



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

I. PURPOSE

For the 2020-2021 school year, the Barrington School Committee adopted a General and Interim Emergency Policy on COVID-19 Related Issues (“COVID-19 Policy”). On September 2, 2021, the School Committee amended the COVID-19 Policy for the 2021-2022 school year (“Amended COVID-19 Policy”). The School Committee now further amends the Amended COVID-19 Policy to reflect the current conditions of the COVID-19 pandemic. These further amendments are retroactive to March 7, 2022, when the BPS implemented certain changes to align with statewide changes in directives by the Governor and guidance by the Rhode Island Department of Health, as described below, and shall extend through the conclusion of the 2021-2022 school year.

II. DEFINITIONS

The changes of significance regarding the COVID-19 pandemic are as follows:

- On February 12, 2022, the Rhode Island Department of Health issued an updated guidance for COVID-19 Prevention Strategies in PreK through 12 Schools. Effective March 8, 2022, the Barrington Public Schools COVID-19 Task Force updated the BPS COVID-19 protocols based on this updated guidance from the Rhode Island Department of Health and information from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (“COVID-19 Protocol Updates”).
 - On or about March 4, 2022, the Governor of Rhode Island did not extend Executive Order 21-87, requiring the wearing of face masks in schools. Executive Order 21-87 therefore expired on March 4, 2022, and in so doing, left to individual school districts the authority to determine whether and under what conditions to require the wearing of face masks in schools and school buildings.
 - On April 12, 2022, the Governor of Rhode Island extended 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, through May 11, 2022.

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



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addressing the needs, care, health and wellness of the BPS's students, staff and community members, the School Committee further amends its general emergency interim Policy as adopted on September 2, 2022, to modify the following mandates for the 2021-2022 school year:

1. All BPS employees and school volunteers 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. A "school volunteer" is one who works directly with students and staff in school buildings.
2. All employees and school volunteers should obtain and receive the first "booster" vaccine when eligible. If an employee or school volunteer is eligible for but does not receive that booster vaccine, for whatever reason, the employee shall submit to weekly COVID-19 testing on a schedule of either Monday and Wednesday or Tuesday and Thursday at their school building, with the process and expense of such testing to be covered by the BPS.
3. The testing schedule for the school volunteer shall vary depending upon the school volunteer's service times and frequency, and will be determined by the principal. The volunteer will test at least prior to their first day and as need, as determined by the principal based on their frequency of service.

The School Committee reaffirms the following goals for the remainder of 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 BPS protocols;
- Empower the Superintendent and staff to act quickly, deliberately, and decisively to make changes as pandemic variables change;



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- 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 School Committee approved 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. These protocols were modified effective March 8, 2022, and are known as the COVID-19 March 1, 2022 Updates (“COVID 19 Protocol Updates”). The link can be found here https://core.docs.s3.amazonaws.com/documents/asset/uploaded_file/1991826/COVID_March_1.2022.pptx.pdf

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 with notification to the School 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.



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The School Committee hereby authorizes the Superintendent to suspend or revise existing protocols and practices and to recommend to the School Committee the suspension of the implementation of such School Committee Policies that interfere with carrying out the Back-to-School Plan. Any recommended revision to policy will be forward to the School Committee for review and approval.

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

- Attendance

Subject to operative law and regulations, the Superintendent may propose that the School Committee suspend or amend 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 RIDE 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 RIDE, 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



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In accordance with guidance from the RIDE and modifications to current regulation or law, the Superintendent may propose, subject to the approval of the School Committee, modifications to the BPS policy regarding graduation requirements.

- Special education

In accordance with guidance from the RIDE and modifications to current regulation or law, the Superintendent may propose, subject to the approval of the School Committee, modifications to the BPS policy 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 BPS 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 BPS 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

The Superintendent or Principal of a school may revise or suspend protocols 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 BPS. 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 BPS 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 BPS protocols 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](#)

- Non-Volunteer visitors, vendors, and families in schools and buildings

The Subject to input and recommendation of the Re-Entry Task Force, the Superintendent may suspend or modify to BPS protocols regarding all non-volunteer visitors to school buildings during the school day and after school hours. Under the COVID-19 Protocol Updates, effective March 8, 2022, non-volunteer visitors, vendors, and families who are in school buildings to carry out business (vendors), or who are attending school activities or meetings shall be required to wear masks if spacing of three to six feet is not possible, regardless of their vaccination status.

- Illness and contract 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](#)

[Link to March 1 Update](#)

[Link to Changes in Contact Tracing](#)

FMLA Policy*

Reasonable Accommodation Policy*

Educator Absence Policy*

Leave of Absence Protocol*

*Can be found within Illness and Screening Protocols



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- Transportation and busing

Subject to current law and regulation, the Superintendent may propose that the School Committee suspend or modify policies related to the transportation of students. 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 protocols to ensure the efficient operation of business functions and maintenance of school buildings and other such offices as the BPS maintains.

[Health and Safety Protocols](#)

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

This further Amended Policy shall apply through the conclusion of the 2021-2022 school year, to include ESY and Summer School ending in early August only, unless amended and/or rescinded prior to the close of the school year as conditions of the pandemic change.

Barrington Public Schools School Committee

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