



Current Plan for COVID-19 Mitigation in 2021-22

July 25, 2021

Our Priorities: Our mission to.. “serve preschool through elementary level children and their families in a small community setting that compassionately empowers children with critical thinking skills, self-confidence, independence and a love of learning; develops their individual gifts; and prepares them to make meaningful contributions to the world,” guides everything that we do. With that aim in mind, the following are our priorities for the upcoming year (in no particular order):

- Optimize teaching and learning conditions (including social-emotional learning, non-verbal communication and support for literacy and Spanish instruction);
- Look to the growing body of information about COVID and guidance of local public health agencies to inform our plans; and
- Avoid conditions that prompt quarantines in the case of a presumed/confirmed positive case and thereby maximize the opportunity for in person school.

We have adopted a cautious approach when we welcome students back to school next month. We believe that it is easier and more likely to be successful if we later loosen restrictions, but it can be challenging to reimpose restrictions once they have been removed. We will pay close attention to local public health trends, including cases at other schools that do not require face coverings or other prevention measures, and plan to revisit our practices in early October - or earlier if warranted. We are all eager to return to “normal”, but we also know that moving too quickly can force us to take steps backwards. We are so close to the “finish line” that holding on to additional mitigation measures a little longer is most consistent with our priorities.

Relevant public health conditions and guidance: The last few weeks have had a series of developments that inform our planning. We will continue to monitor and respond as appropriate but here is what we are looking to as of now:

- **July 1** all state and local public health orders expired, meaning that there are currently no mandated risk mitigation measures in place
- **July 9**, the CDC issued recommendations for risk mitigation in schools/child care centers for the fall. You can read those [here](#), but in short they state clearly that mask use is not required, although several strong recommendations are included.
- **On July 18**, the American Academy of Pediatrics released [COVID-19 Guidance for Safe Schools](#)
- **On July 23**, representatives from Boulder County Public Health shared these updates:
 - BCPH is currently monitoring local infection rates closely and will determine if it will issue new public health orders and/or guidelines in August
 - In the meantime, BCPH strongly recommends that all unvaccinated individuals age 2 and over wear a face covering whenever in an indoor space. In settings where one or more students is unvaccinated, teachers, staff, and others are encouraged to wear a face covering to model behavior for students and normalize wearing of face coverings in support of the unvaccinated individuals.
 - BCPH continues to require reporting and isolation of confirmed cases and quarantine of household contacts
 - The majority of local cases are attributed to the Delta variant, which results in a higher viral load, is estimated to be 1,000% more transmissible than the initial virus, is more likely to be spread among younger people; and common symptoms are typically headache, sore throat, runny nose and fever and less frequently to be loss of taste or smell ([see here](#) for more information about the Delta variant).
 - Fully vaccinated individuals that are asymptomatic do NOT need to quarantine in the event of an exposure
- **On July 20, 2021**, CDPHE released guidance on how to operationalize the CDC guidance in schools (see [here](#))
- **As of today**,

- 100% of Bixby classroom faculty are fully vaccinated against COVID-19
- Over 70% of eligible residents in Boulder County are fully vaccinated (see [here](#))
- Case rates are generally low but recent trends indicate an increase (see [here](#))

Current Plan for Risk Mitigation in the Fall (subject to change based upon BCPH guidelines and changing local conditions) While this is our plan, our evolving understanding of COVID-19 and public health conditions will require us to remain flexible as we plan for the start of the school year and beyond. The Governor’s Office, as well as our local and state health departments, could issue new orders or information at any time that would require us to alter our current plans. With that being said, here is what we are planning:

- **After-care will resume for K-5 students, and extend to 5:45pm for ALL students.** We will begin by committing to serve families that sign up for full-day care but plan to assess our capacity to also provide drop-in care once we have firm commitments from full-day families. We are staffing after-care so as to allow for students to remain cohorted when indoors.
- **We are excited to welcome families back into our school building for pick-up and drop-off**
- **Face coverings:**
 - NOT REQUIRED for anyone when outdoors
 - REQUIRED for everyone when indoors, except that vaccinated individuals (with proof of vaccination) may remove face coverings when it interferes with teaching and learning (e.g. a fully vaccinated teacher demonstrating how to make a “th-” sound).
- **Health and Hygiene:**
 - Everyone who enters Bixby School should
 - Assess their health prior to leaving home
 - Wash their hands upon entering the building
 - Maintain social distance of at least 3’ to the extent possible
 - Students will be required to remain home from school if they are “too sick” to attend and participate (see [here](#)); in some cases a negative test result may be required prior to return
 - Daily health screens will not be conducted, BUT faculty will continue to inquire about students’ general well-being as they enter the building
- **Modified cohorting will continue**
 - Elementary students will resume traveling to each teacher’s classroom, but will only be in classes with students from their cohort
 - Swimming will resume, but only students from the same cohort will swim together
 - Students will continue to use a bathroom designated for their cohort, irrespective of gender (note that students use the bathroom one at a time, except in Preschool)
- **Free weekly on-site testing STRONGLY ENCOURAGED for all students** While we don’t know for certain, recent guidance and recommendations indicate that IF at least 70% of our unvaccinated population participates in weekly testing, the likelihood of quarantines as well as transmission may be significantly reduced
- **Continue additional disinfecting/cleaning procedures, including:**
 - Disinfect high-touch surfaces mid-day
 - Continue to increase flow of fresh air indoors and use air purifiers throughout the school
 - Installing two additional sinks to encourage frequent hand washing
 - Minimize use of shared materials
 - Continue daily disinfecting and sanitizing practices
 - Disinfect pool bathrooms in between cohorts

Share your feedback, questions, ideas, etc.

After reviewing this document, please complete this BRIEF feedback form:

<https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/8L82SC7>.