



Bristol Tennessee City Schools

615 Martin Luther King Jr Blvd ♦ Bristol, TN 37620 ♦ (423) 652-9451 ♦ Fax (423) 652-9238

August 30, 2021

Dear BTCS Families and Staff,

As we announced in last week's communication, BTCS now has **Significant COVID-19 Spread Protocols** in place which allow us to implement even more stringent safety measures should they be deemed necessary district-wide based on community spread *or* in locations in our district experiencing a significant number of cases. As a result of the significant number of cases at TMS, we required masks for all students and staff beginning last week. We are now experiencing a rise in cases in most of our schools and continue to see a rise in cases in Sullivan County.

Based on this alarming increase in COVID cases, **beginning, Wednesday, September 1, through Friday, October 1, the Significant Spread Protocols will officially be in place for ALL SCHOOLS. All individuals will be required to wear a face mask** indoors in all BTCS facilities during this period of time. This includes indoor athletic events and other events held outside the school day. The requirement may be extended beyond October 1 if case numbers do not decrease. Please see page 2 of this document for additional information.

These more stringent measures are designed to be temporary until there is a significant decrease in COVID-19 cases. However, if there continues to be an increase in cases, our next steps would require us to close particular buildings or the entire district. I believe it is imperative to keep our students in schools and keep them and our staff as safe as possible. Therefore, **I urge you to consider requiring your child to wear a mask to help prevent the spread of COVID-19.** The Centers for Disease Control recommends universal indoor masking in K-12 educational settings and emphasizes the importance of wearing masks to reduce transmission of COVID-19 in schools. Many school-aged children are not yet eligible to receive the COVID-19 vaccine, leaving them more susceptible to infection. In the K-12 indoor classroom setting, the close contact definition excludes individuals if both the infected individual and the exposed individual(s) correctly and consistently wore well-fitting masks the entire time, thus exempting them from a requirement to quarantine.

Controlling the spread of this virus must be a community effort. Kingsport City Schools and Sullivan County Schools are both implementing similar mask requirements. It is urgent that we join forces to mitigate the spread of this virus. We are #BTCSBetterTogether!

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Annette Tudor".

Annette Tudor, Ed.D.
Director of Schools



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Opt-Out Information and Significant Spread Protocols

Pursuant to Governor Lee's Executive Order No. 84, of August 16, 2021, parent(s)/guardian(s) have the option to opt their child out of any requirements to wear face coverings in schools. Students who are 18 and older may complete the opt-out form on their own behalf. The opt-out does not apply to events held at school facilities outside of the school day. Should you choose not to require your child to wear a mask during the school day (including the LEAPs after-school program), the opt-out forms for each school are available at the links below. If you wish for your child to opt-out, please submit the completed form no later than **Wednesday, September 1**. If you require a paper copy, please contact your school office. If you do not return the opt-out form, your child will be expected to wear a mask. Masks will be available in each classroom if needed.

[Anderson Elementary Opt-Out](#)

[Avoca Elementary Opt-Out](#)

[Fairmount Elementary Opt-Out](#)

[Haynesfield Elementary Opt-Out](#)

[Holston View Elementary Opt-Out](#)

[Tennessee Middle School Opt-Out](#)

[Tennessee High School Opt-Out](#)

The Significant Spread Protocols, which are in addition to our [COVID-19 Operating Procedures](#) can be found on page 7 of the linked document. They are also outlined below:

Procedures for Significant Spread

- All students and staff will be required to wear a mask; however, parents can elect to opt their child out from wearing a mask during the school day. Students who are 18 years of age or older can elect to opt-out of wearing a mask by completing the form.
- Cleaning touch surfaces will increase in frequency to between classes, playgrounds will be disinfected daily, and hand sanitizing will occur as students enter the building or exit buses.
- Efforts will be taken to minimize the number of persons in the hallways by staggering movements at incremental intervals and traveling in cohorts. Foot traffic will be directed in only one direction, where possible, or hallways will be divided with either side following the same direction with an increased measure to social distance.
- Multiple spaces, including classrooms, may be utilized for social distancing during dining.
- Large-scale assemblies will be discontinued, and before/after school activities may be canceled by school administration. Assemblies of less than 50 students at a time are discouraged but allowed as long as social distancing measures are implemented.
- Public use of indoor facilities will be closed at any school site implementing Significant Spread Protocols. Viking Hall and Tennessee Middle School are currently excluded from public use at this time.