



BETHEL GRADE SCHOOL DISTRICT #82  
1201 BETHEL ROAD  
MT. VERNON, ILLINOIS 62864  
618-244-8095  
FAX 618-244-8096

*Superintendent  
Charley Cass*

*Board of Education  
Rodney McCoy, President  
Nathan Pigg, Vice President  
Eric Gochel, Secretary  
Megan Flexter  
Brandon McCoy  
Travis Settle  
Kelly Tackitt*

### **Return to School Safety Procedures**

Original Adoption 2021-22

Revised September 2023

With Illinois moving into Phase 5, Bethel Grade School District #82 remains committed to the health and safety of our students and staff. Our team has examined the newest guidance from The Centers for Disease Control and the Illinois Department of Public Health and consulted with the Jefferson County Health Department to create an updated back-to-school plan for students returning for the 2021-22 school year. This plan is fluid and subject to change with the release of new guidelines or changes in local conditions related to the COVID-19 virus.

Please see the following mitigation strategies that Bethel Grade School has adopted for the purpose of preventing COVID-19 spread.

#### **Social Distancing**

Classrooms will be distanced to the fullest extent possible. Desks will be faced in one direction and spaced more than the recommended three feet apart. Students will be monitored closely for distancing during other unstructured settings. Lunchtime seating arrangements will also be properly distanced.

Visitors will be limited in the building to help prevent exposure.

#### **Disinfecting Surfaces**

Appropriate cleaning products that meet the guidelines will be used throughout the day in all high-contact areas in the school/classrooms and on the bus. Students and staff will practice proper handwashing and hand sanitizer is available throughout the school building.

#### **Contract Tracing and Quarantine Procedures**

Students should stay home if they are feeling sick and families should not hesitate getting their children tested if they are experiencing COVID symptoms. We ask that parents and families

communicate these absences with us and any testing results. We will also require a release to return to school after quarantine from the health department.

Quarantine will be utilized for students, teachers, and staff who might have been exposed to COVID-19 and will align with current IDPH/CDC guidelines. Close contacts, identified through contact tracing, should be quarantined unless they are fully vaccinated, or have tested positive in the last 3 months, and do not have any symptoms. Students will need to provide proof of their vaccination to help us expedite the contact tracing and quarantine process.

Non-vaccinated students and staff will be subject to the standard local quarantine guidelines if they are identified as a close contact. This could be from seven to ten days depending upon local conditions. Students, teachers, and staff who are in quarantine should stay home and follow the direction of our local public health department about when it is safe for them to be around others.

Students will be assigned seating in most areas of the school to help with contact tracing if someone has been identified as a positive case or as a close contact. Students will also travel in cohorts to help minimize their contact with students outside of their class.

### Masks

Mask-wearing is optional, but strongly recommended if you meet any of these criteria:

- If you are not vaccinated,
- You have a health condition that places you at higher risk for contracting COVID-19<sup>1</sup>,  
or
- You have an immediate family member with a high-risk health condition.

Masks do not have to be worn outdoors unless the setting is crowded. Masks do have to be worn on the bus at all times. Students and staff that are properly masked will not be considered a close contact for contact tracing.

Bethel Grade School will be diligent in maintaining an environment where students who choose to wear masks are supported in doing so.

Our families are encouraged to follow local conditions related to COVID-19. You can find the hospitalization metrics for Jefferson County at

[https://covid.cdc.gov/covid-data-tracker/#maps\\_new-admissions-rate-county](https://covid.cdc.gov/covid-data-tracker/#maps_new-admissions-rate-county) Changes in positive cases or other data may make it necessary to change one or more of our practices to help keep our students and staff safe from the virus or the spread of the virus.

---

<sup>1</sup> <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/need-extra-precautions/people-with-medical-conditions.html>

Please see the following chart that indicates what mitigation strategies are used at what time.

### **Updated COVID-19 Mitigation Plan**

Effective January 2022

	<b>Tier One</b> 0-3% Positive Cases (0-6 Cases)	<b>Tier Two</b> 3-6% Positive Cases (7 to 11 Cases)	<b>Tier Three</b> 7%+ Positive Cases (13 or More Cases)
Masking	Optional	Strongly recommended.	Required of all students and staff.
Practice Contact Tracing	No	Yes	Yes
Exclusion of Close Contacts or Test to Stay.	No	Yes	Yes
Social Distancing	To the Greatest Extent Possible.	To the Greatest Extent Possible.	To the Greatest Extent Possible.
Emphasis on handwashing and sanitizing.	Yes	Yes	Yes
Symptom screening at home. (Stay home if you are ill)	Yes	Yes	Yes
Nurse recommendation for testing if symptoms are present.	Yes	Yes	Yes

We will stay in a tier for a minimum of five days. If numbers do not improve during that time frame, we will either move up a tier or remain where we are based on positive cases.

Please note that the Illinois Department of Public Health has moved to tracking the hospitalization rate in Jefferson County. Bethel Grade School District will maintain using the number of positive cases to activate our mitigation plan.

#### Continuation of Services

In the event that a student has tested positive for COVID-19 and must be quarantined for an extended period of time, The district's e-Learning plan will guide the continuation of services. This plan can be located on the district's website. An updated plan was adopted by the Board of

Education in August of 2023 and approved by the Regional Office of Education. This plan will remain in effect for the next three school years.

### Plan Review

This plan will be reviewed by stakeholders from the Board of Education, Bethel Education Association, and the Parent-Teacher Organization on a bi-annual basis. All pertinent information will be reviewed such as data from the IDPH, community spread data, and parent survey input on effective mitigation strategies.

Questions concerning the Return to School Safety Plan can be directed to Charley Cass, Superintendent, at 618-244-8095 or at [ccass@bethelschool.net](mailto:ccass@bethelschool.net)