



Benson Public Schools
RETURN TO SCHOOL PLAN

2021-2022

8/13/2021

OVERVIEW

As we all know, COVID-19 changed virtually everything in day-to-day life last school year. In May, 2021 the American Recovery Plan (ARP) was passed by Congress; also known as ESSER III. As part of accepting ESSER III federal funds, LEA's are required to have a plan for the safe return to in-person instruction. The focus of the plan is to do everything possible to ensure health for students and staff and to continue to provide high quality learning opportunities for students. The plan reflects some changes and opportunities learned during the 2020-2021 school year; as Benson Schools continues on the path of personalized learning through our designation as an Innovation Zone District.

Benson Schools has worked in coordination with local, state and nation health organizations to follow requirements and recommendations to provide healthy learning environments for students and staff. At the same time, we have worked with the MN Department of Education (MDE), other educational organizations, our school board, staff, and administrators during the course of the 2020-2021 school year. Covid-19 related plans are fluid and will continue to evolve. Therefore, what is in the 2021-2022 plan will change as guidance and mandates from MDE, MDH, CDC, Countryside Public Health, and other governmental agencies change.

In the summer of 2020 nearly 90% of parents that replied to the parent survey indicated that they preferred to have their child return to school in an in-person learning model. Based upon that information, plans are built to continue with in-person learning for the 2021-2022 school year.

Given that students were in-person learning for all but 10 days of school during the 20-21 school year and full time over the final six months of school, the transition back to school for the 2021-2022 school year will be smooth.

To further maintain a healthy learning environment, there will continue to be limits on who can enter the school buildings during school hours. While we love to have parents and volunteers in the buildings, it is important to limit the risk to students and staff. This is difficult, but hopefully the precautions will keep our students and staff safe. The health and safety of our students and staff remains the top priority. Thank you to everyone for your understanding.

Benson Schools will continue to collaborate with local, state and national health agencies and will monitor health information to ensure the health and safety of our students, staff, and community members.

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Communications with Students, Families, and Staff

Benson Public Schools will utilize School Messenger, Email, Phone Calls, Social Media, and the Benson Public School website to keep families informed.

COVID PROGRAM COORDINATOR

COVID-19 Program Coordinator - Julie Loen will serve as point of contact for each school building in collaboration with building or district school nurses. This person will communicate concerns, challenges, and lessons learned related to COVID-19 preventive activities as needed with staff, students/families, school and district leadership, and local health officials.

HEALTH PROCEDURES

- An at home screening/wellness check will continue. If a staff member or student is not feeling well, don't come to school/work. An at home screening checklist will be emailed.
- Vaccinations will be made available for any eligible staff or students that have not been vaccinated.
- Spaces have been identified for COVID symptom students/staff.
- COVID -19 Reporting process and protocols (See below).
- Additional mental health staff will be available for the 2021-2022 school year for student and staff support.
- Clear protective barriers will be available as needed in classrooms and office spaces.
- To begin the school year, only essential personnel will be allowed in schools. Secretaries will have contactless check-in. Northside Elementary School office has a transaction window for dropping off/picking up materials.
- Students are encouraged to exit the school building immediately at the end of the school day, unless they are involved in an after-school activity.
- Vendors coming to the school building will be required to complete a health screening form before being allowed into the building. Forms will be located in each office and receiving room.



BENSON PUBLIC SCHOOLS DAILY HEALTH SCREENING

Please follow the Home Screening Tool Closely. Staff and students should stay home if they don't feel well, if they are waiting for test results, waiting to get tested, someone in the household has tested positive, or may have been exposed (if not vaccinated).

MDH Home Screening

<https://www.health.state.mn.us/diseases/coronavirus/schools/homescreen.pdf>

Call the School Nurses, Julie Loen or Amanda Carruth with any questions or concerns. Call your child's school office to report attendance – 320-843-2710.

CLEANING/SANITIZING

- Classrooms will be sanitized each day.
- There will be daily cleaning schedule of surfaces.
- The district has three portable sanitizing machines. Electrostatic spray machine for BHS, NS, and bus garage. Buses, vans, lockers, classrooms, and high touch areas will be cleaned regularly.
- There will be hand sanitizer stations in the hallways.
- Every classroom and space will have hand sanitizer pump bottles and cleaners/wipes.
- HVAC systems are set to maximize indoor air quality.

