



BPS COVID Health and Safety Update
School Committee
January 18, 2022



Belmont Public Schools Goal:

The goal of the Belmont Public Schools is to keep school open for students and in-person learning.

- We have been proactive in our efforts to maintain in-person learning and will continue to work toward the goal of keeping children safely in school. I want to thank our staff and community for supporting the mitigation measures that have resulted in our ability to keep students in school.

Guidance from CDC and DESE

- The CDC and DESE have set forward guidance for K-12 schools.
- They have recommended that students and staff with a positive COVID diagnosis can return to school after five (5) days of isolation who have been fever-free for 24 hours and experienced improvement in other symptoms. They must mask when around others for the 5 days following their isolation period. [[DESE Guidance Updated Dec. 30, 2021](#)]
- There is NO requirement to provide a test to return on day 6.

Guidance Update – January 18, 2022

Governor Baker, DPH & DESE

- To provide “weekly take home antigen tests” for all staff and students
- Will allow school districts to “pause” Test & Stay and Contact Tracing
- Guidance came out today and will be reviewed by the Belmont Health Team
- Members of the Health Team will attend a DESE webinar tomorrow, January 19, 2022

January 11, 2022

School Committee Vote

- All unvaccinated and partially vaccinated students and staff may return to school on day 11 after a 10-day isolation period.
 - *Please note that Belmont Public Schools is providing tutoring to students in grades K-8 who are quarantined and/or isolated from schools due to COVID. Please see the FAQ for more details.*
- Definition of “vaccinated”
 - *Fully vaccinated is defined as two weeks following the completion of the Pfizer or Moderna series or two weeks following a single dose of Johnson & Johnson’s Janssen vaccine. Being “fully vaccinated” does not require a booster shot, although we do recommend that eligible people receive a booster.*

January 11, 2022

School Committee Motions

- In addition, the School Committee approved the following motions:
 - “The district will explore purchasing in conjunction with the Town, the cost and feasibility to supply antigen tests as a screening tool for students who have tested positive after their 5-day isolation period has expired during the surge period [end of February].”
 - “That the policy subcommittee develop a vaccine mandate policy to be completed and voted on by the School Committee no later than June.”

FAQ

- **What is the best way to screen children for COVID in order to attend school safely?**
Parents and guardians must use the daily symptom checker, get vaccinated, wear tight fitting masks and adhere to all school, state and health organizations directives at home and in school.
- **Can my child return to school following a positive COVID diagnosis after five days of isolation?**
Yes, students may return to school on day 6 as long as they are vaccinated, fever free, and experiencing improvement in other symptoms.
- **My child is not vaccinated. When can they return to school after a positive COVID diagnosis?**
They may return on day 11 after a 10-day isolation period.
- **What is the DESE definition of fully vaccinated?** *Fully vaccinated is defined as two weeks following the completion of the Pfizer or Moderna series or two weeks following a single dose of Johnson & Johnson's Janssen vaccine. Being "fully vaccinated" does not require a booster shot, although we do recommend that eligible people receive a booster.*
- **What support is available to my student while they are at home for isolation or quarantine?**
The district has contracted with an agency to provide tutoring services to students in grades K-8. Tutoring will be set up as quickly as possible after it is determined that a student must stay home. Tutoring can continue for a week after the student returns to school if desired by the family.
- **Will pool testing continue in our schools?**
Yes - please take part by submitting your consent form [here](#).

FAQ (cont.)

- **Should I still take part in pool testing if I have tested positive for COVID?**

No. After someone tests positive for COVID they should not take part in pool testing for 90 days, and they will need to submit a new consent when the 90-day period has ended.

- **Are we still contact tracing in our schools?**

The local Offices of Public Health are the entities in charge of contact tracing, and they are no longer maintaining this effort. School nurses became involved at the outset of the pandemic in an effort to help overwhelmed local public health officials stop the spread of the virus. It is now a public health expectation that those who test positive share this news with anyone with whom they have been in contact. Our nurses are making every effort to support contact tracing as much as possible at the elementary level.

- **What can families do to support contract tracing?**

Families should notify people your student has been in close contact with outside of school.

- **Are pool testing results coming back in a timely manner?**

Last week we saw delays in the return of pool testing results due to increased demands on the labs and staffing issues. Positive results are communicated to families as soon as we receive them. Please see the [weekly district communication](#) for the latest cases.

Cases in Belmont - update from BoH

Given the holiday impacted work week, the Health Department continues to identify cases.

The following case counts are over the last 6 days:

# cases	35	44	41	147
Day	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Sat/Sun/Mon
Date	1/12	1/13	1/14	1/15 – 1/18

- The school department will report out on its weekly Wednesday communication – January 19
- We are monitoring cases closely...

Student and Staff Attendance Data

Staff and students attendance rates are recorded and posted daily on the School Openings Tab on website. Due to self-reporting of absences by staff, specific COVID data is difficult to ascertain.

