

# Bear Creek Community Charter School



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## School Reopening Health & Safety Plan

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**September 3, 2020**

Revision 1



Each school entity must create a Health and Safety Plan which will serve as the local guidelines for all instructional and non- instructional school reopening activities. As with all emergency plans, the Health and Safety Plan developed for each school entity should be tailored to the unique needs of each school and should be created in consultation with local health agencies.

Given the dynamic nature of the pandemic, each plan should incorporate enough flexibility to adapt to changing conditions. The templates provided in this toolkit can be used to document a school entity's Health and Safety Plan, with a focus on professional learning and communications, to ensure all stakeholders are fully informed and prepared for a local phased reopening of school facilities. A school entity's Health and Safety Plan must be approved by its governing body and posted on the school entity's publicly available website prior to the reopening of school. School entities should also consider whether the adoption of a new policy or the modification of an existing policy is necessary to effectively implement the Health and Safety Plan.

Each school entity should continue to monitor its Health and Safety Plan throughout the year and update as needed. All revisions should be reviewed and approved by the governing body prior to posting on the school entity's public website.

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## Introduction

All stakeholders should be mindful that as long as there are cases of COVID-19 in the community, there are no strategies that can completely eliminate transmission risk within a school population. The goal is to keep transmission as low as possible to safely continue school activities.

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 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 with the opening of school on September 8, 2020, and this plan represents our best efforts to balance all the demands placed on us – government mandates, health and safety guidelines, and parent expectations. We face a challenging 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.

The Commonwealth of Pennsylvania requires that all school activities must be informed by Governor Wolf's Process to Reopen Pennsylvania. The Commonwealth has categorized reopening into three broad phases: red, yellow, or green. These designations signal how counties and/or regions may begin easing some restrictions on school, work, congregate settings, and social interactions:

- The Red Phase: Schools remain closed for in-person instruction and all instruction must be provided via remote learning, whether using digital or non-digital platforms. Large gatherings are prohibited.
- The Yellow Phase and Green Phase: Schools may provide in-person instruction after developing a written Health and Safety Plan, to be approved by the local governing body (Board of Trustees) and posted on the school entity's publicly available website.

Based on Luzerne County's current designation (i.e., red, yellow, green) and the best interests of the local community, the Plan will indicate what type of reopening Bear Creek Community Charter School will follow, and will include details relating to bringing back students and staff, how the School will communicate the type of reopening with stakeholders within the school community, and the process for continued monitoring of local health data to assess implications for school operations and potential adjustments throughout the school year.

Depending upon the public health conditions in any county within the Commonwealth, there could be additional actions, orders, or guidance provided by the Pennsylvania Department of Education (PDE) and/or the Pennsylvania Department of Health (DOH) designating the county as being in the red, yellow, or green phase. Some counties may not experience a straight path from a red designation, to a yellow, and then a green designation. Instead, cycling back and forth between less restrictive to more restrictive designations may occur as public health indicators improve or worsen.

This means that each school entity should account for changing conditions in the Plan to ensure fluid transition from more to less restrictive conditions in each of the phase requirements as needed.

Realize, this plan can change between now and the start of school, based on pandemic conditions in our local communities, additional guidance from state and federal health partners, or based on executive orders of the Governor.

Bear Creek Community Charter School will consult with the Pennsylvania Department of Health, the school’s Pandemic Planning and Coordination Team, and the Board of Trustees prior to making any decisions to move the school to a least-restrictive phase of operations, a more restrictive phase of operations, or closing school.

### **Pandemic Planning & Coordination Team**

Each school entity is required to identify a pandemic coordinator and/or pandemic team with defined roles and responsibilities for health and safety preparedness and response planning during the phased reopening of schools. The pandemic team will be responsible for facilitating the local planning process, monitoring implementation of the School’s local Health and Safety Plan, and continued monitoring of local health data to assess implications for school operations and potential adjustments to the Health and Safety Plan throughout the school year. To ensure a comprehensive plan that reflects the considerations and needs of every stakeholder in the local education community, school entities are encouraged to establish a pandemic team to support the pandemic coordinator.

The Pandemic Planning & Coordination Team were involved in the drafting of this plan, and will continue to play a role throughout the school year in the decision making regarding the ever-changing response to the pandemic as well as response efforts in the event a confirmed positive case or exposure among staff and students is identified.

<b><u>Name</u></b>	<b><u>Stakeholder Group Represented</u></b>
Jim Smith	School Administration
Kristen Young	School Administration
Kim Stevens	School Administration
Bridget Deeble	School Administration and Parent
Tammy Miller	School Administration and Parent
Jennifer Smith	Teacher and Parent
Tina Vojtko, RN	School Nurse
Claire Parsons, RN	Community Representative and Nurse
Margaret Austin, RN	Community Representative and Nurse
Stacey Scullion	Parent and Trustee
Dave Blazejewski	Board of Trustees

## Stakeholder Communication

This Plan, along with ongoing information regarding the COVID-19 pandemic and its impact on school operations, will be provided to stakeholders. Information will be posted on the School's public web site at [www.bearcreekschool.com](http://www.bearcreekschool.com), and will also be shared through ongoing e-mail communications, on social media, in print, and during PTO meetings, staff meetings, and Board of Trustees meetings – whether in-person or virtual.

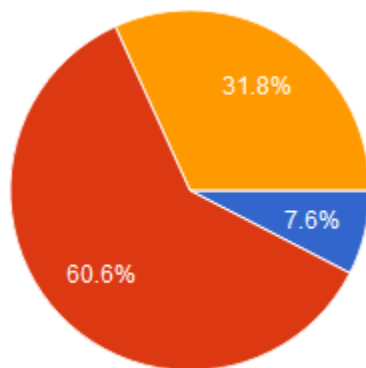
Messages regarding good hygiene and other prevention efforts will be disseminated to students during daily school wide announcements, morning class meetings, using the school's video monitor system, and posted in restrooms and in other common areas throughout the school.

## Family Survey

Bear Creek Community Charter School provided an online survey for parents to complete regarding their perceptions and intentions related to COVID-19. The results of the survey are as follows:

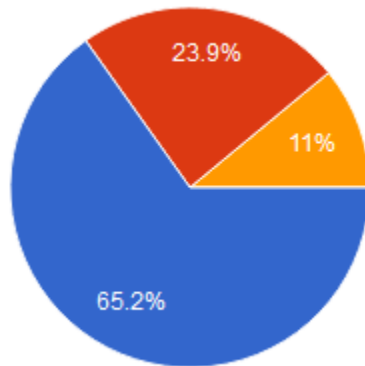
Of the 264 families who responded:

- 75.4% feel it is safe to return to school.
- 60.6% of parents prefer in-person instruction for their child – students attending school with the appropriate health and safety precautions in place.
- 65.2% prefer students attend school on set days each week and complete school work from home on the alternating days.
- 99.6% of the families have internet access at home.
- 57.8% would utilize transportation offered by their public school district, while the remaining 42.2% would provide their own transportation to and from school.
- 72.9% stated if students were given the option to wear masks/face coverings while in school, their child would wear one.
- 84.7% would participate in Google Classroom training if it were offered.
- 51.1% would eat a grab and go breakfast and/or lunch provided by school, while 48.39% stated they would send their child to school with meals.



- Remote/distance learning - students working from home using computers provided by the school.
- In-person instruction - students attending school with the appropriate health and safety precautions in place.
- A blend/mix of in-person instruction and remote/distance learning.





- Students attend school on set days each week (example Monday, Wednesday and Friday) and work from home on alternating days (Tuesday and Thursday).
- Students attend school for half a day, five days a week.
- Students attend school all-day for one week, then work from home during the second week. One week on, one week off.

#### Parent Comments:

I am a single parent and I struggle while working and trying to help children with online school because my children are young or need additional assistance. If teachers could meet to do online instruction daily at specific times, and parents have ample time to train the children how to get online to meetings, it would be more beneficial.

I'm concerned for students wearing masks all day. I don't believe it's healthy for them to breath in CO2.

I think they should start out in school. If things change then implement other options.

I don't really feel safe returning back to work/school at this time really. Would prefer remote learning and i home school/supplement when needed. I don't like the idea of any of the none traditional day options because I have no idea what I would do about child care and I'm not sure I'm comfortable leaving Emmy alone at home. We might be living in bear creek by then which will make it a little better if we have to do that, but if I'm still in Exeter I don't like being 30 minutes away from her if she's alone. Also, upgrading our HVAC system would probably be a good move on many many levels. I do not like the idea of my children or myself needing to wear a mask all day long. Not sure what our internet will be like in Bear Creek Village

Thank you for making the transition to online learning a seamless one back in March! I trust you will do what's best for everyone.

Google classroom does not work for a special needs child. Please take into consideration parents who work full time.

Both my husband and I work so having school remotely at home does not work for us. This would be very hard to accommodate. If hours had to be switched, like say 1/2 days, it would be better if both children go at the same time, then we can figure out our work schedules. I understand that you can only do so much with the CDC guidelines but please keep us working parents in mind. Also, I selected no for masks because my son will not keep his on. He will be pulling it down, taking it off and throwing it. I know because he's done this when he had to wear it in the store even though he knows that he must

keep it on. My daughter is ok but not for long periods of time, the loops hurt her ears. Plus I think you should be able to see the kids' mouths. Also, if you teachers must wears masks, maybe see if you can get clear one so that the students can see their mouths as well. I know this is a learning experience for all and I know everything is done to protect everyone so I completely understand we are all in this together.

My children are currently signed up to use the bus to and from school. However, if I am still off due to COVID at the start of the year I will take them to and from school.

Thank you for continuing to keep parents informed on everything going on as well.

Thank you for always looking out for your school families!

I believe children should learn from educators, in person. I am not scared by any means to have my child in his school learning on a daily basis. We can be as safe as we can while still living our normal life and not having our children deprived of their education. I run a business and work 60-70 hours a week, my child should be in school learning. All children should be.

Just to have a set schedule being a single working parent. Knowing when and for how long i need to have child care lined up.

If social distancing is done, I don't feel masks would be necessary. In situations where social distancing cannot occur, I would allow my child to wear a mask.

I answered that I would not participate in a Google classroom training because I am a teacher who uses Google classroom, so I am very familiar with it.

Overall, I have always felt that Bear Creek looks out for the best interest of their students, and I feel this situation will be no different.

Last year the zoom schedules were difficult in the beginning. However, towards the end of school everyone knew their role and it worked much better and more efficient.

I am unable to answer whether it is safe for my girls to return to school. I believe that is completely contingent on measures taken and compliance to the measures by other students and staff. Additionally, with respect to school lunches I believe my girls would opt for a combination of school purchased meals and meals from home.