FACE COVERINGS

- **Face coverings are recommended, especially for individuals not fully vaccinated, but are not required when on school grounds or in school buildings.**
- Face coverings will be a personal choice. Many families/students have specific reasons for choosing to wear or not wear a face covering. Bullying or other negative actions towards others regarding face coverings will not be tolerated. It is important to have respect for the decisions of others.
- Benson Schools encourages all those who are eligible to get vaccinated. Vaccination information can be obtained through the school nurse.
- Students and staff riding a school bus must wear a face covering. This is a requirement from the Federal government for all public transportation. Face covering is a requirement for riding on a school bus, mini bus, or van for activities.
- Face covering policy is subject to change should requirements change.

NUTRITION/FOOD SERVICE

- Start 6-12 breakfast at 7:30 a.m. with a grab n' go breakfast to reduce congregating.
- There will be regular serving lines and Grab N' Go meals. Staff will be serving students in the main lines.
- Staggered release times from class for grades 6-12.
- Food Service is encouraging contactless pay (no cash) by having students use their lunch accounts with parents filling out the Student Charging Form.

TRANSPORTATION

- An up-to-date seating chart will be maintained on route buses.
- Students and staff riding a school bus must wear a face covering. This is a requirement from the Federal government for all public transportation. Face covering is a requirement for riding on a school bus, mini bus, or van for activities as well.
- School buses and vehicles will be cleaned on a regular basis.
- High touch areas will be wiped down regularly.
- There will be staggered arrival times at NS and BHS – 7:35 and 7:45 at BHS, 7:45 and 7:55 at NS.
- School buses will drop off their own students at NS and pick up their own students at NS after school. Meaning, all school buses will go to NS before and after school.
- NS students should not arrive/be dropped off before 7:45 am.
- BHS students should not arrive/be dropped off before 7:35 am.

SPECIAL EDUCATION

Benson Public Schools remains responsible for the Free and Appropriate Public Education (FAPE) for its students eligible for Special Education services who have an Individual Education Plan (IEP) or students with disabilities who qualify for a 504 plan. An Individual Plan that meets in-person learning will be implemented. Students will have a regular schedule where they will be in general education class as well as time in the specialist area to meet IEP goals & objectives.

Special education services

Special education provides individualized instruction and services aligned with IDEA and MDE guidance to students with disabilities who qualify for learning support in specialized environments.

Equitable services

The Benson Public Schools will ensure equitable educational opportunities for all students while prioritizing their health and well-being.

Free and appropriate public education (FAPE)

Benson Public Schools is responsible for providing a free appropriate public education (FAPE) to each eligible student with a disability, under either an Individualized Education Program (IEP) or Section 504 plan.

Parental Participation

Strong partnership with parents/guardians is essential for engaging in the best possible planning and implementation efforts and for ensuring equitable opportunities. This will necessitate ongoing communication between the case manager, the general education teachers, the parent guardian, support and related service providers to ensure that the student with disabilities can be appropriately involved and make progress towards the general education standards and IEP goals.

IEP Meetings

IEP meetings will be held in both an in-person and virtual manner. These meetings will take place via conference call or utilizing a virtual meeting space. Please contact your student's case manager with questions or concerns.

Other special education considerations

Ensuring equitable learning opportunities to enable students with disabilities to make progress in the mastery of Minnesota academic standards and social emotional learning continues to be the aim of IEP and 504 teams. The district plan focuses on maximizing the effectiveness of specialized instruction and related services and minimizing COVID-19 infection risk through the application of CDC and MDH recommended safety measures.

COVID-19 REPORTING PROTOCOL

Benson Schools COVID-19 Reporting Process & Protocols

Procedure for when a student, athlete or staff member has a positive COVID-19 test.

Reporting process for someone testing positive for COVID-19

1. Notify COVID Coordinator, Julie Loen of a positive COVID-19 case along with name and contact information.
2. Julie Loen, COVID Coordinator will gather information.
3. Julie will notify MDH the name(s) of student and staff positive case(s).
4. Any student, athlete or staff member who tests positive for COVID will be isolated for 10 days, and fever free, without meds, for 24 hours.

