



*Blue Ridge
Educational Center
Unlocking Learning Potential*

Blue Ridge Educational Center Phase III Health Mitigation Health Plan for Return to New Learning

July 2020

BREC's Phase III Health Plan for Return to New Learning has been created to reflect [Virginia's Return to School Plan](#) (updated July 6, 2020), and to accommodate the hybrid/combined 50% capacity in-person and distance learning model approved by the Board of Directors on July 23, 2020. This plan has been developed by members of the Emergency Operations Planning Team in consultation with the Warren County Health Department, Warren County Public Schools and the Lord Fairfax Health District.

Guiding Principles

The role of children in the transmission of SARS-CoV-2, which is the virus that causes COVID-19, remains somewhat unclear and we are learning more every day. Researchers agree that children are not contracting the new coronavirus at the same rate as adults. However, data has yet to show whether young children transmit the new coronavirus at a similar rate as adults. Per the [Centers for Disease Control and Prevention](#), the more people a student or staff member interacts with and the longer the interaction, the higher risk of COVID-19 spread. As such, different activities come with different levels of risk:

- * **Lowest Risk:** Students and teachers engage in virtual-only classes, activities, and events.
- * **More Risk:** Small, in person classes, activities and events. Groups of students stay together and with the same teacher throughout/across school days and groups do not mix. Students remain at least 6 feet apart and do not share objects (e.g., hybrid virtual

and in-person class structures, or staggered/rotated scheduling to accommodate smaller class sizes).

* Highest Risk: Full sized, in person classes, activities, and events. Students are not spaced apart, share materials or supplies, and mix between classes and activities. Strategies that will assist in successful planning should center around promoting behaviors that reduce spread of COVID-19. This includes maintaining healthy environments and operations, preparing for, and acting when, someone gets sick and/or presents with symptoms.

Continuous communication among Blue Ridge Educational Center (BREC), the Lord Fairfax Health District (LFHD), Warren County Emergency Services, local public school districts and others in the community have created an environment where mitigation strategies have been successful across settings. Current guidance from state and local partners, input from community stakeholders and successful local strategies are all being used to develop BREC's Phase III Health Plan for Return to New Learning.

I. Planning to reopen

Our most pressing priority is ensuring that students and staff have as safe and healthy learning environments as possible to return to this fall. Therefore, BREC's Phase III Health Plan for Return to New Learning includes mitigation strategies detailed in CDC guidance to promote behaviors that reduce spread, maintain healthy environments and operations, as well as prepare for when someone gets sick. Planning on reopening means that we must direct much of our initial efforts to developing a safe and supportive environment. Re-opening planning includes:

- A COVID-19 response team within the school has been created (Attachment A), with a point person. Our Emergency Operation Plan (EOP) team will serve as this team with additional members as identified.
- Communication will flow with the Loud Fairfax Health Department on at least a daily basis. Contact information for reaching the local health department are as follows:
Phone: 540-722-3480 Contact Liaison for BREC: Paula Mills
Epidemiologist phone: 540-771-3725
- Health and absenteeism monitoring and reporting will be ongoing. This information will be reported to LFHD as needed.
 1. Student attendance will be tracked in accordance with BREC school policy and guidelines set forth by the Virginia Department of Education. School staff will receive guidance on the parameters for taking attendance for students both in person and virtually. BREC administrators will work with placing school divisions to track student attendance and intervene. Interventions that will be employed by school staff may include:
 - Verification of reason for absences by representatives and school staff;
 - Intervention at three and five consecutive absences intended to stress the importance of school attendance whether it be virtual or in-person; and
 - IEP team intervention at 10 consecutive unexcused absences with referrals made as needed.
- Strategies to prioritize the health of staff and students, mitigate disease transmission, and maintain healthy environments are being implemented. Since March 2020, this has included:
 1. Providing remote learning and teleworking for all students and staff.
 2. Strong encouragement of families and staff to self-monitor their signs/symptoms, to stay home when ill, and to practice self-care strategies to prevent the spread of illness.

3. Health screenings are conducted for all persons entering the school and PPE is required.
 4. In person meetings have been extremely limited and school staff meetings are conducted virtually until re-opening.
- Communication with multiple stakeholders is ongoing and will include the following:
 1. An orientation and training for all staff specific to new COVID-19 mitigation strategies. This training will be completed by the school's director and/or her designee.
 2. An orientation will be required for all students and parents returning to school for both in-person and virtual learning. This will be age and developmentally appropriate for all learners, focusing on new COVID-19 mitigation strategies.
 3. Communication to parents, staff and students with regard to any new policies or information will be conducted initially by the school director and/or her designee.
 4. Plans to communicate positive cases and/or an outbreak detected at school will be determined in collaboration with the LFHD. As a communication mechanism already exists, which includes sample letters and correspondence, guidance will be given to BREC with regard to communicating positive cases and actions to be taken. (Attachments B1-B5). BREC will collaborate with the WCHD to determine notification procedures for families and community members utilizing the ["Preparing for When Someone Gets Sick"](#) process and coordinate messaging on the school's webpage.
 5. BREC Administrators will:
 - Create written correspondence to send to all parents/guardians;
 - Meet with the EOP team on a monthly basis to provide important health updates;
 - A Member of the EOP team will attend Local Emergency Planning Committee (LEPC) meetings;
 - Provide training resources for all staff members to include;
 - Safe and effective use of PPE;
 - Recognizing COVID-19 symptoms in staff members and students;
 - Working with and supporting an ill student.
 - Blue Ridge Educational Center will work collaboratively with all stakeholders and will continue participation in community response efforts. Since March 2020, this has included transportation support, home delivery of school supplies, therapeutic interventions for students and families, technology support, and participation with the local emergency planning committee.