COVID is over-rated. The percentage of those contracting it is very tiny. I would sign a waiver as well for my child to attend part time or full time.

I think that students should all wear masks with the exceptions that the CDC has implemented- really in person instruction is needed but I think that is the number one safeguard to do it safely for students,

staff and families. I am a teacher and had to use Google Classroom for my students so that is the only reason why I wouldn't attend the training - parents NEED to familiarize themselves with it. Thank you for keeping us updated and for all that you do.

Please take a stand and do all you can to reopen the school with as little disruption to the learning and socialization process as possible. I truly believe that an unintended consequence of the shutdowns has been an arrested development of socialization among our children. Whether we realize it or not, telling our children that everyone is a possible threat is a dangerous thing and can potentially have negative outcomes if this continues as the "new normal" in society. No human, let alone a child, should automatically view their fellow man as a threat. This will breed paranoia and harm how individuals form relationships, especially among kids.

Any distant learning that occurs needs to be organized. For example, if they are provided any homework, it needs to be clear to the parent when it's due and what the assignment entails. It would be helpful for a tracking tool like google that is capable of alerting working parents rather than having to go to the faculty website every day to get an update. If we continue this distant learning at any capacity, the alerts would help immensely (at least in my opinion) and to have the assignments submitted online. I fully support utilizing more technology the more distant learning we have.

The safety and health of everyone is my number one priority too. I am answering this survey using considerations of the current conditions and my experience of the 4th quarter remote work.

I don't think alternating school weeks would work for my children; it would be hard to get a routine. My opinion would be every day for a half day or alternating days. In my household my husband and I were both considered essential and worked through the stay at home order. It was difficult to keep up with everyone's work, if they were at least on campus every other day or a half day every day I would feel more comfortable that they were on task.

For the masks, I selected that they wouldn't wear the mask. I answered this as if it were an option, obviously if it was a requirement than yes they would wear masks. As an option, I would say no because I feel like it makes them touch their faces more frequently than if they didn't wear one.

If transportation wasn't available as an option I would drive them to school and pick them up.

Thank you for all your hard work, it certainly isn't unnoticed. The engagement of staff during the remote work was amazing. I feel very fortunate that my children are a part of such a caring community.

They would wear a mask but I can't see them wearing it all day. Also, would but the grab and go depending what it was.

Please keep working parents in mind when deciding the schedule. Half days, every day, are not that feasible and will be putting more strain on the working parents.... having to get them ready for only a

couple hours then worrying about who is picking them up and watching them and continuing that days work...

I feel safe and I don't feel safe about them returning. I feel that as the school they will do everything to make sure they are in a safe and clean environment. I worry about the busing situation and classroom sizes. As for lunches my children would be half and half they will bring breakfast and lunch and purchase breakfast & lunch.

Great communication from your school.

I'm very unsure about all my answers. I would love to see an upgrade in the HVAC system to keep air moving out of the rooms. Thanks for asking! Good luck.

It would be great if somehow siblings could go on the same days.

These answers I gave are not set in stone. I would follow guidelines in hopes that there were options. Our home life on any option you gave would have to be changed unless it was going back to school like normal. We all know that is not going to happen. I am a parent who is not technological at all when it comes to programs and computers. So I hope before this starts you would be kind enough to possibly show me how to help my child. I thank every single one of you. You have given my children the best education possible.

I am not sure I would send my children if masks were optional for students. I think they should be required. More studies are being released that states that are mandating masks in public have decreasing rates while those that do not have increasing rates.

Thank you for the ongoing information and communication.

Half days are not a good option because parents cannot leave work to pick up children midday.

Virtual learning must have live teaching as if the students were sitting in the physical classroom

Would only want her in school if there isn't a spike in the virus.

I would have chosen "unsure" for the question about it being safe to return. A lot can happen in the next 2 months. We are also still working on transportation. I'd like to drive them and we can get them there in the morning, but pickup might be a challenge.

My daughter really struggled with distance learning. Maybe some type of extension or breaking up assignments for kids who have difficulty learning online.

A few of the questions are "Maybes" for my daughter. Such as a wearing a mask at school would be a Maybe because Macie get claustrophobic with a mask on. Also in regards do I feel it's safe for my

daughter to return. I absolutely feel the school is safe! However kids by nature just want to be with each other and always get close.

Thank you to everyone at the Charter School for everything you do!

I feel it is not safe yet. I think remote learning should continue until the end of the year. Advise again in January 2021.

These are such hard questions to answer with certainty. I don't envy your position and I thank you for everything you're doing to keep our kids safe.

Getting a small dose of the zoom classes this past year I think we are a long way from the kids effectively learning this way.

At this time, I feel as though they can return to school but it also depends on if there is a spike in our area at the time school resumes. Public transportation would depend on guidelines, how many on bus, per seat, etc. Also, I am not opposed to a blend/mix of in-person and remote instruction.

I am not worried as much about COVID-19 As I am that students have the structure needed of actually attending school. My son and his friends stay up later than they should (which is the parents responsibility of course) but they do this because of the lack of structure and online school being set later in the day. If it was mainly or split to be online. I think it would be best to have school start at normal time and be structured like actual in school classes would be.

Regardless of my selections, I trust the Bear Creek Charter faculty and staffs decisions going forward. I want the faculty/staff and children to be safe. I am flexible on whatever you need us as parents to do. If I have to drive my kids to school, I will. If you want the kids to wear masks in school, they will, etc. Thanks for all your help and I know your doing the best you can during this trying time.

I am a home health nurse. I work with my client at school or at home . My daughter's schooling is going to have to match his if at all possible so I can work .

I have faith that BCCCS will make the right decisions for their school community for the upcoming school year. The decisions made during the end of the 2020-2021 school year were excellent. The instruction and educational needs of my son were always considered and met. His teachers did an unbelievable job to keep a personal interest in his learning and were always in contact. I was so highly impressed with how BCCCS handled the situation and I want to thank everyone for their efforts during a very difficult time.

I did not answer the question of whether I feel it is safe for my children to return to school. At this time I feel there are too many unknown variables to confidently make that decision. A lot of it depends on the plans you put into place which obviously is still a work in progress.

Being a parent who works Monday through Friday 8-5, I wouldn't need something to go with my schedule as I would not be able to do school at home until 6pm . Also my children are in the YMCA for after care until I was to get out of work and if there is no school they would be going to the YMCA I hope it is considered for parents who do not have the option to stay home to do schooling with their child on a fulltime basis. Children need social interaction to develop and I hope that comes into consideration.

You always make decisions based on what's best for our kids - thank you.

I pray that school is capable of opening in some form. I know that my son NEEDS that physical interaction to be in class. I truly don't know what we will do if there is no in person school, as per everyone knows how the struggles he had with remote learning.

I feel it is safe if precautions are in place and adhered to, and parents don't send their sick children to school. I would prefer 5 half days or 3 full set days with 2 at home. Breakfast and lunch would depend what is being served.

My daughter would get a ride to school in the morning to avoid the bus, but would take the van home. I would like her to wear a mask, but she plays with it and often has a habit of chewing on it which might be worse than not wearing one at all. I would like her to return to school, but with the recent death of a healthy student in my school district due to COVID and the rising numbers I am conflicted about what to do.

I absolutely do not feel comfortable with my daughter returning to school. She had 100% attendance for online class and did 99% of the work required including all the papers sent home.

I have all the faith in the world Bear Creek will do everything in their power to make sure my child is safe The lunch option would be mixed. Angelo & Sicilia would buy and bring from home.

If we had to do Zoom/online learning, it would have to be actual instruction similar to what Mrs. Harry did in the spring. She has actual classes, not just 'this is the assignment and who has questions' or review. I have difficulty teaching academics, not my forte. "What do you mean you don't understand? It's right in front of you!" Is my way of teaching. LOL!

I understand the predicament we are all in and in and will do the best I can to adapt to the situation.

I wanted to clarify my answer No to I don't fully feel safe sending my son; A contributing factor is simply because we don't know how everything will be enforced (safety policies, etc) or what it will look like come September.

I feel badly about this, but I really am afraid for my daughter to be back in school. The hygiene habits of children make me very nervous, in addition to not knowing if other families have been taking this seriously (social distancing, wearing masks, etc.). As a teacher in the school I know I will have to be in the

building. However, if it is truly up to me, I would prefer my daughter not be due to the young ages of her and her siblings at home and not knowing how this virus would affect them.

I think teachers should wear the face shields so children can see their faces and expressions.

I think that K-4 needs to go to school everyday even if it is only a half day.

Steps should be taken to reduce the class sizes (10-15 kids ideally).

If children go for full days then outdoor recess needs to be mandatory unless it is raining. Teachers seem to think that on a cold or chilly day it is ok to stay inside. It is not. Unless it is lower than 25 degrees or raining kids need to be outside.

If the kids only go a half-day will there be online learning/homework for the afternoon? I would like that. My children had a very difficult time as did I learning through zoom meeting. This year it has to be different. My kids need schedules and in class room learning or a virtual learning that is very much like being at school. I felt like I was teaching my kids and the teachers were just reinforcing what I had taught them on schedule that was very crazy and I felt like my family had not privacy with constant zoom meetings. If this year is going to be the same I think I would consider pulling my kids out and finding a curriculum that works for my children and I. I would hate to do that as my kids and I love BCCCS but I could not go through a full year of my children being taught through zoom meetings.

It's very important to me that my son who struggled with Kindergarten goes to school in person. He is going into 1st grade and has several learning disabilities and its very important for him to be in school. At home he gets distracted easily, no matter if he is in his room. I have faith that BC will do everything they can to keep everyone safe and I will do my part as well. I appreciate BC for allowing parents to take this survey as we are on the edge of our seats wondering what will happen for the upcoming school year. BC is the only school I want my child to be in and we are willing to comply with whatever BC decides.

I have mixed feelings as to the safety of both staff and students returning to school. I do have confidence in the school to take every necessary precaution available to keep students/staff safe. Having said that I think distance learning is more difficult for some students than others. I have three children, 1 did well, 1 struggled through with difficulties and 1 who hated it and suffered because of it. You have difficult decisions to make ahead of you. I appreciate the school asking for parental input. Thank you for all you do!

My daughter is in the PSA program currently. It has been working out very well, however, they don't sound like they are doing small groups nor distancing well. I'm concerned about the fall being the same way when there is a larger amount of children at school and on the buses.

Homeschooling is a lot harder than I ever imagined. I purposely enrolled my daughter in school so she can go to school and be taught by trained professionals. I am not a teacher, nor do I want to be one. I give educators all the credit for doing what they do.

