

**GENERAL AND INTERIM EMERGENCY POLICY ON
COVID-19 RELATED ISSUES
(2021-2022 School Year)**

Barrington Public Schools (BPS) takes note of the continuing COVID-19 emergency, intensified by the recent spread of the highly contagious Delta variant of the SARS-CoV2 virus. As the 2021-2022 school year begins:

- The Governor of Rhode Island has extended various Executive Orders, including Executive Order 20-02, issued on March 2, 2020, declaring a state of emergency due to the dangers to life and health posed by COVID-19, Executive Order 20-72, issued on March 19, 2021, regarding COVID-19 Emergency Regulations, Executive Order 21-26, issued on September 2, 2020, amending and restating the quarantine and isolation order;
- The Town Council of the Town of Barrington has adopted Ordinance 2021-14, which declares that a state of emergency continues to exist in the Town, and which delegates to the Town Manager to take any and all actions deemed necessary to address the ongoing emergency;
- The Town Manager of the Town of Barrington has issued Executive Order 2021-8, which declares that effective immediately, all persons in public buildings, including schools, must wear face mask or cloth face shield over the nose and mouth, except for children under two (2) years of age and persons with physical or developmental disabilities that prevent wearing of face coverings;
- The Rhode Island Department of Health and the Rhode Island Department of Elementary and Secondary Education have issued, among other forms of guidance, a Pre-K-12 Health and Safety Guidance for the 2021-2022 School Year (updated August 13, 2021), which requires” that all staff and students use face masks in indoor settings regardless of vaccination status, and the Outbreak and Response Protocols: Pre K-12 (updated June 16, 2021), which sets forth a comprehensive and updated guidance on protocols to follow in the event of COVID-19 outbreaks in schools; and The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) recommends universal indoor masking for all students, staff, teachers, and visitors to K-12 schools, regardless of vaccination status.

Therefore, in light of the above-referenced public health declarations and measures, and in accordance with R.I. Gen. Laws §§ 16-2-9(a), including without limitation subparagraphs (a) (1), (2), (5), (8) & (24), which individually and together vest in the School Committee the

responsibility of addressing the needs, care, health and wellness of the BPS's students and employees, the Committee amends its general emergency interim Policy to include the following mandates for the 2021-2022 school year:

1. All employees must be fully vaccinated by no later than November 1, 2021, subject to certain exemptions to be implemented in accordance with federal and state law;
2. All employees must obtain and receive a "booster" vaccine when eligible; and
3. All persons (including visitors) shall wear face masks that cover the nose and mouth while inside any school building and while on school buses, except for children under the age of 2 years, persons with a disability who cannot wear a mask, or cannot safely wear a mask because of disability, as defined by the Americans with Disabilities Act, and as explained in the [*CDC Guidance for COVID-19 Prevention in K-12 Schools*](#).

The Committee further amends its general emergency interim Policy to advance the following goals for the 2021-2022 school year:

- Promote and ensure the health and safety of students and staff, and all who may come into contact with them, through reliance on science, data, and public health leadership to inform decision making;
- Provide and maintain to the extent possible a high-quality and effective level of educational services by re-opening and operating schools so that students can return to school in-person, five days a week subject to certain limited exceptions, including RI Department of Health and Executive Order mandates to remain under quarantine or in isolation;
- Provide distance learning options for students determined to be eligible under District protocols;
- Empower the Superintendent and staff to act quickly, deliberately, and decisively to make changes as pandemic variables change;
- Ensure academic support for students in general and in particular for those at highest risk educationally as well as those at social and economic risk; and
- Comply with the emergency orders of the Governor and follow the guidance of the Rhode Island Department of Elementary and Secondary Education ("RIDE") and other agencies of state and federal government, to the extent feasible.

Prior to the start of the 2021-2022 school year, the Committee will approve the Back-to-School Plan to be submitted to the RIDE for returning to school ("Back-to-School Plan"). The Back-to-School Plan outlines the BPS priorities and guiding principles for continued delivery of high-quality educational services through the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic. The

Back-to-School Plan also describes and references through links to embedded protocols found in the [Physical Health and Safety Document](#) includes various details regarding the following non-exhaustive sets of issues: learning environments, social distancing and student groupings, home learning, arrival and dismissal, purchasing and procurement, core and specials instruction, movement throughout the building, illness and screening protocols, and health, hygiene and safety.

The Superintendent shall have full authority to take whatever steps needed, subject to law and BPS collective bargaining agreements, to exercise the authority to implement all aspects of the Back-to-School Plan to serve the best interests and safety of staff, students, their families, and the community. The Superintendent will designate appropriate staff to oversee the safe and effective administration of the Back-to-School Plan during the continued period of the COVID-19 pandemic emergency.

With input from and collaboration with students, families and staff stakeholders, and approval by the Committee, the Superintendent may from time to time make such modifications to the Back-to-School Plan and its underlying protocols as needed to serve the best interests and safety of staff, students, their families, and the community.

The Committee hereby authorizes the Superintendent to suspend or revise existing protocols and practices and to recommend to the Committee the suspension of the implementation of such Committee Policies that interfere with carrying out the Back-to-School Plan.

The following policies and practices may be subject to suspension or revision:

- Attendance

Subject to operative law and regulations, suspend, modify or adapt policies related to student attendance including the link between absences and potential discipline, the link between attendance and grades, chronic absence policies, and accommodations for students requiring special placements.

- [Admissions and Residency Policy](#)
- [Student Attendance Policy](#)
- [Activities and Athletics Protocol](#)

- Time on learning

Subject to the guidance from the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education and the provisions of collective bargaining agreements, the Superintendent may suspend or amend requirements for time on learning for the duration of the COVID pandemic.

