan – 2020 Frequently Asked Questions

Health and Safety

- Q: Is it possible to have more outside activities (during the warmer months) such as lunch, P.E., outdoor classrooms when weather permits?
- A: Yes, we are looking into outdoor instruction for things like physical education (PE) when possible and are developing a schedule and a plan for outdoor instruction during independent practice times of Math and English Language Arts blocks. This will allow for several mask breaks for students throughout the day.
- Q: If a person has COVID - are they always positive or can they test negative once the symptoms clear?
- A: If a person has a positive COVID test, they will need to provide proof of a negative test to return. Adults and children.
- Q: The temperature check accountability is being placed on parents and not on the school district. How is home health monitoring being enforced? Also, how long will temperature screening take upon unloading the buses? Seems like school will not start at the same time as last year. Thoughts?
- A: Guidance does not encourage the school to do temperature checks but advise that parents monitor their children by taking two temperature readings ten minutes apart in the morning before sending their child to school or on the bus.
- Q: Why isn't the school providing face masks? Amity is Providing 2 cloth masks per student at the beginning of the year, why not BCS?
- A: The school will provide face masks for any child who needs them. On the Reopen BCS Survey, 96% of parents indicated that they would provide their children with their own masks.
- Q: Regarding the Hybrid Model, if a student is being cared for by someone whose children are in the opposite group; is it possible to have your child switched into that group to limit exposure for all of the children involved?
- A: Yes, if notified ahead of time, the school can take that situation under consideration.
- Q: Will there be mask breaks for children? Are the children able to take the masks off in the classroom if the desks are distanced?
- A: Yes, we will have built-in breaks for recess, snack, lunch, and PE, when held outdoors. No, students will not be able to take their mask off in the classroom.

- Q: What is the number of students in a cohort/classroom going to be? Or at very least what is the max number you are allowing to make up a cohort?
- A: We are following Bethany's policy on class size and State Department of Education (SDE) guidelines on social distancing. If for any reason we cannot meet both, classes will be split into additional sections. This depends on the number of students attending in-person learning and the size of the classrooms.
- Q: Is it possible for each student to be provided a Rubbermaid bin to put their lunch/backpack and coat in when they arrive at school rather than using an open cubby? They could also put their extra school supplies there.
- A: Every student will have an assigned desk where they can store their supplies.
- Q: If a parent or sibling of a child has a health condition requiring self-quarantine, does that child receive educational support from the school if they are also kept home?
- A: Yes, if your child is required to be in quarantine due to COVID they qualify for Homebound Instruction.
- Q: Will there be Kindergarten orientation prior to school opening? If so, how will this work in order to reduce potential risk? Will parents be allowed into orientation, as in the past to help ease children's nerves? Will there be multiple sessions? If not, how will the first day of school happen for the kindergartners, will they enter with all other grades in their respective day?
- Q: As a first-time parent of a BCS incoming kindergartener there are many questions unanswered but I wanted to ask about the kindergarten orientation day that was supposed to occur, I believe, on August 18th for 2 hours? As you can imagine there is a lot of anxiety that comes along with starting a big school that a small child has never been in before and I feel that it would be helpful for this day to still occur. I do realize that the first day my child will be attending will be a half-day and with less students in the classroom. If the orientation day were to occur it would give the students a little longer to process their feelings around the change in environment than one night, if there is no orientation day.
- A: We are still working on details for Kindergarten Orientation. It may look very different from year's past. We are trying to develop a safe yet inviting experience for all students.
- Q: What are some qualifying factors for homebound instruction? For instance, one of our family members has a severe respiratory illness and underlying condition making them more vulnerable to Covid-19, but that does not refer to the students attending BCS. Would this mean we have to opt into the home learning instruction?
- A: Homebound Instruction would be in the case of a student's documented medical need or for a mandatory COVID quarantine. Parents who feel that it would be in the best interest of their family could choose to have their child stay at home to learn through remote learning.

Technology

Q: Can the Chromebooks have a specific website and flash games blocked out so the student won't be tempted to play video games during school hours?

A: We will monitor with our GoGuardian monitoring software and block access to unauthorized websites.

Q: Will live classroom applications be used in lieu of YouTube videos?