I am a college professor. I am not comfortable with in person classes during the pandemic. COVID19 was on my NYC campus and in my classes last term. Many were sick. Some died. 1 of every 400 NYC residents died in a few months. All students, faculty, and staff should mask and distance. But, this virus is airborne. When aerosolized, it hangs in the air in rooms that are not well ventilated. It lives on surfaces. The exposure from public bathrooms alone is an issue. There is no safe way to have face to face in person classes. Please, teach online. Please do not risk lives.

I need to make sure my son, who will be in 8th grade, will be ready for 9th grade next year.

In person instruction is very important. Even if 2-3 days per week. Too hard for working parents to learn material and teach to child/children. With all CDC safety recommendations implemented, this will be a safe environment.

We would feel safe with our child returning to school, as long as proper precautions were in place. We feel masks should be worn.

I don't Feel 100 % comfortable but as long as their safety procedures being covered & checking temperatures, but if they have to go to school I understand but I would feel 100% Comfortable for a doctor to clear the children to attend to make sure people were COVID- free.

Jim, I answered these questions with the anticipation that all appropriate safety measures will be in place. Until there is a plan in place, it's hard to know how to answer these questions. I know you'll do the right thing. If I could make a suggestion - if we have to be online, can there be more regular classroom time i.e. a set few hours a day where the teacher is live with the students? For us, it would create a routine that makes it feel like a school schedule.

I want to thank you all for providing at home instruction during the recent lock down period. Bear Creek Community Charter School goes above and beyond to educate our children. I am confident that my daughter maintained her skill set and learned new material via the various virtual classes/activities and assigned work. Where other schools struggled with the "new normal", BCCCS succeeded. This is a testament to the hard-working, dedicated staff. I am beyond grateful for everything you do.

I would also consider 3 days a week at school 2 home.

We are willing to support the learning process in any way we can. We trust the school administration will make the best decisions and adjustments for the welfare of the children. However, we do not believe it is healthy (mentally, emotionally or physically) for the students to be required to wear a mask for extended periods of time or sit in isolation cubes, etc. We will make our decision, once more specific details are made available from BCCCS.



As far as masks my children have worn them when going out. I feel it may be hard to expect them to wear all day but unsure.

My kids are all looking forward to getting back to school and their routine.

I would hope that masks would be required for all, not only for the student's but also the safety of faculty and staff.

At present time I would prefer at home learning with a far more structured program.

It's hard to do zoom with working parents. How will things work with learning support teachers. I put yes to the face mask, however, I am not sure how distracting it will be. I work with it all day and I take it off my nose when no one is in my office. Maybe if the children could go outside for fresh air more often during the day, then it might not be so bad. Ugh! Tough one.

I won't be attending the Google Classroom training because I'll probably be providing the training. ;) I know the school is doing everything it can to keep the kids and staff safe. Safety is just so uncertain now when it was a given before. However, I do think the kids need to be in school when possible.

Wish the "do you feel it safe for your child to return to school" question had an unsure option.

I am very fearful of sending my kids into school in this current status, not just for them, but I have medical conditions that put me at a higher risk if I would contract Covid-19. I know that especially for younger children, like mine, it will be very difficult to control social distancing, making it very likely that they could contract it and bring it home.

Working remotely for the kids was extremely hard for us...even though I am home I am still working full time and usually don't have the time to sit and help them through their school work. We had says where we spent all day, from 9 am to 9pm, trying to gets kids to do lesson plans and get their work done...they need the structure of being in school because we are not able to push that structure at home with both parents working full time.

I could arrange for my child to be driven to school if need be. I don't feel my son got anything out of school from home based environment. I feel (5)1/2 days in school would provide more of a consistent structure. If some days have to be from home, can they still be class room structured? I just want my child to get a good education.

My only concern is that my daughters are on the same schedule. No way will my youngest walk in to school without her sister knowing she is at home.

If bussing was not available or a problem we can provide transportation. Same with lunch or breakfast. If not available ok.

I appreciate this opportunity to provide feedback. Most schools have just said they are opening and that's that. Thank you for looking out for my child and her fellow students.

I had a HORRIBLE experience with homeschooling. Yes, the health of my kids are top priority but some of us are essential workers and cannot have our children at home. (Specially those of us that cannot afford child care) Some of us have to choose between working and making ends meet and teaching/assisting our kids at home. The amount of hours both require make it impossible for me to do them both successfully. I know this is something unforeseen for everyone and I understand the administration it's in a tough spot but I agree we all are just from different angles.

Praying this too shall pass and we can all make it work for everyone involved.

We would love to have some normalcy for our children, but it all really depends on so many variables that are out of everyone's control. We trust that you all have the staff and children's best interest at heart. We truly appreciate all you do for our school community.

I personally feel with the numbers of COVID climbing back up at a fast rate, the best solution would be distance learning. I don't feel comfortable at this time to have her in a traditional school setting. What kind of grab and go are you suggesting. How can this be healthy. Is there going to be salads available for kids vs sandwiches every day.

If at all possible, I would like to suggest that meals are brought to classrooms as to avoid too much exposure and possibility of coming in contact with the COVID virus. Thank you.

Instead of alternating days, maybe the older grades could meet in person 1 day a week for a whole day and remote learn the rest of the week.

I would like to expand upon my answer regarding wearing face masks. I have observed children, and many adults almost constantly touching the mask or their face. I believe this would negate the effectiveness and cause more harm.

Thank you for all you do!!!

My children will do whatever the school wants them to. If masks needed to be worn I feel they would be able to do it knowing it was to keep people protected. I just feel they need face to face at some level with their teachers and interaction with their classmates. I'm sure I am not the only one that worries about them not having interaction with others and the effects it has on them. As a teacher myself I feel how do we even start coming up with an ideal plan but I am grateful Bear Creek always puts the students first and that we are lucky to have a small school as to maybe be able to get more creative than these larger schools in regards to allowing them face to face education. Plus as a parent I will do anything to help the school get through this and make sure we do everything we can to make sure our children get the education they need.

Great job to the admin and staff during these unprecedented times!

These are difficult questions for me, my son has an IEP and is better equipped at school with his teachers, my daughter is a good student but needs constant reminding. I am also unsure of when I will be returning to work full time so question #7 is up in the air as well. I'm sure the best options for our children will be established, I have complete faith in BCCCS. If you need further information please don't hesitate to ask.

In my opinion Mrs Harcarik, Ms. Walsh and Mr. Z did a great job in teaching my son during remote learning. In person instruction is always best but the videos the teachers posted and the zoom meeting/google hangout were the next best thing and absolutely necessary.

I am unsure if it is safe for the children to return to school, that is why I did not answer that question. That will depend on a lot of factors with both the protocols set up in school and whether they will consistently be adhered to by staff, children and parents and outside factors in the community dealing with COVID-19 issues.

I love the idea of the students going one week at school and one week at home. If the same students were set up for the same week on/off that would put 1/2 the number of students in the school each week. (200 of the same kids). The school would be able to get "super sanitized" on the weekend for the next set of 200 kids to come in the next week. The other two options would put all 400 kids in the school every week thereby increasing the chance of spread of the virus by affecting more children every day of the week. Having 200 kids total in the school each week would also improve the contact tracing if the virus was introduced to the school.

Thank you!

You guys have it hard enough, you don't need opinions. Give us our options and we will choose and follow.

## **Preliminary Re-Opening Plan**

Preliminary Guidance for Phased Reopening of Pre-K to 12 Schools issued by the Pennsylvania Department of Education on June 3, 2020 states “activities must be informed by Governor Wolf’s Process to Reopen Pennsylvania. The administration has categorized reopening into three phases: red, yellow, or green.”

Although Bear Creek Community Charter School understands the importance of coordination of effort and consistency in statewide planning and response, it also understands that each local community is unique, and has been and will continue to be impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic in different ways. These impacts are not necessarily county-wide, but may be more specific to a locality or localities within a county. Therefore; Bear Creek Community Charter School does not want to be “pigeon-holed” into plans based solely on these three specific designations: red, yellow, or green as such designations have been historically identified at the county level.

We believe basing decisions on what is happening “on the ground” in the local communities we serve is most beneficial. For example, in the Spring of 2020, Luzerne County was reported to have a significant number of new COVID-19 cases, prompting state government to designate Luzerne County as a whole in a more restrictive phase. After analyzing geographical data, it was determined that the majority of new cases of COVID-19 were predominately identified in southern Luzerne County, specifically the City of Hazleton. In this situation, decisions were made county-wide relating to closing schools, rather than locally.

Bear Creek Community Charter School’s reopening plan is divided into the three phases identified by state government (red, yellow, and green); with operating parameters that are similar between yellow and green, if not identical. In a situation where Luzerne County transitions to a more restrictive phase (green to yellow), Bear Creek Community Charter School reserves the right to make data-driven, locally-informed decisions that are in the best interests of the children and families in the communities we serve. This includes transitioning additional students to a blended learning environment, to a remote learning environment, from a synchronous remote learning environment to an asynchronous learning environment, etc. Conversely, in a situation where Luzerne County transitions to a least restrictive phase (yellow to green) Bear Creek Community Charter School reserves the right to make data-driven, locally-informed decisions that are in the best interests of the children and families in the communities we serve. This includes transitioning additional students from a blended learning environment to an in-person learning environment, from an asynchronous to a synchronous remote learning environment, etc.

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, 2020). 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.

As part of the *Preliminary Guidance for Phased Reopening of Pre-K to 12 Schools*, the Pennsylvania Department of Education recommended that “charter schools are strongly encouraged to engage with local authorizers in finalizing Health and Safety Plans; this will ensure that students in the same locality – and even from the same family – experience similar safety and disease mitigation protocols.” Despite repeated attempts to engage and collaborate on the reopening of school, we were unable to receive any meaningful response from our local authorizer; therefore, Bear Creek Community Charter School proceeded in developing appropriate protocols to best meet the needs of our student population and other stakeholders.

# Green Phase Plan

## Introduction: Green Phase Plan

Preliminary Guidance for Phased Reopening of Pre-K to 12 Schools issued by the Pennsylvania Department of Education on June 3, 2020 states schools may provide in-person instruction after developing a written Health and Safety Plan, securing approval by each school entity's governing body (Board of Trustees) and posting this plan on the school or district's publicly available website. The plan must include the following:

- Identification of a "pandemic coordinator" and/or "pandemic team" with defined roles and responsibilities for health and safety preparedness and response planning;
- Steps to protect children and staff at higher risk for severe illness;
- Steps to take in relation to isolation or quarantine when a staff member, child or visitor becomes sick or demonstrates a history of exposure;
- Expectations for the posting of signs in highly visible locations, that promote everyday protective measures and how to stop the spread of germs;
- Procedures for cleaning, sanitizing, disinfecting, and ventilating learning spaces;
- Procedures for the safe use of cafeterias and other congregate settings;
- Protocols for sporting activities consistent with the CDC Considerations for Youth Sports for recess and physical education classes.
- Schedules for training all faculty and staff on the implementation of the Health and Safety Plan.
- System for ensuring ongoing communication with families around the elements of the local Health and Safety Plan including ways that families can practice safe hygiene in the home.

