



Blacksburg New School 2500 North Main Street, Blacksburg VA 24060

www.blacksburgnewschool.org

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Est. 1971

January 17, 2023

BNS Community,

At our January meeting, the board had an extensive discussion regarding our general illness & COVID sick policies. During this discussion, we considered the health committee's recommendations, discussed the school's role in the prevention of *any* illness (not just COVID19), discussed the pros and cons of various types of COVID testing, discussed the goal of getting children back to school more quickly, and evaluated the feedback received by the community following the December board meeting.

After this lengthy discussion, the board decided to keep our current illness policy (no change from that which is listed in the parent handbook) and to adopt a new COVID policy. Both the general illness policy and new COVID policy are detailed below for your reference.

You can find a link to this new [Self-Quarantine & School Absence Policy](#) – which now also includes our general illness policy - on our school's COVID page.

GENERAL ILLNESS POLICY

In addition to this usual info, see info below regarding COVID-19 symptoms and community responsibility.

The Blacksburg New School has adopted the following policy regarding illness for students attending the school. It is important to the overall health of the school community that EVERY family follow these guidelines:

A student having a fever of one hundred (100 F) degrees or greater must be picked up from school immediately. *The student may not return to BNS until they have been without fever for 24 hours without the use of fever reducing medications.*

Any student with chicken pox may not attend school for at least 5 school days. All blisters must be “scabbed over” prior to the student's return.

If a student has more than one episode of diarrhea or vomiting, they should not attend school until 24 hours after last episode.

A signed note from a physician stating that a student is well (non-contagious) and can return to BNS prior to the timelines stated above will be honored.

If a teacher determines that the student should not be in school, and a parent cannot be reached, then someone designated as an emergency contact is required to take the student home. In case of a serious accident, the student will be taken to the hospital emergency room and the parents will be notified immediately. Other illnesses for which a student may be asked to leave school for a period of time include, but are not limited to: head lice, “pink-eye,” or impetigo.

Parents are asked to inform the school within 24 hours, if their child or any member of the immediate household has developed any reportable communicable disease (as defined by the State Board of Health; www.vdh.state.va.us; “Reportable Disease List”).
http://www.vdh.virginia.gov/content/uploads/sites/13/2018/11/Reportable_Disease_List.pdf

COVID-19 SICK POLICY

It is important that we keep our school safe for its students and teachers.

Please see the school’s website “COVID page”: www.blacksburgnewschool.org/covidplans
Click “Self-Quarantine and Absences” button to see the latest school policies regarding symptoms to watch out for and stay-home recommendations.

Given the existing and ongoing multiple layers of risk mitigation already in place at BNS, the high BNS vaccination (100% students and teachers) & booster adoption rates, and with the additional layers of precautions being added as described below, the following procedures will guide our response to possible and known COVID cases:

Individuals experiencing new COVID-like symptoms (fever or chills, cough, shortness of breath or difficulty breathing, fatigue, muscle or body aches, headache, new loss of taste or smell, sore throat, congestion or runny nose, nausea or vomiting, diarrhea) from an unknown cause should take an antigen or PCR test at the first sign of symptoms and stay home at least 24 hours.

Individuals with a negative test (1st antigen or PCR) and improved symptoms may then return 24 hours after symptom onset wearing a well-fitted mask.

Individuals may stop masking at school when they are symptom free **and** either:

- a second antigen test taken 48 hours after the first antigen test is negative, or
- upon receiving a negative PCR result.

If the second antigen test (taken 48 hours the first antigen test) or the PCR test comes back positive, individuals will follow [CDC’s COVID guidelines](https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/your-health/isolation.html) for isolation following a positive COVID test. (<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/your-health/isolation.html>; last updated Aug 2022)

If new fever, vomiting, or diarrhea occurs at any point the school's general illness policy should be followed: individuals should not return to school until 24 hours after their last vomiting or diarrhea episode or until they have been without fever for 24 hours without the use of fever reducing medications.

Families and teachers should continue to remain vigilant outside BNS and continue to report symptoms, illness, and exposures by emailing the school's COVID contacts using the email: COVID@new-school.org.

By bringing their child to school, parents are indicating that the above-listed symptoms have been assessed and that the child is free from all of them.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'KD' with a flourish.

Kiyah Duffey
BNS Board President