A: Based on feedback from our Distance Learning Survey in the spring, we will be increasing the amount of synchronous learning and lessons. Additionally, we will continually seek to have students access as much learning through both District made resources and materials as well as partnered curricular providers.

Q: If a family opts out of in-person learning will they receive a Chromebook to use for Distance Learning?

A: Yes.

Q: Will device insurance be required?

A: No, the device insurance program is voluntary for families.

Transportation

Q: Will the bus driver be responsible for making sure all riders keep their masks on at all times? With the buses expected to be at full capacity, as stated, will there need to be multiple chaperones to watch the kids, to make sure they are behaving safely?

A: For at least the first week of school, we will have a monitor on each bus to help establish procedures for getting on the bus and seating arrangements for any student taking the bus. With this routine established, the bus driver will then support the implementation moving forward.

There will be assigned seats for all students. Students getting on the bus will take the farthest back seat available and then will be seated opposite side one row apart as space permits. Siblings will sit together to the extent possible. When the buses arrive, students will remain seated and they will disembark from the front to the back to support social distancing.

Q: Can my student get dropped off in the morning and take the bus home in the afternoon?

A: Yes.

Q: Why is it considered safe to load the buses to capacity?

A: With the size of the bus and the relatively low participation on each bus compared to the overall capacity, we will be able to exceed state guidelines for bus transportation distancing. We will monitor bus seating on an ongoing basis to ensure that we can keep the greatest distance possible between students.

Operations and Policy

Q: The homebound instruction request form is specific to a child's condition. What form is needed if a parent or family member has a medical condition where their lives would be endangered by the child coming in contact with others and bringing the disease into the home? Before you site the article in the source list, the study completed supposed kids don't spread the disease to households was both not peer-reviewed nor is recommended as evidence to support reopening schools. The fact is, no one knows who and how it can spread to reliably and safely open schools. How do students with high-risk family members submit this documentation for a full time supported distance learning?

A: When school is in-person and a family opts to keep their child home for a reason that is not related to that child's medical needs, they will have access to remote learning from the District.

Q: What is the policy if a child is not compliant with mask-wearing?

A: We will provide masks and training for students to wear masks. We will also provide mask breaks throughout the day. Should a child not wear their mask, they will be kindly reminded of our expectations. Should a child continue to refuse to wear a mask we will work with the parents on a plan to help the child comply with expectations.

Q: What will the pickup procedure look like?

A: We are still working on this procedure.

Q: If a child is diagnosed with COVID-19 what will the procedure be and how will it be handled? Who will be quarantined and what at-home distance learning resources will be provided for those forced to quarantine?

A: If a child is diagnosed with COVID, they will need to be quarantined at home and BCS will provide Homebound Learning to that child to the ability that they can participate based on their symptoms. Additionally, before they come back to BCS, the child will need to be both symptom-free and have a negative (no active virus) test on file with the school nurse. The District is working with health officials to create a flow chart of actions related to a positive test of COVID-19.

Q: Will families traveling outside of the state be asked to self-quarantine for two weeks?

A: Any student or family traveling to a state listed in the Governor's Executive Order will need to comply with the Executive Order in regards to the documentation of travel and mandatory quarantine times.

Q: In light of Gov. Lamont's new statement regarding hybrid and in-person learning (July 27), what is BCS's new policy on families that are looking for options?

A: Based on the new information we are working diligently to ensure that all options are possible to the extent that we can do so both fiscally responsibly and safely. We will continue to adapt our programming and policies based on new guidance from the SDE and the Governor's Office.

Food Services

Q: Will students be eating their lunch in the classroom now?

A: Yes, students can either order a cold lunch option from the cafeteria or bring lunch from home. They will eat at their desks and food will be brought from the cafeteria to the rooms. Recess will follow lunch for all students so that the custodians can clean surfaces to maintain safety.

Social/Emotional Growth

Q: Will students be expected to stay 6 feet away from their classmates at all times? If so, how will this and other "rules" for the COVID-19 be enforced without making it seem like a punishment or not being able to interact with their friends?

A: Students will be required to maintain social distance to the greatest extent feasible. Opportunities will be provided at the start of the school year to practice all new protocols and procedures with students and staff.

Q: Will the children be placed into the classes based on where their name falls in the alphabet? So A-K will all be in the same classes and L-Z as well?

A: If there is a need to cohort children, as outlined in the hybrid model, students will be grouped by the last name (A-K and L-Z).

