

Bement CUSD 5

Return-to-School Plan

2021-2022



August 11, 2021

This document is subject to change with new or updated guidance, recommendations and mandates from the IDPH/CDC/ISBE.

Bement CUSD 5 Plans for the Opening of the 2021-2022 School Year

First and foremost, thank you for your support for Bement Schools throughout this challenging time. You have all been amazing and provided us with the encouragement to still be able to keep our students our #1 priority. Your trust, flexibility and grace allowed us to be on this journey with your student(s). COVID has been challenging on all fronts and we will continue to strive to be a positive part of your child's team for the 2021-2022 school year.

- Bement CUSD 5 is planning on being in attendance for all students with our regular schedule five days a week. (8:15-3:15)
- Remote learning is *not* an optional choice this year.
- If a student has a medical condition and a doctor's note indicating that they cannot attend school, they will be enrolled in a homebound/on-line learning program. Students may return to the in-school plan at the semester with a new doctor's note regarding their medical condition.
- FREE breakfast and lunch for ALL students for the 2021-2022 school year.
- Students should not come onto school grounds until 8:00 and we are requesting that parents and guardians not come onto school grounds during the school day unless absolutely necessary. Thank you for doing an amazing job with this last year. Visitors will not be allowed to circulate throughout the school buildings at this time.
- We will communicate with you when we have a positive COVID case reported at school. Thankfully, last school year, we didn't have any cases contracted at school or at a school function. We certainly hope to maintain that safe momentum this coming year.

Public Health Requirements for Schools

The following guidance is based on updated CDC guidance for COVID-19 prevention in K-12 schools and the State of Illinois updated Executive Order. **Executive Order 2021-18 requires that masks be worn indoors by all teachers, staff, students, and visitors to P-12 schools, regardless of vaccination status.**

The State of Illinois also requires all public and nonpublic schools to comply with contact tracing, in combination with isolation and quarantine, as directed by state and local public health departments. In addition to requirements for consistent and correct universal indoor mask use and contact tracing, isolation, and quarantine, the following COVID-19 prevention strategies, as outlined in this guidance, remain critical to protect students, teachers, and staff who are not fully vaccinated, especially in areas of moderate to high community transmission levels, and to safely deliver in-person instruction.

Schools must implement these other layered prevention strategies to the greatest extent possible and taking into consideration factors such as community transmission,

vaccination coverage, screening testing, and occurrence of outbreaks, consistent with CDC guidance.

1. Promote and/or provide COVID-19 immunization for all eligible staff and students.
2. Facilitate physical distancing. Schools should configure their spaces to provide space for physical distancing to the extent possible in their facilities.
3. Implement or provide provisions for SARS-CoV-2 testing for diagnostic testing for suspected cases, close contacts, and during outbreaks, as well as screening testing for unvaccinated staff and students according to the CDC's testing recommendations. COVID testing is not necessary for vaccinated individuals in most cases. COVID screening (SHIELD) may be considered in the future for unvaccinated individuals.
4. Improve ventilation to reduce the concentration of potentially virus-containing droplets in schools' indoor air environments.
5. Promote and adhere to hand hygiene and respiratory etiquette. Handwashing and hand-sanitizing will be a priority.
6. Encourage individuals who are sick to stay home and get tested for COVID-19.
7. Clean and disinfect surfaces in schools to maintain healthy environments.

It is important to note that these requirements are subject to change pursuant to changing public health conditions and subsequent updated public health guidance, including from the CDC.

In-person learning with the appropriate protective measures should be both safe and essential to students' mental health and academic growth.

As families and communities continue to increase vaccine uptake, schools and districts must ensure all students, no matter their vaccination status, continue to have access to full-time in-person instruction.

Parents/guardians may choose to provide their child's COVID-19 vaccination status, and school or district employees may choose to provide their vaccination status, to their school or district through official documentation of vaccination status, i.e., COVID-19 Vaccination Record or official documentation from their health care provider.

All persons, regardless of vaccination status, must wear a face mask at all times when in transit to and from school via group conveyance (e.g., school buses), unless a specific exemption applies. There is no recommended capacity limit for school transportation. Schools should facilitate physical distancing on school transportation vehicles to the extent possible given the space on such vehicles.

Exceptions to universal consistent use of face masks include the following limited situations:

- When eating.
- For children while they are napping with close monitoring to ensure no child leaves their designated napping area without putting their face mask back on.
- For staff when alone in classrooms or offices with the door closed.
- For individuals who are younger than 2 years of age.
- For individuals who have trouble breathing; or those who are unconscious, incapacitated, or otherwise unable to remove the face mask without assistance.
- For persons with a disability who cannot wear a mask, or cannot safely wear a mask, because of the disability as defined by the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA, 42 U.S.C. 12101 et seq.), including: A person with a disability who, for reasons related to the disability, would be physically unable to remove a mask without assistance if breathing becomes obstructed. Examples might include a person with impaired motor skills, quadriplegia, or limb restrictions. A person with an intellectual, developmental, cognitive, or psychiatric disability that affects the person's ability to understand the need to remove a mask if breathing becomes obstructed.
- For individuals who have a condition or medical contraindication (e.g., difficulty breathing) that prevents them from wearing a face mask.
- For fully vaccinated staff when meeting with other fully vaccinated staff outside of settings where unvaccinated persons are present.
- For staff and students when they are outdoors. However, particularly in areas of substantial to high transmission, staff and students who are not fully vaccinated should wear a mask in crowded outdoor settings or during activities that involve sustained close contact with other people who are not fully vaccinated.