[Core and Specials Instruction PK-6](#)

- Grading and retention

In accordance with guidance from the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education, the Superintendent may propose, subject to the approval of the School Committee, modifications to the policy of the district for grading and retention of students.

[Grades, Assessments and Reporting Protocols](#)

- Local graduation requirements

In accordance with guidance from the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education and modifications to current regulation or law, the Superintendent may propose, subject to the approval of the School Committee, modifications to the policy of the district regarding graduation requirements.

- Special education

In accordance with guidance from the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education and modifications to current regulation or law, the Superintendent may propose, subject to the approval of the School Committee, modifications to the policy of the District regarding special education.

[Assessing IEPs](#)

- Distance learning

In the Back-to-School Plan, BPS shall provide a short-term distance learning option for students who are subject to an out-of-school suspension for disciplinary reasons or who are subject to quarantine or isolation. BPS will also provide longer-term distance learning options for students who are entitled to an accommodation under their Health Plan, 504 Plan and/or Individualized Education Program or who are eligible under District protocols not to return to school in person, provided that such students must commit to distance learning for the entirety of the school year through a high-quality learning platform/program to be identified and provided by BPS and ineligible to participate in any in-person activities, athletics, or extracurricular activities in the fall,

except graduation services. Participation may be reopened based on a review of COVID transmission rates each season.

- Job descriptions

The Superintendent may revise job descriptions for District staff to secure the safety and health of students and staff, establish effective communications between school and community, maintain facilities, transport students as needed, provide food services, and acquire necessary materials to operate schools safely and securely during the pandemic. The Superintendent will inform the School Committee of any such changes. Any changes to job descriptions shall expire at the end of the declared emergency situation.

[Staffing Plan](#)

- Students at risk

During the COVID pandemic, the Superintendent or principal of a school may revise or suspend provisions of policy to facilitate the education of students at risk or with special physical needs or their family caregivers, including, but not limited to caring for or educating students with disabilities, illness, pregnancy, child rearing responsibilities, or special education needs consistent with law and regulation.

[Mental Health and Counseling Protocols](#)
[Interventions and Missed Instruction](#)

- Privacy of students

During the pandemic, the rights to privacy held by students and their families shall not be infringed by the District. Such rights extend to the confidentiality of student academic records, health data, economic status, and other such information as may be considered confidential by law.

Students shall not be recorded in classrooms by audio, visual, or remote means without the permission of parents or, if of age, by individual students. During periods of remote learning, the privacy of students participating in on-line classes shall not be violated by recording them without appropriate notice which shall be provided through the school handbooks and referenced in the following policies.

[Video and Audio Recording Policy](#)
[Technology Responsible Use Policy](#)

- Public Safety Officers, including the school resource officer (MOA with the local police)

Subject to current law or regulation, the Superintendent shall report to the School Committee of any change in status of the school resource officer. (If the District eliminates visitors to school during the school day, the SRO may be impacted.)

- Eligibility for participation in extracurricular activities, including sports

Subject to law, regulation and standards established by the appropriate and legitimate regulatory body, the Superintendent may propose changes to district protocols for participation in extracurricular activities including sports subject to the rules established by the Rhode Island Interscholastic Athletic Association. Subject to law, regulation or emergency declaration, the Superintendent may propose protocols or modifications or suspensions of District policies regarding attendance by students or the public in school events including, but not limited to assemblies, sports events, large gatherings, or other programs. Students who are fully enrolled in online learning are ineligible to participate in in-person activities and athletics for the fall season. Eligibility will be reviewed each season in accordance with COVID transmission rates.

[Student Attendance Policy](#)

[Activities and Athletics Protocol](#)

- Visitors in schools and buildings

Subject to current emergency declarations, the Superintendent may propose suspension or modification to district policies regarding visitors to school buildings during the school day and after school hours. All visitors attending school activities, volunteering, or attending meetings longer than 15 minutes will be required to provide proof of vaccination. All visitors will be required to wear face coverings.

[Arrival and Dismissal PK-6](#)

[Arrival and Dismissal 7-12](#)

- Illness and contact tracing

Subject to the provisions of the Back-to-School Plan, the Superintendent may establish protocols for tracking student contacts as a means of locating others from whom students may contract or expose other persons to COVID-19. Such protocols will be consistent

with law and regulation and be consistent with standards to protect the privacy of students, their families, and other persons.

[Illness and Screening Protocols](#)

[Health and Safety Protocols](#)

[Response to Positive Cases within a School](#)

FMLA Policy*

Reasonable Accommodation Policy*

Educator Absence Policy*

Leave of Absence Protocol*

*Within Illness and Screening Protocols

- Transportation and busing

Subject to current law and regulation, the Superintendent may suspend or modify policies related to the transportation of students by the school district. Legal requirements relating to IEP's that contain transportation for students shall not be altered without the appropriate family consent. These modifications shall be consistent with the Back-to-School Plan.

[Transportation Policy](#)

[Arrival and Dismissal PK-6](#)

[Arrival and Dismissal 7-12](#)

- Operations and plant maintenance

Subject to the provisions of law, regulation and collective bargaining agreements, the Superintendent may suspend or amend current policy to ensure the efficient operation of business functions and maintenance of school buildings and other such offices as the District maintains.

[Health and Safety Protocols](#)

[Summary of BPS protocols](#) - Back to School Plan Narrative Summary

This Policy shall apply for the 2021-2022 school year only, unless amended and/or rescinded prior to the close of the school year as conditions of the pandemic change.

First Read 8/19/2020

Approved 9/3/2020

Amended 8/24/2021