



[www.bearcreekschool.com](http://www.bearcreekschool.com)

## PARENT NOTIFICATION

July 21, 2020

Dear Parents,

School administrators presented a summary of Bear Creek Community Charter School's School Reopening Health and Safety Plan to the Board of Trustees yesterday evening. We are working to incorporate the latest guidance from the Pennsylvania Department of Education into the formal plan and working to finalize the document so we can release it in its entirety to parents, as well as submit it to the Pennsylvania Department of Education.

In advance of releasing the complete plan, I understand parents are eager to know where we stand as to reopening school on September 8<sup>th</sup>. As a parent of school-aged children, I understand the need to know; therefore, I wanted to pass along high-level highlights now so parents have a basic understanding of the path forward. Realize, this plan can change between now and the start of school, based on current pandemic conditions in our local communities, additional guidance from state and federal health partners, or based on executive orders of the Governor.

We also understand that this situation places a great deal of stress and responsibility on parents, and not everyone is going to be pleased with the manner in which we are responding to the unfortunate situation we have all be placed in. In addition, opinions relating to the government's response to the pandemic also vary greatly. In the end, we have an obligation to prepare to educate children come September 8<sup>th</sup> and our plan represents our best efforts to balance all the demands placed on us – government mandates, health and safety guidelines, and parent expectations. We are in a no-win situation; however, we will be moving forward with a plan that we believe balances the need to educate our students with the health and safety of all involved, while complying with state and federal law.

In preparing the plan, we considered the following:

- What is critical to ensure adequate learning, which differs based on not only each student's grade/age, but also on each student's learning ability;
- Providing an environment and support for social/emotional learning, in addition to academics;
- The most current data provided by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, along with the recent Mathematica study commissioned by the Pennsylvania Department of Education;
- How to balance the resources we have available to meet the needs of all students, in the safest means possible;
- An understanding and respect that some aspects of our plan will place additional burdens upon parents and families;
- Safety measures for all stakeholders, including students, staff and visitors.
- External variables that are beyond our control.

The most current data provided by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, along with the recent Mathematica study commissioned by the Pennsylvania Department of Education have significantly contributed to our reopening plan, including:

- ❖ A preponderance of existing evidence suggests that virus rates for children (percentage of children that become infected when exposed) are somewhat lower than the virus rate for adults. Evidence suggests that most children who contract COVID-19 do not experience serious symptoms.
- ❖ Practices such as physical distancing, masking, ventilation, and meeting outdoors can reduce COVID19 transmission.
  - CDC recommendations promote physical distancing as the main strategy to contain the spread of the virus in schools (CDC, 2020g). The recommendation is that schools adjust their daily operations to encourage students and staff to stay six feet apart;
  - Wearing face masks has also been supported by emerging evidence as an effective strategy to reduce transmission;
  - Ventilation has shown to be a particularly effective way to reduce transmission, and school officials can consider it whenever possible in school and during transportation to and from school;
  - It is also recommended that group gatherings take place in an as much of an outdoor environment as possible. Evidence indicates that indoor spaces have much higher risk of transmission than outdoor spaces; and
  - Cleaning and sanitation of high-touch areas might also help reduce transmission, but evidence indicates that transmission through surfaces is less of a threat, as the virus is spread predominantly from person to person through respiratory droplets (Ries, 2020).
- ❖ The closure of schools in spring 2020 is likely to lead to substantial long-term learning loss and potentially exacerbate existing inequities.
- ❖ Available research shows that online classes are typically not as effective as in-person classes for most students. Despite the absence of rigorous evidence on best practices in blended and remote learning, research suggests the likely importance of maintaining engagement when students are learning at home, and some practices that show promise.

The complete report is available on the School's web site at <http://www.bearcreekschool.com/covid19.php>

Highlights of Bear Creek Community Charter School's Reopening Health & Safety Plan appear on the following pages. We anticipate the full plan to be available to parents within the next two weeks. Again, please realize this is subject to change.

The annual return-to-school "Summer Packet" will be mailed home to all families the week of August 14<sup>th</sup>, which will include additional information about the start of school.

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I want to thank all of our parents for their understanding, and want to thank the staff for the efforts they are putting forth over the summer to adequately prepare to open school. I would also like to thank the Board of Trustees for providing the additional resources necessary to support our efforts.

Jim Smith  
Chief Executive Officer  
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## School Reopening Health & Safety Plan

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### **Kindergarten through Fourth Grade**

Students in Kindergarten through Fourth Grade will attend school in-person.

