



## School Reopening 2020 – Frequently Asked Questions

Revised: August 28, 2020

Please refer to Bear Creek Community Charter School's Reopening Health & Safety Plan, which will be available on the School's web site at [www.bearcreekschool.com](http://www.bearcreekschool.com)

### **Will Bear Creek Community Charter School be opening for in person instruction?**

Yes. Some students will attend in-person instruction five days each week, others will attend in-person instruction three days each week, and others will attend in-person instruction two days each week. When students are not attending class in-person, they will be participating in distance learning activities with their classroom teachers using Google Classroom.

### **Does my child and/or their teacher have to wear a face covering while attending school? REVISED**

Yes. On July 1, 2020, the Secretary of the Pennsylvania Department of Health announced an Order Requiring Universal Face Coverings. The order, signed under Secretary Levine's authority under the Disease Prevention and Control Act, outlines the situations when a face covering must be worn and includes limited exceptions to the face-covering requirement. This order applies to all individuals while in entities, including public K-12 schools. For the safety of students, staff and families, and to avoid community spread of COVID-19, students and staff are considered to be members of the public who are congregating in indoor locations. As such, they are required to adhere to this Order. The Order is effective immediately and applies to all children aged two and older.

On August 17, 2020, the Pennsylvania Department of Education issued updated guidance based on the American Academy of Pediatrics. Face coverings should only be removed in a school setting for the following (3) reasons:

1. Eating or drinking when spaced at least 6 feet apart; or
2. When wearing a face covering creates an unsafe condition in which to operate equipment or execute a task; or
3. At least 6 feet apart during "face-covering breaks" to last no longer than 10 minutes.

### **What kind of face coverings are acceptable?**

Bear Creek Community Charter School is not mandating the "type" or "style" of face covering that must be worn. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention recommends face coverings as a simple barrier to help prevent respiratory droplets from traveling into the air and onto other people when the person wearing the mask coughs, sneezes, talks, or raises their voice. COVID-19 spreads mainly among people who are in close contact with one another (within about 6 feet), so the use of face coverings is particularly important in settings where people are close to each other or where social distancing is difficult to maintain. Parents can research more information about the effectiveness of face coverings by visiting [www.cdc.gov/coronavirus](http://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus)

The only stipulation the school is placing on face coverings is ensuring any face covering that is worn follows the dress code policy, which can be found in the Student/Parent Handbook. When considering your child's face covering, please be sure that it does not include a message or picture that is vulgar or obscene; promotes drinking, smoking or substance abuse; is derogatory to any racial, ethnic or religious group; has a double meaning; depicts or promotes acts of violence or brutality; or could be considered gang-related attire.

The school also encourage students to bring a spare mask to school in a Zip Lock bag, so students have a back-up face covering in the event something happens that makes their face covering unusable.

### **Will my child be permitted to take an educational field trip during the school year?**

Students are discouraged from taking vacations or “educational field trips” during the pandemic. Parents requesting permission to exclude a child from school for an educational field trip must obtain advance written approval from school administration at least ten school days in advance of the trip. In addition to the information contained in the Student/Parent Handbook, the request may be denied if the trip involves traveling to a location that is considered at high-risk for COVID-19, and where a 14-day quarantine would be recommended upon returning home.

### **Will my child's temperature be taken every day?**

Daily self-screenings of students and staff will be encouraged, but mandatory temperatures of all students will not be undertaken daily at school. As part of a daily self-screening process, it is encouraged for families to check their child's temperature each day before leaving for school. Parents can access the CDC Self-Checker regarding COVID-19 symptoms at <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/symptoms-testing/symptoms.html>

### **How will truancy laws be applied if students are not in school every day?**

As noted in the Student/Parent Handbook, Bear Creek Community Charter School can only be effective in educating a child if the child attends classes. Therefore, every effort should be made to have every child attend all classes, whether in-person or classes held via distance learning. Attendance will be taken at the beginning of each class held virtually, and will count towards students' attendance. If a student is unable to attend a virtual class for a reason listed under the excuse absence section of the handbook, a written excuse/note must be provided from the parent/guardian in accordance with the school's policy, just as though the student was absent from the physical building. The School's attendance/truancy policy will be modified to account for distance learning activities. Truancy (unexcused absences) will be enforced.