Each Health and Safety Plan may also include the following to the extent possible:

- Guidelines for hygiene practices for students and staff;
- Guidelines on the use of face coverings (masks or face shields) by staff and students;
- Protocols for classroom/learning space occupancy that allow for 6 feet of separation among students and staff throughout the day when appropriate;
- Methods of limiting the number of individuals in classrooms and other learning spaces, and interactions between groups of students;
- Methods of staggering the use of communal spaces and hallways and ensuring regular cleaning;
- Procedures to limit the sharing of materials among students;
- Processes for identifying and restricting non-essential visitors and volunteers; and
- Protocols for adjusting transportation schedules and practices to create social distance between students.

## **Kindergarten**

Students in Kindergarten will attend class on campus and will receive in-person instruction daily. Class sizes will be reduced to ensure appropriate social distancing, by splitting the existing two sections of Kindergarten into three sections of Kindergarten and utilizing additional classroom space within the school building. Students will be seated facing forward to the front of the classroom. Excess furniture will be removed from the classroom.

Kindergarten students will continue to receive instruction in all core academic subjects as well as special subjects (physical education, environmental education, art and music). Students will be offered a grab and go breakfast each morning to be taken to their respective classroom. Students will be offered at least two lunch options, which will be delivered to their respective classroom. 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.

A second recess period will be implemented into the schedule for Kindergarten students, and teachers will be encouraged to incorporate learning activities that allow students to spend additional time outdoors, where possible. With the exception of inclement weather, physical education instruction and environmental education instruction will take place outdoors. Students will be required to maintain appropriate social distancing whenever possible, and will be required to wear face coverings throughout the school day.

All three Kindergarten teachers will be properly state-certified and will have paraprofessional support within their 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. Bear Creek Community Charter School will provide students with a school Chromebook/iPad to facilitate the potential transition to a hybrid-learning model or virtual/remote learning based on evolving conditions.



## **First Grade**

Students in First Grade will attend class on campus and will receive in-person instruction daily. Class sizes will be reduced to ensure appropriate social distancing, by splitting the existing two sections of First Grade into three sections of First Grade and utilizing additional classroom space within the school building. Students will be seated facing forward to the front of the classroom. Excess furniture will be removed from the classroom.

First Grade students will continue to receive instruction in all core academic subjects as well as special subjects (physical education, environmental education, art and music). Students will be offered a grab and go breakfast each morning to be taken to their respective classroom. Students will be offered at least two lunch options, which will be delivered to their respective classroom. 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.

A second recess period will be implemented into the schedule for First Grade students, and teachers will be encouraged to incorporate learning activities that allow students to spend additional time outdoors, where possible. With the exception of inclement weather, physical education instruction and environmental education instruction will take place outdoors. Students will be required to maintain appropriate social distancing whenever possible, and will be required to wear face coverings throughout the school day.

All three First Grade teachers will be properly state-certified and will have paraprofessional support within their 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. Bear Creek Community Charter School will provide students with a school Chromebook/iPad to facilitate the potential transition to a hybrid-learning model or virtual/remote learning based on evolving conditions.

## **Second Grade**

Students in Second Grade will attend class on campus and will receive in-person instruction daily. Class sizes will be reduced to ensure appropriate social distancing, by splitting the existing two sections of Second Grade into three sections of Second Grade and utilizing additional classroom space within the school building. Second grade students will no longer rotate between two teachers; rather, Second grade will operate as a self-contained classrooms. Students will be seated facing forward to the front of the classroom. Excess furniture will be removed from the classroom.

Second Grade students will continue to receive instruction in all core academic subjects as well as special subjects (physical education, environmental education, art and music). Students will be offered a grab and go breakfast each morning to be taken to their respective classroom. Students will be offered at least two lunch options, which will be delivered to their respective classroom. 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.

A second recess period will be implemented into the schedule for Second Grade students, and teachers will be encouraged to incorporate learning activities that allow students to spend additional time outdoors, where possible. With the exception of inclement weather, physical education instruction and environmental education instruction will take place outdoors. Students will be required to maintain appropriate social distancing whenever possible, and will be required to wear face coverings throughout the school day.

All three Second Grade teachers will be properly state-certified and will have paraprofessional support within their 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. Bear Creek Community Charter School will provide students with a school Chromebook/iPad to facilitate the potential transition to a hybrid-learning model or virtual/remote learning based on evolving conditions.

## **Third Grade**

Students in Third Grade will attend class on campus and will receive in-person instruction daily. Classrooms will be adjusted to ensure appropriate social distancing by converting two traditional classrooms into one larger classroom by retracting Modernfold walls between classrooms, and eliminating shared space between classrooms. Third grade students will no longer rotate between two teachers; rather, teachers will rotate into classrooms. Students will be seated facing forward to the front of the classroom. Excess furniture will be removed from the classroom.

Third Grade students will continue to receive instruction in all core academic subjects as well as special subjects (physical education, environmental education, art and music). Students will be offered a grab and go breakfast each morning to be taken to their respective classroom. Students will be offered at least two lunch options, which will be delivered to their respective classroom. 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.

A second recess period will be implemented into the schedule for Third Grade students, and teachers will be encouraged to incorporate learning activities that allow students to spend additional time outdoors, where possible. With the exception of inclement weather, physical education instruction and environmental education instruction will take place outdoors. Students will be required to maintain appropriate social distancing whenever possible, and will be required to wear face coverings throughout the school day.

Third Grade classrooms will have paraprofessional support.

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. Bear Creek Community Charter School will provide students with a school Chromebook/iPad to facilitate the potential transition to a hybrid-learning model or virtual/remote learning based on evolving conditions.

## **Fourth Grade**

Students in Fourth Grade will attend class on campus and will receive in-person instruction daily. Classrooms will be adjusted to ensure appropriate social distancing by converting two traditional classrooms into one larger classroom by retracting Modernfold walls between classrooms, and eliminating shared space between classrooms. Fourth Grade students will no longer rotate between two teachers; rather, teachers will rotate into classrooms. Students will be seated facing forward to the front of the classroom. Excess furniture will be removed from the classroom.

Fourth Grade students will continue to receive instruction in all core academic subjects as well as special subjects (physical education, environmental education, art and music). Students will be offered a grab and go breakfast each morning to be taken to their respective classroom. Students will be offered at least two lunch options, which will be delivered to their respective classroom. 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.

A second recess period will be implemented into the schedule for Fourth Grade students, and teachers will be encouraged to incorporate learning activities that allow students to spend additional time outdoors, where possible. With the exception of inclement weather, physical education instruction and environmental education instruction will take place outdoors. Students will be required to maintain appropriate social distancing whenever possible, and will be required to wear face coverings throughout the school day.

Fourth Grade classrooms will have paraprofessional support. All teachers will be properly state-certified.

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. Bear Creek Community Charter School will provide students with a school Chromebook/iPad to facilitate the potential transition to a hybrid-learning model or virtual/remote learning based on evolving conditions.

## **Fifth Grade**

Students in Fifth Grade will attend class on campus on Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays of each week and will receive in-person instruction. Learning spaces will be relocated to larger common areas to ensure appropriate social distancing or by converting two traditional classrooms into one larger classroom by adjusting removable Modernfold walls between classrooms. Fifth Grade students will no longer rotate between four teachers; rather, teachers will rotate into classrooms. Students will be seated facing forward to the front of the classroom. Excess furniture will be removed from the classroom.

Fifth Grade students will continue to receive instruction in all core academic subjects as well as physical education and environmental education. With the exception of inclement weather, physical education instruction and environmental education instruction will take place outdoors. Students will be required to maintain appropriate social distancing whenever possible, and will be required to wear face coverings throughout the school day. Teachers will be encouraged to incorporate learning activities that allow students to spend additional time outdoors, where possible.

Students will be offered a grab and go breakfast each morning to be taken to their respective classroom. Students will be offered at least two lunch options, which will be delivered to their respective classroom.

Students in Fifth Grade are expected to engage in synchronous distance learning (at home) on Tuesdays, and Thursdays based on their regular school schedule. Content-specific teachers will engage students in online lessons and activities using Google Classroom and other Google products within the Google platform. Participation in distance learning is required, and will be incorporated into each student's grade.

In addition to synchronous instruction, students will be assigned a combination of independent work as well as student-specific online activities in both Math and English Language Arts, using iReady instructional software that is accessible through the internet. These additional learning activities will be under the direct supervision of a certified teacher and will be considered graded assignments.

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. A modified attendance policy will be implemented to incorporate distance learning, and Pennsylvania's truancy law will apply.

Bear Creek Community Charter School will provide students with a school Chromebook or iPad to facilitate the hybrid-learning model. The School will strive to accommodate students who do not have internet access at home.

Based on individual student needs, some Fifth Grade students will attend class on campus and will receive in-person instruction daily, or will participate in synchronous learning using technology while physically on campus and supervised by school staff. Participation is required, and will be incorporated into each student's grade. Parents of these specific students will receive a personalized instructional plan via U.S. Mail in August, 2020. Appropriate social distancing measures will be implemented. Attendance will be taken daily.

## **Sixth Grade**

Students in Sixth Grade will attend class on campus on Tuesdays and Thursdays of each week and will receive in-person instruction. Learning spaces will be relocated to larger common areas to ensure appropriate social distancing or by converting two traditional classrooms into one larger classroom by adjusting removable Modernfold walls between classrooms. Sixth Grade students will no longer rotate between four teachers; rather, teachers will rotate into classrooms. Students will be seated facing forward to the front of the classroom. Excess furniture will be removed from the classroom. 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.

Sixth Grade students will continue to receive instruction in all core academic subjects as well as physical education and environmental education. With the exception of inclement weather, physical education instruction and environmental education instruction will take place outdoors. Students will be required to maintain appropriate social distancing whenever possible, and will be required to wear face coverings throughout the school day. Teachers will be encouraged to incorporate learning activities that allow students to spend additional time outdoors, where possible.

Students will be offered a grab and go breakfast each morning to be taken to their respective classroom. Students will be offered at least two lunch options, which will be delivered to their respective classroom.

