



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 Recommendations

Masks

- Pursuant to the Benzie Leelanau Health Department Order, dated Aug 27, 2021, the District is ordered to ensure that face masks are consistently and properly worn over the nose and the mouth. This applies to all students in grades K-12, all staff working with K-12 students during school hours and after school hours while indoors, and all visitors. It also applies to all staff working with students in grades K-12 that are identified as medically fragile. Staff working alone in an office, classroom, or building may remove a mask.
- Medical exemptions, provided by a medical doctor, will be accepted. Students with a medical mask waiver will be given a shield. If a student is unable to wear a mask or shield, the medical exemption from the doctor should state they are unable to wear a mask or a shield for medical reasons.
- Face coverings are **not required for students or staff while outdoors.**
- **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.

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 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) *Close Contact is defined as closer than 6 feet for more than 15 minutes in a 24-hour period. In a school setting, if both the exposed individual and the positive case are wearing masks, the close contact is defined as anyone closer than 3 feet for more than 15 minutes in a 24-hour period.

- We will still continue to trace close contacts* of COVID positive students in conjunction with our health department.
- COVID positive students will isolate 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.

- **An individual who is a close contact* to someone with COVID-19 and is not vaccinated may return to work/school on the 8th day** from the exposure date as long as all of the three following conditions are met:**

1) The exposed individual does not have any symptoms, including fever, cough, shortness of breath, sore throat, muscle aches, runny nose/congestion, or nausea/diarrhea.

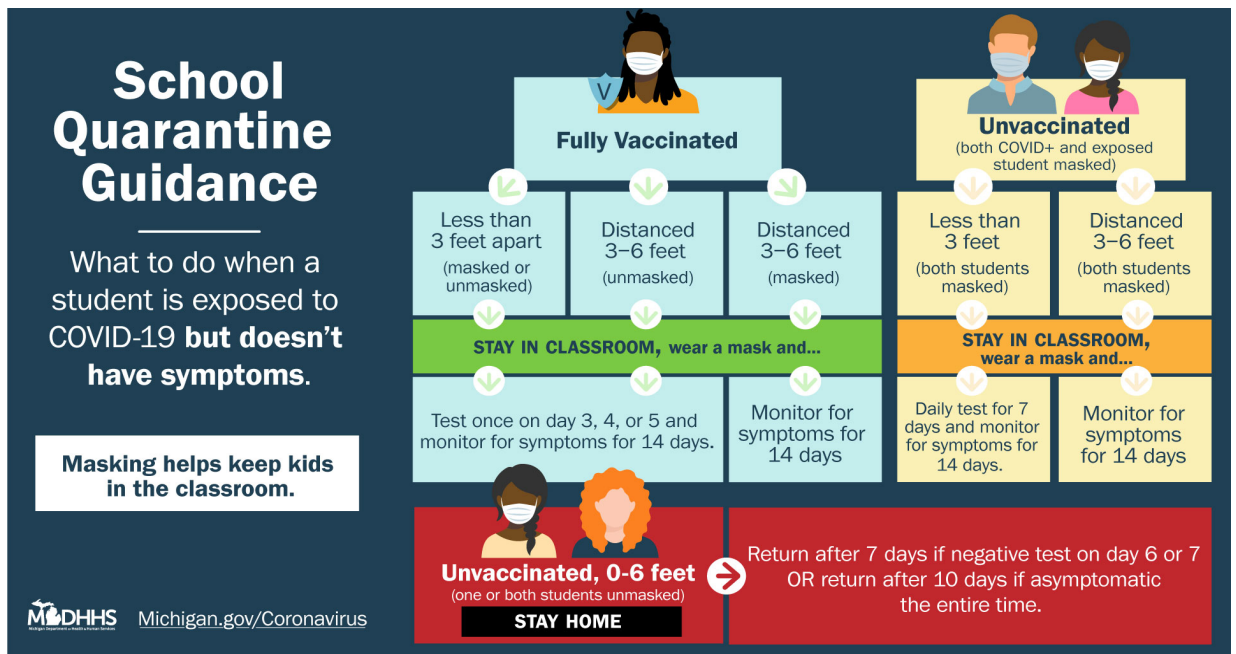
2) The exposed individual has a negative COVID-19 test on day 6 or after, before entering the school building or work site.

3) The school/employer accepts the 7 day/negative test quarantine option instead of the 10-day quarantine.

**Example: Exposed on 9/1/2021. First day of quarantine is 9/2/2021. Test can be done on 9/7 at the earliest. If negative, can return to work/school on 9/9/2021. *Individuals who are fully vaccinated do not need to quarantine if exposed to COVID-19

- **If the student was masked and within 3 feet of the masked COVID positive student:**

- The close contact may be quarantined for 10 days (OR)
- The child may continue to attend school but **test daily** each morning at the school prior to starting classes
- If the student is vaccinated, they may continue to attend school and test once on day 3, 4, or 5. If the vaccinated student is displaying symptoms, they should receive a negative test to resume activities.



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 and must wear a mask.

- 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

Athletics/Performing Arts

- Athletes, Officials/Referees, or those in performing arts may utilize serial testing (minimum of 1x/week on Monday morning or first day of the week they attend school) to perform without a mask during practice, competition or performances.
- Athletes and performers may remove masks only while actively practicing, competing (e.g. on the court) or performing and will wear masks for example while on the bench, sidelines, or “behind stage.”
- All others attending the event would continue to be masked per the Public Health Order dated Aug 27, 2021

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.