COVID-19 HEALTH OFFICE PROCEDURES

- Any student or staff with potential symptoms of COVID-19 based on recommendations from the Minnesota Department of Health's (MDH) Decision Tree one more common symptom or at least two less common symptoms will be sent home.
 - Common symptoms: fever of 100.4 degrees or higher, new cough or worsening cough, difficulty breathing, new loss of taste and/or smell.
 - Less common symptoms: sore throat, nausea, vomiting, diarrhea, muscle pain, extreme fatigue, new severe headache, new nasal congestion – stuffy or runny nose.
 - Student or staff with symptoms are required to wear a mask when in the nurse's office, unless there is a medical exemption for wearing a mask.
 - Parent/guardian will be called to pick up as soon as possible.
 - The individual with symptoms will need COVID testing, alternative diagnosis from Health Care Provider, or to remain home for 10 days.
 - Household members may remain in school.
- Individuals testing positive for COVID-19 will remain home for 10 days from onset of symptoms or COVID test day if asymptomatic.
 - Unvaccinated household members will need to remain home for 14 days if separated in house.
 - **Fully vaccinated household members do not need to quarantine**, though will need to go home if there are any symptoms.
 - MDH and Local Public Health will be notified as needed.
 - Contact tracing will be completed if positive case was in school with symptoms, or two days prior.
- Close contacts of positive COVID-19 while at school.
 - Parent/Guardian will be notified by phone, email, or letter about exposure while at school.

- Close contacts will be recommended to complete a 14-day quarantine with shortened quarantine options.
- **If fully vaccinated, then no quarantine required.**
- Close contacts with symptoms are recommended to get a COVID test 3-5 days after exposure regardless of vaccination status.
- Close contacts who are not fully vaccinated that remain in school are strongly encouraged to wear a mask for 14 days.
- **Students wearing a mask who come into contact with a positive case will not be considered a close contact and will not need to quarantine.**

NORTHSIDE ELEMENTARY PLAN

In-Person

- All students and staff will report for the regular day.
- Students will follow a regular schedule, including specials, recess, lunch, etc.
- Northside students should not arrive/be dropped off before 7:45 am.
- NS students can have breakfast and can go out on the playground before school begins.
- After the first day of school, Parents are not to be in the school hallways unless they are volunteering or meeting with a teacher.
- Kindergarten teachers will be holding scheduled preschool conferences to orientate parents and students to school.
- Parents are not allowed to wait by the school doors. Teachers will walk students out to buses and parent pick up after school.
- School buses and City Bus, will be parked on the East side of NS.
- Physical distancing to the extent possible when indoors.
- Teachers will maintain up-to-date seating charts in classrooms.
- Regular hand washing and respiratory etiquette.

BENSON HIGH SCHOOL PLAN

In-Person

- All students and staff will report for the regular day.
- Students will follow a regular schedule, including specials, lunch, etc.
- BHS students should not arrive/be dropped off before 7:35 am.

- No parents, visitors, or volunteers will be allowed in the school building during the school day without prior approval by the building principal.
- Physical distancing to the extent possible when indoors.
- Teachers will maintain up-to-date seating charts in classrooms.
- Regular hand washing and respiratory etiquette.

EARLY LEARNING/PRESCHOOL

- Benson Preschool will hold regular Early Learning/Preschool programming. Classrooms will be cleaned daily.

COMMUNITY EDUCATION

- Activities will be offered as normal.
- District facilities will be available for reservation through the Community Education website.

ACTIVITIES/EVENTS

- Benson Schools is planning for normal fall activities schedules.
- Benson Public Schools will operate under guidance from the Minnesota State High School League (MSHSL) in relation to extra and co-curricular activities.
- Students-athletes that test positive for COVID-19 will be quarantined for 14 days. An identified close contact will be notified.
- Due to Federal requirement of face coverings when on public transportation, student-athletes and staff are required to wear a face covering when riding bus, mini bus, or van to an activity.
- Fans are welcome at extra-curricular activities.
- Masks are recommended for fans at activities.
- Fans should stay home if they are sick.