Students in Sixth Grade are expected to engage in synchronous distance learning (at home) on Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays based on their regular school schedule. Content-specific teachers will engage students in online lessons and activities using Google Classroom and other Google products within the Google platform. Participation in distance learning is required, and will be incorporated into each student's grade. In addition to synchronous instruction, students will be assigned a combination of independent work as well as student-specific online activities in both Math and English Language Arts, using iReady instructional software that is accessible through the internet. These additional learning activities will be under the direct supervision of a certified teacher and will be considered graded assignments. All teachers will be properly state-certified.

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. A modified attendance policy will be implemented to incorporate distance learning, and Pennsylvania's truancy law will apply.

Bear Creek Community Charter School will provide students with a school Chromebook or iPad to facilitate the hybrid-learning model. The School will strive to accommodate students who do not have internet access at home.

Based on individual student needs, some Sixth Grade students will attend class on campus and will receive in-person instruction daily, or will participate in synchronous learning using technology while physically on campus and supervised by school staff. Participation is required, and will be incorporated into each student's grade. Parents of these specific students will receive a personalized instructional plan via U.S. Mail in August, 2020. Appropriate social distancing measures will be implemented. Attendance will be taken daily.

## **Seventh Grade**

Students in Seventh Grade will attend class on campus on Mondays and Wednesday of each week and will receive in-person instruction. Learning spaces will be relocated to larger common areas to ensure appropriate social distancing or by converting two traditional classrooms into one larger classroom by adjusting removable Modernfold walls between classrooms. Seventh Grade students will no longer rotate between four teachers; rather, teachers will rotate into classrooms. Students will be seated facing forward to the front of the classroom. Excess furniture will be removed from the classroom. 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 teachers will be properly state-certified.

Seventh Grade students will continue to receive instruction in all core academic subjects as well as physical education and environmental education. With the exception of inclement weather, physical education instruction and environmental education instruction will take place outdoors. Students will be required to maintain appropriate social distancing whenever possible, and will be required to wear face coverings throughout the school day. Teachers will be encouraged to incorporate learning activities that allow students to spend additional time outdoors, where possible.

Students will be offered a grab and go breakfast each morning to be taken to their respective classroom. Students will be offered at least two lunch options, which will be delivered to their respective classroom.

Students in Seventh Grade are expected to engage in synchronous distance learning (at home) on Tuesdays, Thursdays and Fridays based on their regular school schedule. Content-specific teachers will engage students in online lessons and activities using Google Classroom and other Google products within the Google platform. Participation in distance learning is required, and will be incorporated into each student's grade. In addition to synchronous instruction, students will be assigned a combination of independent work as well as student-specific online activities in both Math and English Language Arts, using iReady instructional software that is accessible through the internet. These additional learning activities will be under the direct supervision of a certified teacher and will be considered graded assignments.

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. A modified attendance policy will be implemented to incorporate distance learning, and Pennsylvania's truancy law will apply.

Bear Creek Community Charter School will provide students with a school Chromebook or iPad to facilitate the hybrid-learning model. The School will strive to accommodate students who do not have internet access at home.

Based on individual student needs, some Seventh Grade students will attend class on campus and will receive in-person instruction daily, or will participate in synchronous learning using technology while physically on campus and supervised by school staff. Participation is required, and will be incorporated into each student's grade. Parents of these specific students will receive a personalized instructional plan via U.S. Mail in August, 2020. Appropriate social distancing measures will be implemented. Attendance will be taken daily.

## **Eighth Grade**

Students in Eighth Grade will attend class on campus on Tuesdays and Thursdays of each week and will receive in-person instruction. Learning spaces will be relocated to larger common areas to ensure appropriate social distancing or by converting two traditional classrooms into one larger classroom by adjusting removable Modernfold walls between classrooms. Sixth Grade students will no longer rotate between four teachers; rather, teachers will rotate into classrooms. Students will be seated facing forward to the front of the classroom. Excess furniture will be removed from the classroom. 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 teachers will be properly state-certified.

Eighth Grade students will continue to receive instruction in all core academic subjects as well as physical education and environmental education. With the exception of inclement weather, physical education instruction and environmental education instruction will take place outdoors. Students will be required to maintain appropriate social distancing whenever possible, and will be required to wear face coverings throughout the school day. Teachers will be encouraged to incorporate learning activities that allow students to spend additional time outdoors, where possible.

Students will be offered a grab and go breakfast each morning to be taken to their respective classroom. Students will be offered at least two lunch options, which will be delivered to their respective classroom.

Students in Eighth Grade are expected to engage in synchronous distance learning (at home) on Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays based on their regular school schedule. Content-specific teachers will engage students in online lessons and activities using Google Classroom and other Google products within the Google platform. Participation in distance learning is required, and will be incorporated into each student's grade. In addition to synchronous instruction, students will be assigned a combination of independent work as well as student-specific online activities in both Math and English Language Arts, using iReady instructional software that is accessible through the internet. These additional learning activities will be under the direct supervision of a certified teacher and will be considered graded assignments.

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. A modified attendance policy will be implemented to incorporate distance learning, and Pennsylvania's truancy law will apply.

Bear Creek Community Charter School will provide students with a school Chromebook or iPad to facilitate the hybrid-learning model. The School will strive to accommodate students who do not have internet access at home.

Based on individual student needs, some Eighth Grade students will attend class on campus and will receive in-person instruction daily, or will participate in synchronous learning using technology while physically on campus and supervised by school staff. Participation is required, and will be incorporated into each student's grade. Parents of these specific students will receive a personalized instructional plan via U.S. Mail in August, 2020. Appropriate social distancing measures will be implemented. Attendance will be taken daily.

## **Attendance and Truancy**

Attendance will be taken at the beginning of each day for students attending class in-person. Attendance will be taken at the beginning of each class for students participate in remote/virtual instruction. Bear Creek Community Charter School's attendance policy and Pennsylvania's truancy law both apply. If a student is unable to attend school in-person or is unable to participate in remote/virtual instruction because of illness or other authorizes reason (refer to Student/Parent Handbook), the parent/guardian must submit a written excuse to the child's teacher within three (3) school days of the absence; otherwise, the absence will be considered unlawful.



## **Educational Field Trips**

Educational field trips to destinations outside the United States or to a state or geographic area within Pennsylvania that is designated as a COVID-19 “hot spot” by the Pennsylvania Department of Health, will not be approved. Bear Creek Community Charter School reserves the right to decline any request for an educational field trip that the school feels is not in the best interest of the student or the school, or poses an unnecessary health/safety risk to the student or others within the school community. The school reserves the right to restrict students from attending school for up to 14 days (quarantine) if a student travels outside the local community. Staff members will be required to comply with similar conditions regarding travel and quarantine. Trips taken without school approval are considered unexcused absences.

## **Hygiene Practices for Students, Staff and Visitors**

All visitors will be provided with hand sanitizer upon entry to the building as part of a modified visitor check in process.

Students and staff will be encouraged daily, as part of morning announcements, to wash hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds especially prior to eating, after using the restroom, and after blowing their nose, coughing, or sneezing. Many classrooms have sinks, soap dispensers and paper towels within the classroom to facilitate this process.

Instructions will be posted in all restrooms reminding students and staff to wash hands with soap and water for at least 20 after using the restroom.

Students who are observed coughing or sneezing will be immediately instructed to wash their hands.

Staff members shall wash their hands upon entering the building; after using the restroom, and prior to eating in-school breakfast or lunch. Staff members who cough or sneeze shall immediately wash their hands or apply approved hand-sanitizer.

Students will be required wash their hands after each recess as well as before lunch.

Tissues will be available in all classrooms for student and staff use.

Hand sanitizer will be provided to all staff. Hand sanitizer will be available for students who do not have access to a sink in their classroom. The following products will be in use:

Assured Clear Hand Sanitizer	-	70% Ethyl Alcohol
Germ-X Instant Hand Sanitizer	-	62% Ethyl Alcohol
Purell Hand Sanitizer	-	70% Ethyl Alcohol

In the event these specific brands are unavailable, Bear Creek Community Charter School will utilize an alcohol-based hand rub/hand sanitizer with greater than 60% ethanol or 70% isopropanol.

Students will not share computers or educational supplies. Individual supplies, such as glue sticks, pencils, etc. will be provided for each student's personal use.

Athletic equipment will be disinfected between each class period.

## **Social Distancing**

It is the goal of Bear Creek Community Charter School to provide in-person instruction to the greatest extent possible, while implementing recommended health and safety protocols to keep students and staff safe. Bear Creek Community Charter School is making modifications to operations to allow for adequate social distancing among students and staff, including but not limited to the following:

- Classes will be split into three sections of each grade, rather than two sections of each grade, to reduce class size and allow for appropriate physical distancing among students within the classroom.
- Tables have been removed from classrooms such as Kindergarten, Art, Environmental Education, Science, etc. and have been replaced with individual student desks, all aligned to face forward.
- Retractable walls between two traditional classrooms and shared spaces will be opened to create one larger classroom to allow for appropriate physical distancing among students within the classroom.
- Common areas will be converted to temporary classrooms (i.e. gymnasium, dining hall, loft, commons, etc.) to allow for appropriate physical distancing among students. Communal spaces will not be used for student gatherings outside of modified use for instruction.
- Specialist classrooms (Art, Environmental Education, Music, Gifted Education, etc.) will be converted to regular education classrooms to allow for appropriate physical distancing among students.
- Offices and other spaces may be temporarily repurposed and used as mini-classroom purposes to support learning support and other small-group initiatives
- The Dining Hall will be closed for the foreseeable future. Grab and go breakfast will be available to students to eat in their classrooms while maintaining appropriate social distancing. Grab and go lunch will be distributed to individual classrooms so students can maintain appropriate social distancing. Students will be provided at least two choices for a school lunch.
- Classes will be assigned a designated schedule to use specific outdoor spaces for recess and "down-time", including the playground, basketball court and play field. This will allow us to limit the number of students interacting in a specific area during a specific timeframe. It will also allow playground equipment to be sanitized throughout the day.

- Two additional classrooms are under construction with occupancy expected in December 2020. This will provide more flexibility in accommodating social distancing among students. The design of these educational spaces include a sink for handwashing.
- All “typical” 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.
- Extra-curricular soccer will be held this fall, following PIAA guidelines and incorporating appropriate health and safety measures.
- Whenever possible, parent/teacher conferences will be held using remote technology.
- All school wide or larger group activities will comply with the health and safety requirements designated by the Pennsylvania Department of Health, which may change from time to time.