- Personal protective equipment (PPE) is being acquired on an ongoing basis in preparation for adequate PPE materials for all students and staff for each day of school.
- A room will be designated to support possible COVID-19 cases that are identified in school. N95 masks, shields, gowns and gloves will be available for use in this location.
- Resources are in place to support the social and emotional needs of students to ensure that our school, students and staff are healthy and safe before we can effectively focus on teaching and learning. This includes access to community-based mental health supports who partner with BREC, as well as, on-going and direct therapeutic support to all BREC students, their families and BREC staff members.

II. Promoting Behaviors that Reduce the Spread of COVID-19

Consistent with the Phase Guidance for Virginia Schools, physical distancing and other measures will remain important prevention strategies. Additional measures will include gathering limits (consistent with any existing Executive Order) and other mitigation strategies. BREC will follow all guidance from the CDC to the greatest extent possible. The CDC advises that individuals maintain six feet of distance to reduce the risk of COVID-19 transmission. The World Health Organization (WHO) advises that schools maintain a distance of at least one meter (approx. three feet) between everyone present at school. Additionally, the American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) says spacing as close as three feet may have similar benefits if students wear cloth face coverings and do not have symptoms of illness.

Adherence to appropriate physical distancing and hygiene requirements throughout each stage of the recovery process is necessary for the health and safety of BREC's school community. Signs and messaging will be posted throughout the school to promote behaviors that reduce the spread of illness. Those at BREC will be expected to:

- Complete daily health screenings
- Wear face coverings and masks unless appropriate physical distancing is adhered to
- Whenever possible, maintain at least a 6ft physical distance from others
- Wash hands with soap and water for at least 20 seconds and use hand sanitizer if washing is not available
- Cover coughs and sneezes into an elbow or sleeve and throw away tissues after each use
- Staying home when sick is required. If you are feeling sick you should stay home. Staff and students who have recently had close contact with a person with COVID-19 should also stay home and monitor their health.

In addition to physical distancing, other distancing precautions include, but are not limited to: restricting mixing classes/groups of students, closing or staggering the use of communal spaces, limiting the size of groups participating in outdoor activities with a priority on physical distancing and limiting mixing of classrooms. Indoor and outdoor recreational sports may occur if ten feet of physical distancing can be maintained by all instructors and participants.

In order to acclimate our staff members, students and their families to these new school practices, comprehensive orientations will be held prior to students returning for new learning. An education / training plan for staff, students, and families will be led by a school administrator.

III. Maintaining Healthy Environments

- Daily screenings will be conducted for all staff and students entering the buildings. This will be done with a temporal thermometer. School staff will use the COVID-19 screening flow chart provided by the CDC. All staff and students, supported by their parents/guardians, will be asked to complete the daily self-assessment health questionnaire (Attachment C).
- Cleaning and Disinfecting of frequently touched surfaces (e.g. door handles, sinks, desk tops, classroom equipment) will be conducted at least daily or between each use as much as possible. The use of shared objects will be limited. Additionally, a schedule for increased cleaning and disinfecting will be followed. Until otherwise determined by the Board of Directors, the physical facility will be closed for deep cleaning between each learning group (e.g. every Wednesday and Saturday). Cleaning products should not be used near children, and staff should ensure that there is adequate ventilation when using these products to prevent children or themselves from inhaling toxic fumes. Cleaning products for deep cleaning will only be used when the school is closed to students.
- Hygiene Practices
 1. BREC follows the [guidelines issued by the CDC](#) and uses the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) approved disinfectants. Special attention has been given to ensure that updated guidelines are followed, and the CDC website is closely monitored for changing information. BREC custodial staff have been trained to meet these guidelines. The school administrator and custodial staff will work together in determining any additional needs for the building.
 2. In accordance with CDC guidance, BREC hand sanitizer, containing a minimum of 60 percent ethanol alcohol, will be strategically placed throughout the school.