Q: How do you know what kids level of understanding really is about this disease? I have not seen very many children out in the stores or parks or restaurants. How are they supposed to be prepared for what they see once they see the classrooms on August 31st? Shouldn't the parents see the school first before they decide what model they decide to take and certainly before the kids see it unprepared?

A: A variety of resources will be created to assist with the return to school. These include the use of social stories, videos, virtual tours, buttons, and enlarged identification badges for staff and the use of clear masks and shields whenever possible.

Q: Will students at home have access to the planned SEL focused morning meetings by live stream, Zoom so they can interact, or at very least a recorded meeting on Google classroom?

A: Yes.

Q: My son will be starting kindergarten this year he has been home with us since March how will it be handled on his first day if he is upset and needs added support?

A: In addition to support offered by the classroom teacher, BCS has a wonderful team of professionals available to work with students. This team includes our school psychologists, guidance counselor, behavior analyst, and behavior technician.

Curriculum, Instruction, and Assessment

Q: How will students be instructed with classes that aren't apart of their daily routine, like art, gym, music, etc.?

A: We are still working on a schedule for our special area teachers. Special area teachers will travel to each classroom in order to provide instruction. Another option we are exploring is that students receive special area instruction by subject on a rotating basis.

Q: Will classes ever be taught outside if rather is permitting?

A: Opportunities for outdoor instruction will be provided when feasible.

Q: If we do have to turn to distance learning again, is it possible to send home worksheet packets or workbooks for the kids. My children really struggled with having to be on the computers for all of their assignments.

A: Yes, Go Bags are being created for each student that will include items to support remote learning. Electronic devices will be provided to students K-6, preschool devices will be provided at the discretion of the administration.

Q: If a family opts for home learning at the beginning and then the school moves to the hybrid model- does that home learner immediately become supported through the hybrid model on the virtual days of instruction or all of them?

A: If a family elects to participate in home learning they will continue on that track even if the District moves to a hybrid model and receive all instruction through the learn at home model with school support.

Q: Will the student's transition to virtual learning immediately if the school is closed due to a case being reported or will classes also be "closed" or canceled?

A: If in-person instruction is stopped, for any reason, we will shift into remote learning and those days will count as school days.

Q: Transitioning between mandatory in-person model to distance learning is extremely disruptive to those families who don't have flexibility to accommodate distance learning facilitation without advanced notice and planning. Why aren't there any provisions for those families to elect a fully supportable model from the beginning so their learner can benefit from consistency and support from the onset?

A: The directive from the state is to fully reopen in the Fall with contingency plans for a hybrid model and full remote learning.

- Q: Could you please expound on the support being offered to families that do not wish to send their children back to the school? Will they still be assigned to a teacher? Will that teacher be checking that student's work, similar to the end of last school year? What will we have to do to make sure our students can move up to the next grade level as normal in 2021?
- Q: What exactly will students who opt out be provided with so their at-home lessons may stay aligned with their grades lessons. Will they be provided with the "Go Bags", FaceTime and assistance from teachers? Thorough lessons and materials? Students who opt-out without a medical need to.
- A: The District is currently exploring options to provide home learning support to the greatest extent possible. All students will be assigned a dedicated teacher who will oversee their educational program. Student progress on grade-level standards in accordance with District policy will be considered when determining progression to the next grade level.
- Q: What is the plan for special Ed students as no accommodations were made for distance learning last time?
- A: Individualized Education Plans will be implemented to the greatest extent possible regardless of the learning model.
- Q: How do you plan to assess the children during distance learning?
- A: Students will be assessed based on submitted work and online assessments provided by the District.
- Q: What is the plan to assist the households of working families now that work has resumed in many other professional sectors? Distance learning was contingent on the parents assisting. That can no longer be expected from working households.
- A: Families should plan for all three phases of learning as outlined in the plan. The District is creating a Family Resource Hub to support families as needed during remote learning. When the District transitions into Remote Learning there will be more synchronous teaching than what occurred in the Spring.
- Q: The planning document mentioned that some resources would be available via Google Classroom, but it was unclear which types of resources would be available. For example, will any lesson plans be available to parents?
- A: Every student will be provided with a Go Bag. Students will have access to Google Classroom, additional materials, resources, and staff supports when available and feasible. Students will have access to real-time with their teacher and assistance and will have access to Google Classroom.
- Q: If we elect to keep our student(s) home, will all of the assignments for core classes be posted in Google Classroom for grade 5, or are the parents required to cover the curriculum at their discretion without any guidance from BCS by using the State hub?
- Q: Additionally, will students who choose the home learning option have any virtual contact with the teacher or in-person student group (e.g. occasional Zoom calls with the class)? Or will they essentially not be treated as part of the class?"
- A: Students will be considered part of the class and will have access to Google Classroom, additional materials, resources, and staff supports when available and feasible. The District is currently working on this plan.