## Face Coverings

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.*

Staff will be provided different types of face coverings (cotton mask and plastic shield) to be used throughout the day. Face coverings should be worn when feasible – realizing that it may be impractical to utilize face coverings at all times throughout the school day, particularly when teaching a whole group lesson. Specific guidelines will be reviewed with staff as part of the annual pre-service training held prior to the start of school. Face coverings are to be washed daily using hot water, a standard detergent and tumble dried.

Students will be required to wear a face covering to the greatest extent possible, following guidance issued by the Pennsylvania Department of Health and Pennsylvania Department of Education as indicated on page 35. Students are also required to wear face coverings when using transportation provided by each local school district or when using transportation provided by a before/after-school care program.

Parents are urged to wash face coverings daily using hot water, a standard detergent and tumble dried. Parents will be asked to send an extra face covering to school in a paper bag (not plastic) with their child's name written on the outside.

Any student who cannot wear a face covering or face shield due to a medical condition, including those with respiratory issues that impede breathing, a mental health condition, or disability, and students who would be unable to remove a face covering without assistance are not required to wear face coverings. Individuals who are communicating or seeking to communicate with someone who is hearing impaired or who has another disability, where the ability to see the mouth is essential to communication, are not required to wear a face covering; however, individuals should consider using another type of face covering such as a plastic face shield.

## **Drinking Water**

Although water fountains will be available and sanitized frequently, students will be discouraged from using communal drinking fountains. Bottle fillers are available throughout the school, offering filtered water. Students will be provided a personal water bottle at the beginning of the school year they can utilize for drinking purposes.

## **Learning Support**

Bear Creek Community Charter School will continue to implement and provide the appropriate modifications and accommodations included in student's Individualized Education Program and 504 Plan in compliance with the Individuals with Disabilities in Education Act and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973. This includes the provision of related-service such as speech and language therapy, occupational therapy, physical therapy, and support for visual and hearing impairment. In addition, some students will be required to participate in in-person instruction five days each week in lieu of a hybrid-model, based upon their educational disability.

## **IEP and 504 Meetings**

Bear Creek Community Charter will coordinate all IEP and 504 meetings in-person, unless otherwise requested by a parent.

## Student Transportation

Bear Creek Community Charter School does not provide transportation for students to and from school. As required by the Pennsylvania Charter School law, each local school district is responsible for the transportation of students residing in their district to and from Bear Creek Community Charter School on days when the charter school is in session. Although we strongly recommend students wear face coverings while riding on the school bus and maintain proper social distancing, specific requirements will vary from district to district. We encourage all parents who will be relying on public transportation to and/or from school to contact the transportation department of their local school district to become familiar with each district's COVID-19 protocols for transportation.

Wilkes-Barre Area School District 730 South Main Street Wilkes-Barre, PA 18711-0375 Phone: (570) 826-7116 Contact: Sylvia Decker	STA Bus Line 771 Scott Street Wilkes-Barre, PA 18705 Phone: (570) 823-8611 Contact: Janelle Davison
Wyoming Valley West School District Maple & Price Streets Kingston, PA 18704 Phone: (570) 288-6551 Ext. 10801 Contact: Janet Sott	Myers Bus Company 446 Elm Street Kingston, PA 18704 Phone: (570) 288-8035 Contact: Phillip Meyers
Hanover Area School District 1600 Sans Souci Parkway Hanover, PA 18706 Phone: (570) 831-2300 Ext. 179 Contact: Hollie Evans	Churnetski Bus Company 146 Hillside Street Hanover, PA 18706 Phone: (570) 824-0832 Contact: Mary Ellen
Wyoming Area School District 20 Memorial Street Exeter, PA 18643 Phone: (570) 655-3733 Ext. 2346 Contact: Angelo Falzone	Pace Transportation 123 Armstrong Road Pittston, PA 18640 Phone: (570) 883-0620 Contact: Rob Pace
Pittston Area School District 5 Stout Street Yatesville, PA 18640 Phone: (570) 654-2415 Ext. 2205 Contact: James O'Brien	Pace Transportation 123 Armstrong Road Pittston, PA 18640 Phone: (570) 883-0620 Contact: Rob Pace
Crestwood School District 281 South Mountain Boulevard Mountain Top, PA 18707 Phone: (570) 474-6782 Ext. 328 Contact: Sarah Smigelski	Rinehimer Bus Lines Inc. 1899 Slocum Road Wapwallopen, PA 18660 Phone: (570) 868-3667 Contact: Moon Eckrote

## **Student Dismissal – Pick Up**

Bear Creek Community Charter School will dismiss students in groups based on “colors” through the back door of the school, beginning at 3:15 p.m. daily. Parents will no longer be permitted to congregate in the gymnasium for student pick up. Parents are asked to wait outside the double gates near the rear play area to pick up their children. Parents are encouraged to wear face coverings and maintain six feet of separation from other parents, students and staff. All students will be placed into a color group (red, green, blue, purple, yellow, etc.) and will be dismissed by group, which will allow us to control the number of children being dismissed at any given time yet allow for students residing in the same household, but in different grades, to be dismissed at the same time.

## **Use of Outdoor Spaces**

Use of outdoor spaces for instruction will be encouraged, including the courtyard, yurt, deck, pavilion, outdoor classroom, soccer field, outdoor play area and nature trails. All students will receive time for recess in their regular schedules. Students at the primary level will receive an extra block of time for recess.

## **Extra-Curricular Activities**

The extra-curricular activities typically held between the start of school and winter break will be cancelled, postponed or drastically modified to take into consideration current government mandates regarding group size, social distancing requirements as well as other health and safety best practices.

For detailed information for Fall Soccer, please refer to the Interscholastic Soccer Resocialization Plan located on the school’s web site at [www.bearcreekschool.com](http://www.bearcreekschool.com) → COVID-19.

## **Visitors**

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.

Upon entering the building, all essential visitors must register at the Main Office. Along with presenting appropriate identification, all visitors shall be required to:

1. Answer a series of questions regarding whether they have been exposed to anyone with COVID-19, are displaying symptoms such as a fever or dry cough, have actually been diagnosed themselves, or have recently traveled to high-risk countries
2. Submit to a non-contact temperature check.
3. Sanitize their hands.
4. Wear a mask/face covering.

A record of each visit will be maintained in the Raptor Visitor Management System.

To limit the number of individuals in the building, Bear Creek Community Charter School will not engage student teachers during the first half of the 2020-2021 school year.

Whenever possible, non-essential meetings or visits will either be rescheduled or be held outside the school building (outdoor area or pavilion).

The Volunteer Program will be temporarily suspended for the first quarter of the 2020-2021 school year.

To help ensure the health and safety of our students and our staff, Bear Creek Community Charter School reserves the right to restrict entry to the school building for any reason.

### **Staff Training**

All staff will receive training on Bear Creek Community Charter School's Reopening Health and Safety Plan, including social distancing protocols, as part of mandatory training on August 31, September 1, September 2, and September 3.

Housekeeping and maintenance staff will receive training related to proper disinfecting protocols prior to the start of the school year.

The School Nurse and Director of Student Affairs will review appropriate guidance from the Pennsylvania Department of Health and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

Updated information relating to COVID-19 will be communicated to staff regularly as protocols change, and will be incorporated in future after-school meetings and in-service trainings.

### **Cleaning & Disinfecting**

Cleaning and disinfecting of all classrooms, offices, other work spaces and common areas by the housekeeping team will occur nightly between 4:00 p.m. and 7:00 p.m. Bear Creek Community Charter School will use *CDC Guidance for Cleaning and Disinfecting Public Spaces, Workplaces, Businesses, Schools, and Homes* as the baseline for its cleaning and disinfecting practices. Training sessions for maintenance and housekeeping staff will occur prior to the opening of school.

The following are a representative (not all-inclusive) list of cleaning and disinfecting tasks that will occur every evening:

1. All carpeted areas, including classrooms, offices, entryways, common areas, and the elevator will be vacuumed daily.
2. All tile, terrazzo and Marmoleum flooring will be swept and wet-cleaned daily.
3. All student desks, tables and chairs to be cleaned daily with liquid disinfectant and clean cloth.
4. All teacher desks and chair handles to be cleaned daily with liquid disinfectant and clean cloth.
5. All hard-surfaces in classroom (counters, window sills, door handles, white board trays, etc.) to be cleaned daily with liquid disinfectant and clean cloth.
6. All student restrooms (both group and in-classroom) will be thoroughly cleaned with liquid disinfectant and paper towels – sinks, partition doors, door handles, commodes, grab bars, fixtures and all touchable surfaces.
7. All water fountains and bottle fillers will be thoroughly cleaned with liquid disinfectant and paper towels.
8. Dining Hall tables, counters, door handles and window sills will be thoroughly cleaned with liquid disinfectant and clean cloth.
9. Furniture, door handles and all “touchable surfaces” in vestibules and common areas will be thoroughly cleaned with liquid disinfectant and clean cloth.

Supplemental housekeeping will occur throughout the school day utilizing temporary maintenance staff reassigned to work during the school day, 10:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. The following are a representative (not all-inclusive) list of cleaning and disinfecting tasks that will occur multiple times during the mid-day shift:

1. Door handles and touchable surfaces in all vestibules and common areas will be thoroughly cleaned with liquid disinfectant and clean cloth.
2. Stair railings will be thoroughly cleaned with liquid disinfectant and clean cloth.
3. All water fountains and bottle fillers will be thoroughly cleaned with liquid disinfectant and paper towels.
4. All student restrooms (both group and in-classroom) will be thoroughly cleaned with liquid disinfectant and paper towels – sinks, partition doors, door handles, commodes, grab bars, fixtures and all touchable surfaces.
5. All staff restrooms will be thoroughly cleaned with liquid disinfectant and paper towels – sinks, door handles, commodes, grab bars, fixtures and all touchable surfaces.
6. In the event of a spill or student accident impacting a carpeted area during the school day, the appropriate area of the carpet will be thorough cleaned using an appropriate disinfectant and carpet cleaning machine; or the impacted carpet squares will be replaced.



Additionally, route in-class disinfecting will be done by classroom teachers and paraprofessionals as they rotate between classrooms, but at least once daily, including:

1. The classroom telephone will be cleaned with liquid disinfectant and paper towels.
2. The remote for the classroom LCD projector will be cleaned with liquid disinfectant.
3. The handles to the classroom door, teacher's desk, teacher's chair and table at the front of the room will be cleaned with a liquid disinfectant
4. As time permits, door handles, counters, and shared tables will be cleaned with liquid disinfectant and paper towels.

Each classroom will be provided with an appropriately-labeled spray bottle of approved disinfectant and a roll of paper towels. Additional supplies will be requested as needed.