3. Sharing supplies will be kept to a minimum. Commonly touched areas of any classroom or other location throughout the school building will be cleaned and sanitized by school staff throughout the school day.
- Ventilation: BREC has taken measure to assure that the ventilation system is operating properly and the circulation of outside air is done at the maximum extent possible. This will be continuously monitored. Prior to re-opening, a site evaluation of all current equipment will be conducted to ensure the system is bringing in the significant amount of outside air already required by Code. BREC will increase the amount of outside air into buildings prior to occupancy, and post occupancy for the building and for each classroom.
 - Water System: to minimize the risk of diseases associated with water, [CDC guidance](#) is being followed to ensure that BREC's water system and features are safe for use after the prolonged school closure. The hallway drinking fountain is closed. The water bottle refill station will be frequently cleaned and sanitized for use. Staff and students will be encouraged to bring their own water bottle to minimize the use and touching of water stations.
 - Physical distancing will be encouraged at all times. The department of education guidelines will be followed. The number of students in a class will be limited and classroom layouts will be modified to create 6ft of distancing when feasible. In addition, blended learning, virtual learning and other opportunities will be employed. Group outings will be postponed and planned in accordance with Executive Orders that are in effect. All volunteers for the school must be approved by the administrator and will be subject to all guidelines for students and staff.

IV. Maintaining Healthy Operations

Protections and supports are available for our most vulnerable staff and students. Individual plans will be developed for each person identified with these needs. Some examples are remote work sites, flexible scheduling, and other strategies that can help protect this segment of the population while supporting them in the least restrictive environment. Administration has gathered information of who needs this support and it is done in a confidential manner.

- BREC will follow the Governor's Executive Orders. Gatherings, field trips, and other activities will follow this guidance.
- Sick leave policies are in place that allow staff to stay home or self-isolate when they are sick. BREC practices allow employees to stay home if they are sick with COVID-19,

quarantined due to exposure, and to care for a family member diagnosed with COVID-19. Employees will utilize accrued sick leave in this circumstance.

- As continuity of operations is critical, BREC will cross train staff in a variety of functions. These cross training efforts include clinic coverage, administrative duties and other areas.
- All water fountains will be turned off and bottle filling stations will be provided.
- Cohorting of students will be practiced for at least the 1st semester of the school year and will continue as deemed necessary and appropriate. Mixing of staff and students will be limited to ensure that groups of staff and students are as static as possible.
- Consistent with applicable law and privacy policies, staff and families should self-report to the school if they or their student have [symptoms](#) of COVID-19, a positive test for COVID-19, or were exposed to someone with COVID-19 within the last 14 days in accordance with [health information sharing regulations for COVID-19](#).
- Staff and students will be encouraged to take breaks from watching, reading, or listening to news stories about COVID-19, including social media if they are feeling overwhelmed or distressed. Healthy eating, exercising, adequate sleep and downtime will be encouraged to help promote coping and resilience. Students and staff will have access to therapeutic support staff provided by the school. An additional resource is the national distress hotline: 1-800-985-5990, or text TalkWithUsto 66746

V. Preparing for When Someone Gets Sick

BREC will follow guidelines from the CDC and implement the following strategies:

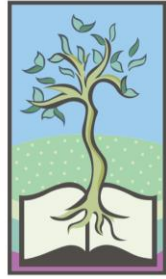
- Separate and isolate those who present with symptoms. A designated location in the building will serve as an isolation room as needed. The EOP team and an administrator will ensure that standard supplies are available for this room and that designated staff who are trained will be deployed as needed.
- Facilitate safe transportation of those who are sick to home or a health care facility. The school administration will contact a parent/guardian, or appropriate emergency contact, for pick-up of sick students, or call 911 for emergency situations.
- Implement cleansing and disinfection procedures of areas used by sick individuals. The OFS has established a protocol outlining enhanced cleaning and disinfection guidelines for areas when a known or suspected COVID-19 exposure has been introduced by a student, employee, or visitor. These guidelines will be followed. Protocol includes direction to close off/demarcate areas with a known or suspected exposure; open outside doors and windows (as allowable) to increase air circulation in the area; and

wait 24 hours, if possible, after a known or suspected exposure prior to cleaning and disinfection.

- Develop a communications plan with the local health department to initiate public health investigation, contact tracing and consultation on next steps. The Office Manager, Megan Steele, will serve as the main communicator with the WCHD.
- Inform those who have had [close contact](#) with a person diagnosed with COVID-19 to stay home and [self-monitor for symptoms](#), and follow [CDC guidance](#) if symptoms develop.

VI. Mitigating the Illness

BREC has established a tiered system of plans to mitigate the circumstances created by COVID-19. BREC is prepared to reduce in-person classes and/or determine if a school closure is needed and will do this in consultation with the LFHD and local placing school divisions. There is no hard and fast threshold for the employment of these strategies as there are a variety of factors used to interpret the data. Factors such as: What is the ongoing risk? What tools do we have to further mitigate risk? Is closure the best option? These factors will be explored by the LFHD, BREC and local placing school divisions before reduction/closure practices are employed. BREC's closure will not be contingent on Warren County Public Schools (or other school districts) closing. Additionally, it is impossible to eliminate all risk of infection. If the IEP team or parent(s) deem it is unsafe for a student to attend in-person, a decision can be made by the IEP team.



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Blue Ridge Educational Center COVID-19 Response Team

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