

COVID-19 RISK REDUCTION STRATEGIES

2021-2022 SCHOOL YEAR

When the COVID-19 pandemic began in 2020, Bulloch Academy adjusted and developed a phased approach to its strategies to reduce the risk of COVID-19 infection on our campus based on the Governor's executive orders, State Department of Public Education recommendations, Georgia Department of Public Health recommendations, and Centers for Disease Control recommendations.

During the 2020-2021 school year, the school's Health & Safety Committee and school administration developed protocols for school operation and successfully conducted in-person teaching and learning for the entire school year without community spread. Over 98% of our school weeks last year were conducted in-person which was a huge success. At-home learning through in-classroom video and online resources helped support sick or exposed students at home to continue their education without lengthy interruptions in education. A very low number of athletic events were interrupted by COVID-19 illness and no sports season was cancelled.

As we prepare for the 2021-2022 school year, Bulloch Academy looks to continue to safely conduct school on campus. Your student's health and the health of our faculty are of the utmost importance. Your cooperation, encouragement of healthy health practices, and monitoring your student for illness at home is critical to our school's success.

While we cannot predict the impact of new COVID-19 virus variants or the rate of our community/school spread in the fall, we are optimistic about the school year ahead for the following reasons:

- The consistent cooperation of our families with Nurse Heather Dabbs in keeping exposed or symptomatic children home and having them tested for COVID-19.
- The increased knowledge we now have about prevention of community transmission thanks to 18 months of work by researchers, epidemiologists, and physicians working with the virus.
- The increasing rates of vaccination and the success of the vaccines in preventing spread and serious illness.
- Many of our faculty/staff have chosen to be vaccinated
- The increased flexibility by the CDC and Georgia Department of Public Health, which relaxes measures if local conditions are favorable and shorten quarantine times for exposed individuals
- Better access to local testing resources for COVID-19 illness/exposure

None of these conditions above were true last August. It is under these new conditions that we have modified some of our risk reduction measures for the 2021-2022 school year.

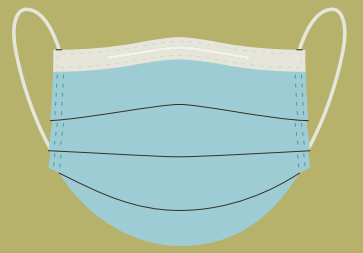


Unfortunately, there are negative health factors that may influence this upcoming school year which include:

- COVID-19 has been diagnosed among BA students in summer months
- BA has a LOW rate of vaccination of students in the age 12-18 category
- As of July 2021, Bulloch County has low vaccination rates with only 26% of our population being vaccinated and hospitalizations from COVID increasing
- The COVID Delta variant is now the dominant variant in Georgia, its transmission rate is 4 times higher than previous strains (more contagious)
- Bulloch County rates of COVID infection are increasing which is concerning.

UPDATED CAMPUS-WIDE PROCEDURES

Currently, BA is employing key prevention strategies to lower the risk of community transmission of the virus during teaching and learning on campus: mask use, handwashing, physical distancing, sanitation, contact tracing with appropriate quarantine periods, and self-screening for symptoms. . The following measures are in effect for the start of 2021-2022 school year:



MASK USE

- Masks are REQUIRED for ALL parents and visitors when inside on campus
- No mask needed for outdoor activities regardless of vaccination status
- Mask is recommended (i.e., optional) for daily use for those unvaccinated and/or concerned about a pre-existing health condition
- Masks may be required and will be provided, in certain situations with poor ventilation for long periods of time (example: bus rides in winter when windows cannot be down)
- Masks are REQUIRED for all unvaccinated visitors when indoors.
- Masks are REQUIRED for all unvaccinated volunteers on campus



HANDWASHING ETIQUETTE

- Signage in restrooms reminding proper handwashing techniques
- Hand sanitizer stations throughout campus

PHYSICAL DISTANCING

- Will use entire classroom space to maximize spacing of students in classroom where they sit for prolonged periods, assigned seating when feasible, enter and exit signs for all doors and directional signs on floors in tight spaces to better manage foot traffic flow inside buildings

SANITATION

- Classroom sanitation supplies available to clean high touch surfaces after class changes
- Regular cleaning of high touch surfaces by our facilities team
- Water fountains disabled for button use, enabled for bottle fill use only.

CONTACT TRACING

Please report any illness to the school nurse who will provide guidance on course of action. Nurse Dabbs will continue to work with the Georgia DPH in regards to keeping students with COVID-19 isolated and further contact tracing and identifying students who may have been exposed.