In some situations, existing certified teachers and administrators have been reassigned to split grades into three sections to reduce class size and allow for adequate social distancing. In other situations, temporary walls have been removed and classroom spaces have been combined to allow for adequate social distancing. Special classrooms will be used to further reduce class size. Excess furniture has been removed from classrooms.

Students will not rotate between classrooms; instead, teachers will rotate into classrooms. Students will continue to participate in specials – physical education, environmental education, art and music – which will either be held outdoors or within their respective classrooms. Students will be provided an additional or expanded block of time for recess. Teachers will be encouraged to incorporate outdoor spaces into their lesson plans. Outdoor spaces will be assigned, as to promote adequate social distancing. Grab and go breakfast and lunch will be available to all students and will be served in their respective classrooms.

Students at all grade levels will experience an increase in the use of technology in the classroom, particularly Chromebooks and Google Classroom; which will help prepare them for any future transition to remote learning. Technology and school supplies will be assigned to specific students and not shared. Bear Creek Community Charter School will purchase and provide each student with their own Chromebook for use in/out of school.

All student seating will face forward to the front of the classroom. Students will be required to wear face coverings when six-feet of separation cannot be maintained. When six-feet of separation can be maintained, face coverings will not be required. Hand washing throughout the day will be encouraged. Hand sanitizer will be available for students in classrooms that do not have hand-wash sinks. All students will be provided a personal water-bottle at the beginning of the school year to reduce the number of students using public water fountains. Additional housekeeping staff will be engaged during the school day to clean and sanitize restrooms and common areas. Teachers will take attendance daily utilizing the Power Teacher attendance tool. Parents will have access to daily attendance and grades by utilizing the online Parent Portal.

All school-wide or large group activities will be limited or modified to ensure participant safety. The student dismissal process will also be modified to promote adequate social distancing. Visitors entering the school will be limited with new protocols regarding health questionnaires, temperature checks and hand sanitization will be required.

Students and staff who exhibit symptoms of illness will be required to stay home. Daily self-screenings of students and staff will be encouraged. Occupants of the school building who exhibit specific symptoms of COVID-19 will be isolated and removed from campus. Health concerns will be communicated to the Pennsylvania Department of Health and school administrators will evaluate each situation to determine its potential impact on ongoing school operations.



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## School Reopening Health & Safety Plan

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### **Fifth Grade**

The majority of Fifth Grade students will attend school in-person three days each week (Mondays, Wednesdays, and Fridays), and will participate in synchronous remote learning from home two days each week (Tuesdays and Thursdays). Select students will attend in-person instruction daily. Students will be relocated to other classrooms and common areas to allow for adequate social distancing. Special classrooms will be used to further reduce class size. Excess furniture has been removed from classrooms.

Students will not rotate between classrooms; instead, teachers will rotate into classrooms. Students will continue to participate in select specials – physical education and environmental education – which will either be held outdoors or within their respective classrooms. Students will continue to receive recess. Teachers will be encouraged to incorporate outdoor spaces into their lesson plans. Outdoor spaces will be assigned, as to promote adequate social distancing. Grab and go breakfast and lunch will be available to all students and will be served in their respective classrooms.

Students at all grade levels will experience an increase in the use of technology in the classroom, particularly Chromebooks and Google Classroom; which will help prepare them for any future transition to remote learning. Technology and school supplies will be assigned to specific students and not shared. Bear Creek Community Charter School will purchase and provide each student with their own Chromebook for use in/out of school.

Students will participate in synchronous virtual instruction at home on Tuesdays and Thursdays, and will follow their in-person schedule, and will be required to log into Google Classroom to attend class. Teachers will teach virtual classes live via Google Classroom, engage students and answer questions. Teachers will take attendance for each class utilizing the Power Teacher attendance tool. Parents will have access to daily attendance and grades by utilizing the online Parent Portal.

All student seating will face forward to the front of the classroom. When attending in-person instruction, students will be required to wear face coverings when six-feet of separation cannot be maintained. When six-feet of separation can be maintained, face coverings will not be required. Hand washing throughout the day will be encouraged. Hand sanitizer will be available for students in classrooms that do not have hand-wash sinks. All students will be provided a personal water-bottle at the beginning of the school year to reduce the number of students using public water fountains. Additional housekeeping staff will be engaged during the school day to clean and sanitize restrooms and common areas.

All school-wide or large group activities will be limited or modified to ensure participant safety. Student dismissal process will also be modified to promote adequate social distancing. Visitors entering the school will be limited with new protocols regarding health questionnaires, temperature checks and hand sanitization required.