Bear Creek Community Charter School utilizes MAQUAT 64-PD from Mason Chemical Company, branded Halt® by Spartan Chemical Company, as its primary disinfectant on hard surfaces. This disinfectant includes quaternary ammonium as its active ingredient, and is approved for use against the Human Coronavirus. This product was evaluated at 2 ounces per gallon use level (703 ppm quat active), in the presence of 5% serum with a ten-minute contact time and found to be effective against human coronavirus on hard nonporous environmental surfaces. (Testing is performed per EPA Guidance (DIS/TSS-7). Two separate lots are tested. Inactivation of virus must be demonstrated at all dilutions when no cytotoxicity is observed or at all dilutions above the cytotoxic level when it is observed. The data must demonstrate a 3-log reduction in viral titer for both lots.) Efficacy data is available on the school's web page under "COVID-19 Information". In the event Halt® by Spartan Chemical Company is unavailable, Bear Creek Community Charter School will utilize an alternative product recommended by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention or the Environmental Protection Agency.

## **Outdoor Air Exchange**

Bear Creek Community Charter School's facility is less than five years old and our heating, ventilation and air conditioning ("HVAC") system is modern and meets all appropriate building codes and best-practices following the national consensus standard for outside air ventilation under ASHRAE, Ventilation for Acceptable Indoor Air Quality and its published addenda. Bear Creek Community Charter School will ensure its HVAC system is properly maintained and in good working order while school is in session. The Nurse's Office, restrooms and certain other spaces are also equipped with supplemental mechanical ventilation for additional exchange of indoor and outdoor air.

## **Monitoring Students & Staff for Symptoms/History of Exposure**

Students, staff, and others will be monitored to ensure they are healthy and not exhibiting signs of illness by first educating all stakeholders (students, staff, parents/guardians) on the signs and symptoms of COVID-19.

Students and their parents as well as employees will be asked to self-monitor at home each day before sending children to school and/or reporting to school or work. Bear Creek Community Charter School will provide resources and guidance to assist students, parents and staff in this process, including guidance from the Pennsylvania Department of Health and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/symptoms-testing/symptoms.html>

Parents will be continually reminded as to the importance of keeping symptomatic children home from school. Each school day, the first teacher (e.g. first period, homeroom, classroom teacher) that comes in contact with students will remind students of the signs and symptoms of COVID-19 with reminders to go to the nurse immediately if feeling symptomatic. The school nurse will evaluate any individual who presents with symptoms. Staff members who feel ill will be required to stay home from school/work.

## **Isolating Students, Staff and Visitors with Potential Illness**

If a staff, student, or other member of the school community becomes ill or has been exposed to an individual confirmed positive for COVID-19, that individual will be by the School Nurse. As necessary, the School Nurse will consult with the Pennsylvania Department of Health. The School Nurse's evaluation will include taking the temperature of the individual who presents with symptoms, isolating them from other students and staff, and requiring the individual to wear a face covering until they can be removed from the building.

Individuals will be isolated in the Nurse's Office, which is equipped with a supplemental ventilation system to evacuate airborne particles from the area. When the Nurse's Office is being used for isolation purposes, no other students and staff members will be permitted to enter. A "service desk" will be available to all others outside the Nurse's office for non-COVID related conditions. When used for isolation purposes, the Nurse's Office will be closed for the remainder of the school day and thoroughly cleaned and disinfected. Additional nursing and support staff will be called in as necessary to support school operations, based on the needs present on any given school day. The School Nurse will be provided with additional personal protective equipment such as N95/KN95 masks, disposable gowns and plastic face shields.

Staff who are unable to return will be offered options as part of the Families First Coronavirus Response Act (FFCRA), which was previously disseminated to employees and available in the 2020 Staff Handbook.

Bear Creek Community Charter School will consult with the Pennsylvania Department of Health regarding cases of students or staff who are exposed to COVID-19, including length of potential quarantine and criteria for return to school/work.

Bear Creek Community Charter School will notify families and staff in the event of a confirmed case of COVID-19 within the school community. Notification would take place via emails to families, and posting on our websites. Bear Creek Community Charter School will comply with the Family Educational Rights Privacy Act and the Health Insurance Privacy Portability act when disseminating health information. No student-specific or staff-specific information will be released without prior consultation with both the Pennsylvania Department of Health and the school's legal counsel.

A clearance from a medical provider will be required before a staff member or student, following a COVID-19 isolation or quarantine, is permitted to return to school.

### **Vulnerable Populations**

Bear Creek Community Charter School recognizes that certain individuals are considered more vulnerable than others as it relates to COVID-19. Bear Creek Community Charter School will provide appropriate accommodations for students who qualify under Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and will provide reasonable accommodations to employees under the Americans with Disabilities Act. Examples include implementing student-specific planning, increased social distancing strategies, increased communication with parents, the provision of additional personal protective equipment, etc.

### **Other Considerations**

Until further notice, all non-essential staff travel is prohibited. This includes attending off-site seminars, conferences, etc.

Staff members may consider bringing a change of clothes to work. Prior to leaving the school building for the day, staff members may consider washing their hands and changing their clothes – placing the clothes they wear to work in a plastic bag and immediately washing them upon returning home for the day, and discarding the bag they were transported in.

### **Notice: Subject to Change**

As the COVID-19 pandemic continues to evolve, medical professionals are learning more about the transmission of the virus. As such, guidance will continue to change. Bear Creek Community Charter School reserves the right to change its policies and operating procedures based on the latest guidance from the Pennsylvania Department of Education, Pennsylvania Department of Health, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, and other professional sources of information.

## Additional Information

Additional information regarding COVID-19 and its impact on school operations can be found on the School's web site at [www.beracreekschool.com](http://www.beracreekschool.com) → click on COVID 19 Information at the top of the page.

Bear Creek Community Charter School is the first and only free public charter school operating in Luzerne County. Since our opening in 2004 with 98 students, we have grown to an enrollment near the maximum capacity of 468 students.

### Reopening School & COVID 19

#### Bear Creek Community Charter School's Plan

The health, safety, and well-being of our students and our staff is our highest priority. Everyone wants life to return to normal, including our school environment. That being said, we are faced with not only an extraordinary public health crisis, but also a great deal of uncertainty. That uncertainty, coupled with little scientific data available and a great deal of differing opinions, makes the process of reopening school extremely complicated. To further complicate matters, we need to consider a host of ancillary issues as well as guidance that is frequently changing and can also conflict with existing state and federal law. Decision-making must consider the following factors, just to name a few:

- The changing environment related to the COVID-19 virus, including increases and decreases in infection rates.
- Guidance from the Centers for Disease Control & Prevention.
- Guidance from the Pennsylvania Department of Education.
- Logistics associated with prevention and mitigation strategies such as social distancing, wearing masks, personal hygiene, student/staff illness, etc.
- Concerns and personal beliefs of parents, which may vary significantly.
- Home life situations such as parents working, lack of internet access, lack of access to technology.
- Requirements of the Every Student Succeeds Act.
- Requirements of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act.
- Requirements of Section 504 of the Americans with Disabilities Act.
- Transportation logistics of ten different local school districts.

Bear Creek Community Charter School is working to develop a plan that will allow for in-person instruction to the greatest extent possible, **based on current circumstances**. Because of developmental concerns relating to primary-aged children, our goal is to provide as much continuity for in-person instruction as possible for students in Kindergarten through Fourth Grade. Bear Creek Community Charter School will place a greater emphasis on integrating technology into the educational process in all grades. Due to physical space limitations resulting from social distancing requirements, students in Grade 5 through Grades 8 may be exposed to a hybrid-learning environment, to include a combination of in-person instruction and distance learning.

Other aspects of school operations are also being evaluated such as movement of students and staff within the building, use of outdoor areas, serving of breakfast and lunch, school health services, etc. Every aspect of regular school operations will be



#### COVID-19 Updates

- Update July 21, 2020
- Update July 2, 2020
- Update June 21, 2020
- Update April 10, 2020
- Update March 31, 2020
- Update March 29, 2020
- Update March 13, 2020

#### Other Resources

- COVID-19 Self Check
- COVID-19 Frequently Asked Questions
- Family Survey 2020
- Daily Disinfectant

# Yellow Phase Plan

## **Introduction: Yellow Phase Plan**

Preliminary Guidance for Phased Reopening of Pre-K to 12 Schools issued by the Pennsylvania Department of Education on June 3, 2020 states schools may provide in-person instruction after developing a written Health and Safety Plan, securing approval by each school entity's governing body (Board of Trustees) and posting this plan on the school or district's publicly available website.

Although Bear Creek Community Charter School understands the importance of coordination of effort and consistency in statewide planning and response, it also understands that each local community is unique, and has been and will continue to be impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic in different ways. These impacts are not necessarily county-wide, but may be more specific to a locality or localities within a county. Therefore; Bear Creek Community Charter School does not want to be "pigeon-holed" into plans based solely on these three specific designations: red, yellow, or green as such designations have been historically identified at the county level. We believe basing decisions on what is happening "on the ground" in the local communities we serve is most beneficial. Bear Creek Community Charter School reserves the right to transition more students to a blended learning environment (mix of in-person learning and at-home remote learning) or to move some students completely to a remote learning environment, should the need arise. Such decisions will be data-driven and locally-informed, and determined to be in the best interests of the children and families in the communities we serve.

It is goal of Bear Creek Community Charter School to provide in-person instruction to the greatest extent possible, while implementing recommended health and safety protocols to keep students and staff safe.

The operating plan for the state-designated Yellow Phase is similar to, if not the same as the operating plan for the state-designated Green Phase. Charter school operations may be modified based on the specifics of what is transpiring in the local community, as well as developments within the smaller school community. When such modifications occur, Bear Creek Community Charter School's Health & Safety Plan will be updated and posted on the School's publicly-accessible web site. Updated information will also be shared with parents, staff and other stakeholders using e-mail, social media, and other methods of communication.

# Red Phase Plan

## Introduction: Red Phase Plan

Preliminary Guidance for Phased Reopening of Pre-K to 12 Schools issued by the Pennsylvania Department of Education on June 3, 2020 states “activities must be informed by Governor Wolf’s Process to Reopen Pennsylvania. The administration has categorized reopening into three phases: red, yellow, or green.”

Although Bear Creek Community Charter School understands the importance of coordination of effort and consistency in statewide planning and response, it also understands that each local community is unique, and has been and will continue to be impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic in different ways. These impacts are not necessarily county-wide, but may be more specific to a locality or localities within a county. Therefore; Bear Creek Community Charter School does not want to be “pigeon-holed” into plans based solely on these three specific designations: red, yellow, or green as such designations have been historically identified at the county level.