ATTENDANCE RATES - JANUARY 2022												
	BHS		CMS		Burbank		Butler		Wellington		Winn Brook	
DATE	Staff	Students	Staff	Students	Staff	Students	Staff	Students	Staff	Students	Staff	Students
January 3, 2022	87%	89%	91%	87%	93%	83%	85%	87%	88%	81%	87%	79%
January 4, 2022	88%	93%	88%	89%	95%	88%	80%	90%	90%	83%	89%	82%
January 5, 2022	87%	92%	90%	89%	90%	88%	90%	88%	82%	87%	89%	83%
January 6, 2022	86%	93%	86%	89%	93%	86%	86%	85%	87%	86%	84%	84%
January 7, 2022	snow day	snow day	snow day	snow day	snow day	snow day	snow day	snow day	snow day	snow day	snow day	snow day
January 10, 2022	92%	93%	89%	90%	92%	91%	88%	91%	84%	89%	86%	94%
January 11, 2022	93%	94%	88%	92%	93%	92%	85%	91%	89%	90%	89%	93%
January 12, 2022	92%	96%	92%	93%	95%	94%	81%	90%	88%	92%	86%	94%
January 13, 2022	90%	94%	87%	92%	95%	92%	85%	88%	89%	94%	90%	95%
January 14, 2022	90%	94%	87%	92%	97%	93%	88%	88%	92%	90%	94%	90%
January 18, 2022	92%	96%	91%	95%	93%	92%	95%	93%	94%	91%	94%	93%

Staffing levels may be an issue moving forward, which could impact the delivery of our traditional school day schedule.

Belmont Public Schools Vaccination Rates

Grade	As of 9/13/2021	As of 10/29/2021	As of 12/21/2021	As of 1/4/2022
K	N/A	N/A	62.4% at least 1 dose	62.4% at least 1 dose
1	N/A	N/A	60.6% at least 1 dose	63 % fully vaccinated
2	N/A	N/A	63.6% at least 1 dose	66 % fully vaccinated
3	N/A	N/A	63.6% at least 1 dose	65 % fully vaccinated
4	N/A	N/A	63.3% at least 1 dose	72 %fully vaccinated
5	N/A	N/A	70% at least 1 dose	69 % fully vaccinated
6	N/A	N/A	67.1% at least 1 dose	71 % fully vaccinated
7	72.6%	80.3%	82% fully vaccinated	82% fully vaccinated
8	77.5%	84.5%	86.7% fully vaccinated	86.7% fully vaccinated
9	79.1%	89.9%	91.8% fully vaccinated	93.9% fully vaccinated
10	83.1%	87.8%	88.7% fully vaccinated	88.7% fully vaccinated
11	80.8%	84.3%	85.8% fully vaccinated	85.8% fully vaccinated
12	80.8%	84.3%	85.5% fully vaccinated	85.5% fully vaccinated

Belmont Consent Rates

COVID Routine Safety Checks Update							
		Butler	Winn Brook	Wellington	Burbank	CMS	BHS
Veritas	% consent	86.20%	86.20%	72.90%	85%	71%	51.30%
	# ind tested	234	264	284	187	421	90
Week of 11/28/21	# positive pools	0	0	0	0	1	1
	# ind tested	197	288	335	193	486	170
Week of 12/6/21	# positive pools	0	1	0	0	0	0
	# ind tested	210	278	400	214	379	186
Week of 12/12/21	# positive pools	0	0	0	0	1	0
	# ind tested	206	282	331	197	418	*369
Week of 1/2/2022	# positive ind.	5	8	12	4	18	5
	# ind tested	205	300	328	202	527	*399
Week of 1/9/2022	# positive ind.	10	5	7	5	8	3
	*Veritas has BHS listed as the school for some individuals versus the actual school- Veritas is aware						
These number reflect the pooled test numbers only							

Vaccination & Testing Opportunities

The Belmont Public Schools, in partnership with the Belmont Health Department, will continue to offer testing and vaccination opportunities for our students, staff and community in addition to weekly pool testing in our schools. The school department will continue to offer pool testing and Test and Stay in every school.

January and February events planned by the School Department and Health Department:

- January 2, 2022 -Staff testing - **Completed**
- January 4, - Vaccination event at BHS - **Completed**
- January 8, 2022 - Community Testing (329 community members tested - **Completed**
- January 12, 2022 - Community Vaccination event at BHS (140 students and 76 community members boosted and vaccinated) - **Completed**
- January 17, 2022 - Community Testing event - **Completed**
- January 18, 2022 - Community Vaccination event
- January 24, 2022 Community Vaccination event
- January 30, 2022 Community Testing event
- January 31, 2022 Community Vaccination event
- February 27, 2022 Community Testing event prior to return from February break

School Based Mitigation Strategies in Place

- Mask wearing mandated in school – Wear a tightly fitted mask
- High level of air exchange
- Distancing where possible
- Deep cleaning on a regular basis
- All staff vaccinated
- High rate of K-12 students vaccinated

Please remember!

There are several action steps that families can take *at home and in school* to support our efforts to keep all BPS students and families safe:

- Sign up (consent) and participate in pool testing
- Get vaccinated and get boosted – two upcoming vaccine clinics for BHS and CMS students
- Wear a properly fitting mask to school every day
- Wash/sanitize hands regularly
- Physically distance wherever possible
- If your child feels sick, keep them home
- Adhere to the symptom checker and absence follow up
- Attend upcoming community testing and vaccination events

You can order free at-home tests from the federal government at this website: <https://www.covidtests.gov/>
This link takes you directly to the order form: <https://special.usps.com/testkits>