



Benzie County Central Schools

Moving forward, the district will continue to preserve the ability to enact protocols based on the situation at hand in cooperation with the local health department. Local data that will drive levels of protocols and may be as specific as an individual classroom, teams, organizations, grade levels, or school-wide data.

2021-2022 Return to Benzie Central Recommendations

Masks

- Masks will not be required of students or staff. Wearing a mask is a choice students/parents/staff can make throughout the school year when on Benzie campuses. We will work to ensure a positive culture for those who continue to mask and for those that choose to not mask.
- **Face coverings are still required for all on [buses](#).** The CDC requires that all persons – regardless of vaccination status – wear masks on planes, buses, trains, and other forms of public transportation traveling into, within, or out of the United States and in U.S. transportation hubs such as airports and stations.
- If cases increase or we are seeing spikes within our school community, masking may be required. This might look like masking when in public spaces, between classes, in the halls, when cohorting is not possible, etc. This would be determined by the board with guidance from our local health department and medical officials.

Vaccination

- This is a personal choice for families and staff and will not be required by Benzie County Central Schools.

Testing

- The district will not require COVID-19 testing at this time. (MHSAA will not be requiring testing at this time.)

Cohorts

- We will not require cohorting to begin the year. If increased cases are present at the elementary level, we will move to cohorting students during lunch and recess times.
- We will not require assigned seating at the MS/HS level for lunches. If increased cases are present, we will move to assigned seating for MS/HS students.
- All classes will keep assigned seating charts and have them available to administration if necessary for contact tracing purposes.

- Buses will also have assigned seating. Social distancing will also be observed where space permits.

Social Distancing

- Staff will support distancing when possible. Recommended classroom distance is 3 feet (if students are masked) and 6 feet for other indoor spaces.
- If outbreaks or rising cases are present, we will strive to provide 6 feet distance between desks as space/arrangements exist.

COVID-19 Contact Tracing *(close contact defined as someone within 3 feet in a classroom setting when strict mitigation measures like students being masked are present or within 6 feet in any other indoor setting for 15 minutes or more)

- We will still continue to trace close contacts* of COVID positive students in conjunction with our health department.
- COVID positive students will quarantine for 10 days and can return when they are symptom free.
- Families will be notified to monitor their child for symptoms if their child was identified as a close contact*. If they are symptomatic, they will be required to quarantine for 10 days unless they receive a negative test result on day 7 and are symptom free.

Cleaning

- Enhanced cleaning protocols will continue in all Benzie facilities and buses.
- All classrooms will be provided with cleaning and sanitizing materials.
- All buses will have sanitizing stations for students.
- Should increased cases arise, additional mitigation measures will be implemented.

Health

- Benzie Central will continue to model appropriate hand washing, covering coughs and sneezes, etc.
- Benzie Central will encourage parents to monitor the health of their children including staying home if fever is present.
- If a student becomes ill at school (fever of 100.4 or more, new uncontrolled cough that causes difficulty breathing, vomiting, severe headache) parents or emergency contacts are expected to pick up the child immediately and the child will remain out of school for 24 hours and should be fever free before returning to school.

Visitors

- Visitors/parents will be allowed in the building by appointment only
- Pick up and drop off routines will be the same as last year
- Visitors will be required to complete a screener prior to entering the building

Learning Options

- Pre-K through 5th grade students will be face to face. Benzie Schools believes that these students learn best when they are face to face with their teacher and peers. Much early learning focuses on social emotional skills. These skills are best learned in the presence of their peers.
- Grades 6-12 will have two options: Face to Face or virtual learning through Benzie Academy. We understand that maturing students have unique needs and want to offer learning opportunities that will meet individual needs. Face to Face is always the preferred method of learning, however, we are providing Edgenuity for students that found success with online learning that was self-paced. Parents are strongly encouraged to speak to a counselor to ensure that this is the best fit for their child's learning style.