### **Do all students now have to be tested for COVID 19? Will those tests be available at school?**

No. Parents who feel their children should be tested for COVID-19 should consult with their child's primary care physician or consult with a representative of the Pennsylvania Department of Health. The telephone number for the Pennsylvania Department of Health is 1-877-724-3258.

### **Will hand sanitizer and/or sanitizing stations be available for students to use in addition to normal handwashing in student restrooms?**

Many classrooms have in-classroom sinks that will be made available to students for handwashing. Hand sanitizer will be available to students in classrooms without a handwashing sink. Parents are welcome to send children to school with personal hand sanitizer, if they so desire.

**At what point will the school change from in-person to online or a more hybrid system? Will parents be given sufficient notice in order to make daytime arrangements for children?**

Much of Bear Creek Community Charter School's response to the COVID-19 pandemic is based upon decisions made at the state level. Although Bear Creek Community Charter School would like to provide notice to parents, staff and students, circumstances outside the School's control may necessitate a transition to complete distance learning with little notice. Decisions to move to a more restrictive phase may be based upon pandemic conditions in our local communities, additional guidance from state and federal health partners, or at the direction of the Governor through executive order.

**What if I don't feel comfortable sending my child to school because of COVID-19? Will an online option be available through the Bear Creek Community Charter School?**

Bear Creek Community Charter School understands that the modification of the educational process due to the pandemic 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 been placed in. The School's plan represents our best efforts to balance all the demands placed on us – government mandates, health and safety guidelines, and parent expectations.

Parents make a choice to have their child participate in the educational program offered by Bear Creek Community Charter School. Unfortunately, we are not able to accommodate the desires of all of our parents. Parents will have to consider what options work best for their children, including attending a traditional public school, cyber-charter school or private school – which are options available to parents in addition to the educational program being offered by Bear Creek Community Charter School.

**What do I do if my child has a fever?**

As noted in the Student/Parent Handbook, the student should remain home with a fever of 100 degrees or greater. The student can return to school after he/she has been fever free for a full twenty-four (24) hours without fever reducing medication such as Motrin or Tylenol. Any child with a fever of 100 degrees or higher at school will be sent home, and must remain home the next day as 24 hours will not have lapsed. If your child is exhibiting other COVID-19 symptoms besides fever, please consult your primary care physician for guidance. Contact the School Nurse and advise her of the situation.

**What do I do if someone in my household is suspected of having COVID-19?**

Immediately consult your primary care physician. If someone in your household is suspected of having COVID-19 and has been tested and is awaiting test results, we ask that you do not send your child to school unless the testing returns a negative result. Contact the School Nurse and advise her of the situation.

**What do I do if someone in my household tests positive for COVID-19?**

If someone in your household tests positive for COVID-19, contact your child's primary care physician to determine testing recommendations, as well as guidance for quarantine and isolation. We ask that you do not send your child to school for 10 days after symptom onset and resolution of fever for at least 24 hours, without the use of fever-reducing medications, and with improvement of other symptoms. Contact the School Nurse and advise her of the situation.

### **What should I do if my child is tested for COVID?**

If your child has been recommended by his/her physician to be tested for COVID 19, please contact the school nurse. Your child should remain at home until the results of the test are received. If your child tests positive for COVID-19, your child is prohibited from attending school for 10 days after symptom onset and resolution of fever for at least 24 hours, without the use of fever-reducing medications, and with improvement of other symptoms. Contact the School Nurse and advise her of the situation. Your child will need written permission from his/her primary care physician to return to school.

### **If my child's teacher tests positive or a classmate tests positive for COVID 19, will my child need to stay home and quarantine?**

Yes. Your child would have been potentially exposed in this situation. We would strongly recommend contacting your child's primary care physician. The teacher, students and other potentially-exposed individuals would be restricted from coming to school for 14 days from their last contact with the person having COVID-19. Watch for fever, cough, shortness of breath, or other symptoms of COVID-19 and seek medical attention as necessary. If possible, stay away from others, especially people who are at higher risk for getting very sick from COVID-19. Anyone testing positive for COVID-19 will require written permission from his/her primary care physician to return to school/work.

