

GENERAL AND INTERIM EMERGENCY POLICY ON COVID-19 RELATED ISSUES

The School Committee takes note of the COVID-19 emergency and the resulting disruption it has caused to the traditional school day and year. The Committee also recognizes the growing concerns of staff, students, families and the community, and the proliferation of issues that will likely affect Barrington Public Schools (BPS) for the 2020-2021 school year and thereafter, until the public health emergency has ended as declared by the Governor of Rhode Island.

Therefore, the Committee establishes this general emergency interim Policy to further the following goals:

- 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 through various venues and platforms, including distance learning;
- 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 2020-2021 school year, the Committee will approve the final plan submitted to the RIDE for returning to school, entitled “Physical Health and Safety in 3 Phases of Teaching and Learning: Full, Partial, & Limited with Hybrid in Each Model” (“Re-entry Plan”). The Re-entry Plan outlines the BPS priorities and guiding principles for continued delivery of high-quality educational services through the COVID-19 pandemic. The Re-entry Plan also describes and references through links to embedded protocols various details regarding the following non-exhaustive sets of issues: learning environments, social distancing and student group, 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 Re-entry 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 Re-entry Plan during the period of the COVID-19 pandemic emergency.

With input from and collaboration with student/family and staff stakeholders, and approval by the Committee, the Superintendent may from time to time make such modifications to the Re-entry 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 Re-entry 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 Policy](#)

Student Attendance

- 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.

The Superintendent and school committee should be mindful that attainment of a high school diploma may render certain students ineligible for further services.

[Special Education Upon Re-Entry](#)
[Assessing IEPs](#)

- Discipline and Suspension/Expulsion with homeschooling rights

The Re-entry plan recommended by the Superintendent and subject to the approval of the school committee shall contain protocols for serving students who are disciplined or suspended during the pandemic emergency.

Further, the Superintendent shall provide in these Re-entry plans provisions for students who were disciplined or suspended **or** who may elect to remain at home under the provisions of the policies related to homeschooling, or who may elect remote learning in the interests of safety or health concerns.

[Student Concerns Protocol](#)

- 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 abridged by the public schools. 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.

Rhode Island law prohibits the recording of individuals without their permission. Similarly, students may 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](#)

- Pivoting back to remote learning, or back to in-school instruction

The Superintendent shall incorporate into the Re-entry plan protocols for modifying these plans including addressing the needs of students who may require reversion from in-school to remote learning modalities because of the pandemic emergency.

- Home schooling File IHBG (temporary), home-bound instruction File IHBF (e.g., students with physical disabilities) and remote instruction for students in quarantine

The Re-entry plan shall provide for students who are temporarily homebound due to illness, quarantine, or disability

[Home Learning Protocol](#)

- 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.

- Attendance vs. participation in events (Student/Athletic Handbooks)

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.

[Activities and Athletics Protocol](#)

[Student Attendance Policy](#)

- 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.

[Arrival and Dismissal PK-6](#)

[Arrival and Dismissal 7-12](#)

- Illness and contact tracing

Subject to the provisions of the Re-entry 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 the 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

Families First Coronavirus Relief Act

- 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 district Re-entry 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](#)

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Approved 9/3/2020