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## School Reopening Health & Safety Plan

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### Sixth Grade

The majority of Sixth Grade students will attend school in-person two days each week (Tuesdays and Thursdays), and will participate in synchronous remote learning from home three days each week (Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays). Select students will attend in-person instruction daily. Students will be relocated to other classrooms and common areas to allow for adequate social distancing. Special classrooms will be used to further reduce class size. Excess furniture has been removed from classrooms.

Students will not rotate between classrooms; instead, teachers will rotate into classrooms. Students will continue to participate in select specials – physical education and environmental education – which will either be held outdoors or within their respective classrooms. Students will continue to receive recess. Teachers will be encouraged to incorporate outdoor spaces into their lesson plans. Outdoor spaces will be assigned, as to promote adequate social distancing. Grab and go breakfast and lunch will be available to all students and will be served in their respective classrooms.

Students at all grade levels will experience an increase in the use of technology in the classroom, particularly Chromebooks and Google Classroom; which will help prepare them for any future transition to remote learning. Technology and school supplies will be assigned to specific students and not shared. Bear Creek Community Charter School will purchase and provide each student with their own Chromebook for use in/out of school.

Students participating in synchronous virtual instruction at home on Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays will follow their in-person schedule, and will be required to log into Google Classroom to attend class. Teachers will teach virtual classes live via Google Classroom, engage students and answer questions. Teachers will take attendance for each class utilizing the Power Teacher attendance tool. Parents will have access to daily attendance and grades by utilizing the online Parent Portal.

All student seating will face forward to the front of the classroom. When attending in-person instruction, students will be required to wear face coverings when six-feet of separation cannot be maintained. When six-feet of separation can be maintained, face coverings will not be required. Hand washing throughout the day will be encouraged. Hand sanitizer will be available for students in classrooms that do not have hand-wash sinks. All students will be provided a personal water-bottle at the beginning of the school year to reduce the number of students using public water fountains. Additional housekeeping staff will be engaged during the school day to clean and sanitize restrooms and common areas.

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## School Reopening Health & Safety Plan

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### **Seventh Grade & Eighth Grade**

The majority of Seventh Grade students will attend school in-person two days each week (Mondays and Wednesdays), and will participate in synchronous remote learning from home three days each week (Tuesdays, Thursdays and Fridays). The majority of Eighth Grade students will attend school in-person two days each week (Tuesdays and Thursdays), and will participate in synchronous remote learning from home three days each week (Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays). Select students will attend in-person instruction daily. Students will be relocated to other classrooms and common areas to allow for adequate social distancing. Special classrooms will be used to further reduce class size. Excess furniture has been removed from classrooms.

Students will not rotate between classrooms; instead, teachers will rotate into classrooms. Students will continue to participate in select specials – physical education and environmental education – which will either be held outdoors or within their respective classrooms. Students will continue to receive recess. Teachers will be encouraged to incorporate outdoor spaces into their lesson plans. Outdoor spaces will be assigned, as to promote adequate social distancing. Grab and go breakfast and lunch will be available to all students and will be served in their respective classrooms.

Students at all grade levels will experience an increase in the use of technology in the classroom, particularly Chromebooks and Google Classroom; which will help prepare them for any future transition to remote learning. Technology and school supplies will be assigned to specific students and not shared. Bear Creek Community Charter School will purchase and provide each student with their own Chromebook for use in/out of school.

Students participating in synchronous virtual instruction at home will follow their in-person schedule, and will be required to log into Google Classroom to attend class. Teachers will teach virtual classes live via Google Classroom, engage students and answer questions. Teachers will take attendance for each class utilizing the Power Teacher attendance tool. Parents will have access to daily attendance and grades by utilizing the online Parent Portal.

All student seating will face forward to the front of the classroom. When attending in-person instruction, students will be required to wear face coverings when six-feet of separation cannot be maintained. When six-feet of separation can be maintained, face coverings will not be required. Hand washing throughout the day will be encouraged. Hand sanitizer will be available for students in classrooms that do not have hand-wash sinks. All students will be provided a personal water-bottle at the beginning of the school year to reduce the number of students using public water fountains. Additional housekeeping staff will be engaged during the school day to clean and sanitize restrooms and common areas.

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Students and staff who exhibit symptoms of illness will be required to stay home. Daily self-screenings of students and staff will be encouraged. Occupants of the school building who exhibit specific symptoms of COVID-19 will be isolated and removed from campus. Health concerns will be communicated to the Pennsylvania Department of Health and school administrators will evaluate each situation to determine its potential impact on ongoing school operations.