- Q: If children are enrolled in the "home learning" option, will they be required to participate in distance learning assignments during potential short term school closures (in the event of increased community spread) or would they be able to continue "learn from home under their parents' direction?"
- A: If a family elects to participate in home learning they will continue on that track even if the District moves to a different instructional model.
- Q: For speech, will masks be allowed to be removed? Many of the corrective practices for speech the face, lips, mouth are needed to be seen by both teacher and student. Will there be shields provided or any other special protection?
- Q: Similarly, for learning to read, fundamentals, and letter sounds, is there a way for children to see the teacher's mouths? As much of the initial stages of reading are also very dependent on corrective sound/word development.
- A: Yes, clear masks, face shields, and clear partitions are available for staff to use during instruction.

Professional Development Questions

- Q: How are the teachers being instructed on the virtual learning tools to standardize the quality of virtual learning at all levels?
- A: There are 6 full days of professional development built into the schedule in August for staff to receive additional training in a variety of technology platforms.

Questions from the Webinar

- Q: Can the bus drivers be encouraged to have the windows on the bus open?
- A: Yes, when temperature ranges ensure a safe environment on the bus.
- Q: Will there be outdoor classroom time available for students?
- A: Yes, we are working to develop both a schedule and a map for outdoor teaching. The goal is to schedule at least two times during the day for classrooms to go outside weather permitting. This will also double as a mask break time.
- Q: What will happen to mask break times when the weather is inclement?
- A: We are working on indoor mask break solutions right now. Currently, there would be indoor mask breaks for every class during snack and lunch at a minimum. We will look to designated covered areas outside the school to allow students to receive mask breaks during inclement weather.

- Q: Can we have JCC back for the morning and afternoon?
A: JCC was offered space at BCS to run their before and after school program but at this time has declined the offer. We will stay in contact with them in the event their plans change.
- Q: Will PreK and Kindergarteners be expected to wear a mask?
A: PreK – No. Kindergarten – Yes.
- Q: What is the timeline for a student returning to in-person learning if they start with Remote Learning or Homebound Instruction options?
A: If a family opts to start with remote learning, we ask that they make that decision through October 16th which denotes the end of our first instructional cycle. Should a family change their mind and want their child to return to in-person learning, we ask for a week's notice before being able to ensure that we have all our protocols adjusted to accommodate their return.
- Q: How will traffic be addressed with increased parents dropping off?
A: BCS administration is working with Officer Merriam to design traffic flow patterns which will ensure the safety of our students and drivers. Drop off will look different than in the past and we ask for everyone's patience as we develop, practice, and evaluate the new protocols.
- Q: Can masks be taken off when students are socially distanced and the dividers are up?
A: This is a consideration, but at this time, we are expecting to keep masks on as much as possible. Even with plexiglass dividers, generally close proximity means we want students to wear masks. We are reviewing this idea with our health officials.
- Q: Can we have parent volunteers to monitor lunch waves?
A: For the time being, there are no visitors allowed in the building. We will need to have staff supervise lunch waves.
- Q: Isn't cohorting made moot by having students on the bus together or going to Park & Rec together?
A: We are doing the best we can to control what we can. We are working with Park & Rec to see if they can support our cohorting to the best of their ability. Additionally, with the bus, we are taking precautions to ensure that students are distanced as far as possible from one another.
- Q: Could we have each day be dismissed at 1:10 pm to lower time together in cohorts?
A: While we have considered this option and others that involve regular half-days to start and throughout the year, a 177-day schedule with dismissal at 1:10 pm is far fewer hours than is required by the state, at this time.

Thank you for your thoughtful questions and please feel free to contact any one of the Bethany administrators if you have any additional questions.