### **Will parents be notified if a teacher, classmate or someone else tests positive for COVID-19 at school?**

We will notify parents of any confirmed COVID-19 case involving a student, teacher or any other person within the building who may have come in contact with their child. This contact may be done via telephone, e-mail or in writing. Bear Creek Community Charter School will only share personal information allowed under state and federal law – the identity of specific individuals with health conditions may not be disclosed.

### **Will the school still host events and extra-curricular activities?**

All typical or recurring school activities will be evaluated to determine if they can proceed as normal, be modified to incorporate health and safety considerations, or not held at all. This includes assemblies, meetings, public events, extra-curricular activities, etc. The school will most likely forego many extra-curricular activities during the 2020-2021 school year to reduce the risk of contracting COVID-19 for students, staff and families as well as to focus on providing students with a high-quality public education. As of the date this document was published, extra-curricular soccer will be held this fall and will follow PIAA guidelines, incorporating appropriate health and safety measures.

### **Will parents still be permitted to volunteer at school?**

Bear Community Charter School values parent interaction in the educational process – we view it as an important component of the educational process for children. That being said, due to unprecedented health and safety concerns related to the COVID-19 pandemic, the school will limit non-essential visitors until further notice. Essential visitors shall primarily be educational support personnel such as behavior therapists, therapeutic support staff, etc. Volunteer opportunities will be limited during the upcoming 2020-2021 school year, and in-school volunteer opportunities will be temporarily suspended.

**If I do not feel Bear Creek Community Charter School’s educational plan works best for my child or my family, what are my options?**

Bear Creek Community Charter School understands that the modification of the educational process due to the pandemic 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 been placed in. The School’s plan represents our best efforts to balance all the demands placed on us – government mandates, health and safety guidelines, and parent expectations.

Parents make a choice to have their child participate in the educational program offered by Bear Creek Community Charter School. Unfortunately, we are not able to accommodate the desires of all of our parents. Parents will have to consider what options work best for their children, including attending a traditional public school, cyber-charter school or private school – which are options available to parents in addition to the educational program being offered by Bear Creek Community Charter School.

Parents who do not plan to have their child/children participate in the educational program available at Bear Creek Community Charter School will need to complete and submit a withdrawal form, which is available from the school office. The School’s Admissions Policy dictates that any student who does not attend school on the first day of scheduled classes will be dropped from the rolls (lose spot) as an active student, unless the student’s parent or legal guardian provides the school advance notice of the excused absence. Any student who has ten consecutive days of unexcused absence will be dropped from the rolls as an active student.

**When will the formal Health & Safety Plan be available on the School’s web site.**

It is anticipated the formal Health and Safety Plan will be available on the School’s web site on Saturday, August 8, 2020.

**Will my child have access to a locker for their personal belongings? NEW**

Due to the need for social distancing, students will not be assigned lockers for the 2020-2021 school year. Students in grades Kindergarten through Second will utilize the cubbies located within their classroom. If their classroom does not have a cubby, they will be provided with a large plastic container to hold their belongings. Older students will keep their coats and backpacks with them. They may hang these items on the back of their chair or keep them beside their desk.

**What about class parties? Will my child be permitted to bring items in to celebrate their birthday? NEW**

Bear Creek Community Charter School will not be permitting items from outside of the school to be brought in and shared with other students and staff. We will revisit this decision at a later time, but for the start of the school year through the end of December 2020, outside treats will not be permitted. Students will be provided with some sort of snacks and beverages for a class party celebration for Halloween but volunteers, including Homeroom Parents, will not be permitted to attend.

**If volunteers are not permitted in the school setting, how am I able to volunteer? NEW**

Various opportunities to volunteer will be offered, such as scanning Box Top receipts, cutting items for bulletin boards, and other at home options will be made available as often as possible. If you are interested in supporting the school by volunteering for an at home activity, please contact Kim Stevens at [kim.stevens@bearcreekschool.com](mailto:kim.stevens@bearcreekschool.com)

**Will older students still participate in special activities for Live School? NEW**

Due to the need for social distancing and limited in-person instructional time, we will be limiting the number of Live School activities that are available for students through December 31, 2020. Rewarding student for positive behavior remains a priority; therefore, we will be providing students opportunities to exchange their Live School points for prizes and gift cards through a raffle system. Additional details will be shared with students once school is in session.