Currently, the Georgia DPH is NOT requiring school quarantines for **in class exposure** because of the recognized importance of in person learning. Students are required to quarantine if they have a household contact (lives in a home with someone with COVID) or have a known exposure off-campus.

Like last year, BA will continue to contact trace students who may have been exposed to COVID-19 in the classroom and notify parents.

If your student has been identified as exposed to COVID by contact tracing and your student is asymptomatic, your student can continue in person learning and continue with extracurricular activities (**higher risk exception). These students will be required to check in daily with Nurse Dabbs for a symptom screening/temperature check. Students who have been vaccinated or have experienced COVID-19 in the past 90 days **will not** be required to have check ins with Nurse Dabbs.

Our parents have been our partners in keeping exposed children home, children with symptoms home, accessing testing, communicating with Nurse Dabbs and helping keep our school open to continue in-person education. Do NOT send your child to school if you are aware they have been exposed to COVID-19. If you have a household member that has contracted COVID-19, your child will be transitioned to at home learning and a return to school plan will be developed.

We do not anticipate transitioning a grade to virtual learning for one COVID-19 case in a classroom. If we track a rising number of cases in a particular class or grade, like last school year, close contacts will be identified, parents will be notified, and all students in the affected class/grade level will be sent home and transition to virtual learning.

***If by contact tracing and monitoring, the school identifies a rapidly rising number of positive cases within a smaller group, these students may be required to transition to at-home learning and will be excluded from extracurricular activities. We monitor classrooms where there is a case very closely, if we see rising spread amongst a particular group who interacts closely together, your student will be transitioned to at home learning AND not allowed to participate in extracurricular activities until their quarantine is complete.

SELF SCREENING

-Students and adults are expected to self-screen for temperature and COVID-19 symptoms prior to arrival at school or school-related events. If an adult or student is exhibiting any COVID-19 symptoms or has been exposed to COVID, please stay home and seek medical care. We are happy to assist you in finding local testing, please contact Heather Dabbs.

Note: The school will adjust our protocols if the rate of school spread reaches high levels

VACCINES

Bulloch Academy recognizes that two optional vaccines for our students help keep students healthy, prevent absences, and keep vulnerable community members safe;

the Influenza (flu) vaccine and the COVID-19 vaccine.

Both are recommended by the American Academy of Pediatrics.

Neither vaccine is required to attend Bulloch Academy.

Bulloch Academy is happy to help you connect with a trusted local medical provider for vaccines or other health related needs, please contact: hdabbs@bullochacademy.com

Bulloch Academy looks for opportunities to help provide these two vaccines. We work with the Department of Public Health and other vaccine resources to help provide convenient resources for our students.

PROCEDURES FOR STUDENT ILLNESS

The number one key to our success during last school year was your cooperation in not sending sick or exposed children to school. Daily vigilance by parents in the home will remain essential to keeping COVID-19 virus from coming to campus. Nurse Heather Dabbs is here to help you triage any illness before a student arrives on campus. Please call her after 7:40 am during school days at 912-764-6297, EXT 225 or email her at hdabbs@bullochacademy.com.

Please understand that the local Department of Public Health has different standards for quarantine based on vaccination status. Please share with Nurse Heather Dabbs if your child is vaccinated or has an appointment to be vaccinated. This will help us determine who is at risk for infection if a student is exposed and work to limit any outbreaks.

PROVISIONS FOR LEARNING FROM HOME IF IN QUARANTINE OR SICK

If your student is quarantined or ill, each classroom has established procedures to learn from home via video conferencing tools. Of course, if your child feels sick then they should rest and recover. Each situation is unique and should be worked out with the classroom teacher. Please consult Brandilyn Stroup and the Student-Parent Handbook for details and direct any questions to Brandilyn Stroup at bstroup@bullochacademy.com. Please note there is online learning is only available to those who are quarantined due to COVID-19. There is no online learning for vacations or year-long learn from home (distance learning) available.

Sources:

CDC: Guidance for COVID-19 Prevention in K-12 Schools

CDC: Science Brief: Transmission of SARS-COV-2 in K-12 Schools

CDC: Guidance for Operating Youth Camps

CDC: Key Things to Know about COVID-19 Vaccines

CDC: When You've Been Fully Vaccinated

CDC: Interim Public Health Recommendations for Fully Vaccinated People

Georgia Department of Education: Return to School Guidance