We believe basing decisions on what is happening “on the ground” in the local communities we serve is most beneficial. For example, in the Spring of 2020, Luzerne County was reported to have a significant number of new COVID-19 cases, prompting state government to designate Luzerne County as a whole in a more restrictive phase. After analyzing geographical data, it was determined that the majority of new cases of COVID-19 were predominately identified in southern Luzerne County, specifically the City of Hazleton. In this situation, decisions were made county-wide relating to closing schools, rather than locally.

Bear Creek Community Charter School’s reopening plan is divided into the three phases identified by state government (red, yellow, and green); with operating parameters that are similar between yellow and green, if not identical. In a situation where Luzerne County transitions to a more restrictive phase (green to yellow), Bear Creek Community Charter School reserves the right to make data-driven, locally-informed decisions that are in the best interests of the children and families in the communities we serve. This includes transitioning additional students to a blended learning environment, to a remote learning environment, from a synchronous remote learning environment to an asynchronous learning environment, etc.

Conversely, in a situation where Luzerne County transitions to a least restrictive phase (yellow to Green) Bear Creek Community Charter School reserves the right to make data-driven, locally-informed decisions that are in the best interests of the children and families in the communities we serve. This includes transitioning additional students from a blended learning environment to an in-person learning environment, from an asynchronous to a synchronous remote learning environment, etc.

It is goal of Bear Creek Community Charter School to provide in-person instruction to the greatest extent possible, while implementing recommended health and safety protocols to keep students and staff safe. Implementing the red phase of this Plan will be an action of last resort. The red phase of the Plan represents the most restrictive and aggressive mitigation efforts and has the sole purpose of minimizing the spread of COVID-19 through aggressive social distancing measures, resulting in the closure of schools. This will often originate with an Executive Order from the Governor of Pennsylvania. During the red phase, there is no provision for in-person instruction.

Under the red phase, telework is required for all non-essential staff. Virtual/remote learning is the only type of instruction that is permitted and large gatherings are prohibited.

## **Academic Instruction**

All students will engage in virtual/remote instruction. Students will continue to receive instruction in all core academic subjects along with physical education. Other specials will not be offered. Online learning will consist of a blended model of both synchronous instruction and asynchronous instruction.

As required by Pennsylvania law (Chapter 11), the "instruction time for students shall be time in the school day devoted to instruction and instructional activities provided as an integral part of the school program under the direction of certified school employees." 22 Pa. Code § 11.2. Although instruction may be provided in synchronous or asynchronous format to count as instruction, students' instructional activities must be under the direction of a certified school employee, unless otherwise permitted (24 P.S. § 17-1724-A).

Content-specific teachers will engage students in real-time online lessons and activities using Google Classroom and other Google products within the Google platform. Participation in distance learning is required, and will be incorporated into each student's grade. In addition to synchronous instruction, students will be assigned a combination of independent work as well as student-specific online activities in both Math and English Language Arts, using i-Ready instructional software that is accessible through the internet. These additional learning activities will be under the direct supervision of a certified teacher and will be considered graded assignments.

## **Student Grades**

Students will be graded based on the accurate and timely completion of assignments, along with participation in online instruction. Students who do not engage in the virtual/remote instructional process may be at risk of failing the school year.

Parents will have access to student's grades by utilizing the online Parent Portal. Written instructions to access Parent Portal was provided to all parents/guardians via U.S. Mail as part of the summer mailing that will be mailed on August 14, 2020.

## **Attendance and Truancy**

Pennsylvania law requires that any school entity that includes time spent in a remote learning environment toward instructional time requirements must implement a system that accurately tracks out of school instructional time similar to attendance in the school building. Teachers will take attendance for each class utilizing the Power Teacher attendance tool.

Parents will have access to daily attendance by utilizing the online Parent Portal. Written instructions to access Parent Portal was provided to all parents/guardians via U.S. Mail as part of the summer mailing that occurred on August 10, 2020. A modified attendance policy will be implemented to incorporate distance learning, and Pennsylvania's truancy law will apply.

If a student is unable to participate in remote/virtual instruction because of illness or other authorized reason (refer to Student/Parent Handbook), the parent/guardian must submit a written excuse to the child's teacher within three (3) school days of the absence; otherwise, the absence will be considered unlawful. Excuses can be mailed to the school, or parents can take a photo of the written excuse with their cell phone and e-mail it to [office@bearcreekschool.com](mailto:office@bearcreekschool.com) within three days of the absence.

## **Technology**

While attending school in-person or in a hybrid environment, 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.

Bear Creek Community Charter School will provide students with a school Chromebook or iPad to facilitate remote/virtual instruction. These devices will remain property of the School. Students and parents will be responsible to keep them safe and protect them from damage. Students will utilize the Chromebook/iPad, along with Google Classroom and other Google products to engage teachers and classmates in synchronous instruction, and will use the technology provided to complete and submit graded assignments.



## Internet Access

Bear Creek Community Charter School will strive to accommodate students who do not have internet access at home. Accommodations may include:

- Working with parents/guardians and local internet service providers to procure low-cost or no-cost wired internet service based on demonstrated economic need;
- Providing parents/guardians with wireless “hot-spots” to facilitate online learning, based on demonstrated economic need, where other internet service is not available; or
- Providing parents/guardians and students with the credentials to access the School’s wireless network on campus, including expansive parking lots, school pavilion, outdoor classroom, and yurt.

The following local internet service providers offer low-cost or no-cost internet access to parents/guardians based on demonstrated economic need:

Service Electric Cable TV, Inc.  
15 J Campbell Collins Drive  
Wilkes-Barre, PA 18702  
www.sectv.com  
570-825-8508

Frontier Communications  
www.frontier.com  
Nicole Ellis  
1-844-320-4445, Extension 1122597  
Nicole.ellis@ftr.com

Xfinity from Comcast  
www.xfinity.com  
1-800-266-2278

Learn more about the Lifeline Program for Low-Income Consumers from the Federal Communications Commission at <https://www.fcc.gov/general/lifeline-program-low-income-consumers>

## **Learning Support**

Bear Creek Community Charter School will continue to implement and provide the appropriate modifications and accommodations included in student's Individualized Education Program and 504 Plan in compliance with the Individuals with Disabilities in Education Act and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973. This includes the provision of related-service such as speech and language therapy, occupational therapy, physical therapy, and support for visual and hearing impairment. Whenever possible, these related-services will be provided online or via teleconference. One-on-one sessions may be considered with enhanced health and safety protocols.

## **IEP and 504 Meetings**

Bear Creek Community Charter will coordinate all IEP and 504 meetings via teleconference, and will provide parents with the required notices and appropriate documents electronically via e-mail or using the U.S. Mail.

## **Extra-Curricular Activities**

All extra-curricular activities will be cancelled, postponed or drastically modified to take into consideration current government mandates regarding group size, social distancing requirements as well as other health and safety best practices.

## **Visitors to Campus**

Staff will be available in the Main Office during limited office hours, which will be posted on the School's web site and communicated to parents via e-mail. Person-to-person contact will be restricted. Office hours are available so parents can call the school to receive information, and to drop off/pick up paperwork or other materials. Access to the school building will be restricted.

The John Glenn Trail on the Bear Creek Community Charter School campus may be open to the public, from sunrise to sunset. Information on trail access will be posted on the School's web site and communicated to parents via e-mail and social media.

Bear Creek Community Charter School's playground and pavilion will be closed to the public.

## **Staff Training**

Staff will continue to participate in ongoing professional development in support of school operations as well as individual professional goals. All professional development will either occur online or via teleconference.

## **Cleaning & Disinfecting**

Bear Creek Community Charter School facilities will be cleaned and disinfected routinely during periods of school closure.

## **Other Considerations**

All business-related staff travel is prohibited. This includes attending off-site seminars, conferences, etc.

## **Notice: Subject to Change**

As the COVID-19 pandemic continues to evolve, medical professionals are learning more about the transmission of the virus. As such, guidance will continue to change. Bear Creek Community Charter School reserves the right to change its policies and operating procedures based on the latest guidance from the Pennsylvania Department of Education, Pennsylvania Department of Health, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, and other professional sources of information.

## Additional Information

Additional information regarding COVID-19 and its impact on school operations can be found on the School's web site at [www.beracreekschool.com](http://www.beracreekschool.com) → click on COVID 19 Information at the top of the page.

Bear Creek Community Charter School is the first and only free public charter school operating in Luzerne County. Since our opening in 2004 with 98 students, we have grown to an enrollment near the maximum capacity of 468 students.

### Reopening School & COVID 19

#### Bear Creek Community Charter School's Plan

The health, safety, and well-being of our students and our staff is our highest priority. Everyone wants life to return to normal, including our school environment. That being said, we are faced with not only an extraordinary public health crisis, but also a great deal of uncertainty. That uncertainty, coupled with little scientific data available and a great deal of differing opinions, makes the process of reopening school extremely complicated. To further complicate matters, we need to consider a host of ancillary issues as well as guidance that is frequently changing and can also conflict with existing state and federal law. Decision-making must consider the following factors, just to name a few:

- The changing environment related to the COVID-19 virus, including increases and decreases in infection rates.
- Guidance from the Centers for Disease Control & Prevention.
- Guidance from the Pennsylvania Department of Education.
- Logistics associated with prevention and mitigation strategies such as social distancing, wearing masks, personal hygiene, student/staff illness, etc.
- Concerns and personal beliefs of parents, which may vary significantly.
- Home life situations such as parents working, lack of internet access, lack of access to technology.
- Requirements of the Every Student Succeeds Act.
- Requirements of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act.
- Requirements of Section 504 of the Americans with Disabilities Act.
- Transportation logistics of ten different local school districts.

Bear Creek Community Charter School is working to develop a plan that will allow for in-person instruction to the greatest extent possible, **based on current circumstances**. Because of developmental concerns relating to primary-aged children, our goal is to provide as much continuity for in-person instruction as possible for students in Kindergarten through Fourth Grade. Bear Creek Community Charter School will place a greater emphasis on integrating technology into the educational process in all grades. Due to physical space limitations resulting from social distancing requirements, students in Grade 5 through Grades 8 may be exposed to a hybrid-learning environment, to include a combination of in-person instruction and distance learning.

Other aspects of school operations are also being evaluated such as movement of students and staff within the building, use of outdoor areas, serving of breakfast and lunch, school health services, etc. Every aspect of regular school operations will be



#### COVID-19 Updates

- Update July 21, 2020
- Update July 2, 2020
- Update June 21, 2020
- Update April 10, 2020
- Update March 31, 2020
- Update March 29, 2020
- Update March 13, 2020

#### Other Resources

- COVID-19 Self Check
- COVID-19 Frequently Asked Questions
- Family Survey 2020
- Daily Disinfectant

Bear Creek



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