Staff and students who remove their face mask in these limited situations should be monitored and should maintain physical distancing to the greatest extent possible given the space in their facilities, with at least 3 feet recommended, but not required, between students and at least 6 feet recommended, but not required, between adults or between students and adults.

Individuals who have a condition or medical contraindication (e.g., difficulty breathing) that prevents them from wearing a face mask are required to provide documentation from the individual's health care provider. These persons may wear a face shield in lieu of a face mask; however, physical distancing should be maintained.

The CDC does not recommend use of single-layer athletic face masks (e.g., "gaiters"/neck warmers) as a substitute for multi-layered cloth face masks.

Social Distancing - Physical distancing provides protection, minimizes risk of exposure, and limits the number of close contacts. CDC recommends schools maintain at least 3 feet of physical distance between students within classrooms to reduce transmission risk. No school should exclude students from in-person learning to keep a minimum distance requirement.

Students and staff who are fully vaccinated with no COVID-19-like symptoms do not need to quarantine or be restricted from school or extracurricular activities. CDC recommends that fully vaccinated individuals test three to five days after a close contact exposure to someone with suspected or confirmed COVID-19.

Individuals who exhibit symptoms should be referred to a medical provider for evaluation, treatment, and information about when they can return to school, according to the IDPH Decision Tree for Symptomatic Individuals in Pre-K. Confirmed cases of COVID-19 should be reported to the local health department by the school health personnel or designee as required by the Illinois Infectious 17 Disease Reporting requirements issued by IDPH.

Definition of a Close Contact

For all individuals where exposure occurred outside of the classroom setting and for adults in the indoor P-12 classroom setting, CDC defines a close contact as an individual not fully vaccinated against COVID-19 who was within 6 feet of an infected person for a cumulative total of 15 minutes or more over a 24-hour period. For students in the classroom setting, contacts who were within 3 to 6 feet of an infected student do not require quarantine as long as both the case and the contact were consistently masked. If they were not consistently masked, then close contacts are classroom students who were within 6 feet of the infected student for a cumulative total of 15 minutes or more over a 24-hour period.

In general, individuals who are solely exposed to a confirmed case while outdoors should not be considered close contacts.

The infectious period of close contact begins two calendar days before the onset of symptoms (for a symptomatic person) or two calendar days before the positive sample was obtained (for an asymptomatic person). If the case was symptomatic (e.g., coughing, sneezing), persons with briefer periods of exposure may also be considered contacts, as determined by local health departments. Persons who have had lab-confirmed COVID-19 within the past 90 days or those fully vaccinated, according to CDC guidelines, are not required to quarantine if identified as a close contact to a confirmed case.

Local health departments are the final authority on identifying close contacts.

Encourage individuals who are sick to stay home and get tested for COVID-19.

Schools should post signage and otherwise communicate to students and staff that they are discouraged from entering buildings or boarding school transportation if ill.

Both the CDC operational guidance for K-12 schools and this joint guidance no longer recommend fever and symptom screening by school staff upon arrival at school. Instead, self-screening for COVID-19-like symptoms, as well as any other symptoms of common respiratory viruses and ailments, prior to arriving on school grounds or boarding school transportation continues to be recommended. **Parents and guardians will now be responsible for the COVID health screening before their child(ren) board the bus or arrive at school.**

Individuals who have or self-report a temperature greater than 100.4 degrees Fahrenheit/38 degrees Celsius or currently have known symptoms of COVID-19 may not enter school buildings. Symptoms of COVID-19 include fever, cough, shortness of breath or difficulty breathing, chills, fatigue, muscle and body aches, headache, sore throat, new loss of taste or smell, vomiting, or diarrhea. Individuals who exhibit or self-report symptoms should be referred to a medical provider for evaluation, testing, treatment, and information about when they can return to school.

Vaccination

Vaccines are currently the leading public health prevention strategy to end the COVID pandemic. While this is a personal choice and a family decision, getting the vaccination can also help schools safely return to and stay with in-person learning as well as activities and sports. The CDC guidance differs for vaccinated and unvaccinated individuals in schools. If you are not fully vaccinated you can go to Walgreens, CVS, or check with your healthcare provider or go to www.vaccines.gov for more information.

It is recommended that students bring water bottles to have during the school day. Water fountains can be used to fill water bottles. Drinking directly from water fountains will not be allowed.

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Bement school district is committed to providing a safe and healthy place for all of our students and staff. We will be enforcing the mask mandate and also doing our best to socially distance and still provide some unique experiences and memories with our students and staff.