

Dr. Helen Baldwin Middle School

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October 2, 2020

Dear Baldwin Middle School Families:

As we prepare to fully re-open our schools, I wanted to reach out to you to share some important information, as well as to respond to many of the questions that parents posed on our recent parent survey. Below, you will find that I have categorized my responses into sections, in an effort to organize information in a way that is simpler to navigate. I hope this letter provides clarity around many of the issues your families are thinking about and please know that, as with everything else this year, we will continue to be flexible as the situation in Canterbury and Connecticut continues to evolve.

BMS In-Person and Remote Schedules

The schedule for in-person students will remain the same as the current hybrid model. Students will have classes on a two-day rotating basis, where they will see all core classes as well as three electives, every two days. Classes will continue to run at 60-minute length. In addition, while SRBI will remain in the schedule for all students, we will also begin to ramp up more specific SRBI supports where time allows.

The schedule for remote students will be consistent across all four grade levels. Staff will post all work for the week by 8 AM on Mondays (or on Tuesdays when Monday is a calendar day off). All work for the week will be due by 3:30 PM on Friday of the same week that it was posted. Each teacher will be posting the equivalent of two hours of work, per subject, per week. While work may look different, it will be reflective of the curriculum that is occurring in the physical classroom. In addition, teachers will also be providing access to online enrichment opportunities, such as Kahn Academy, Gizmo, and iReady. Remote support will be provided through office hours on an in-need basis. Students should sign-up ahead of time if they are in need of remote support, just as they are currently doing.

While live-streaming is often seen as the obvious choice for remote learning, please know that the technology capacity and infrastructure does not support this approach on a whole-scale basis. While there may be opportunities for teachers to invite remote students into their classrooms on a limited basis through programs such as ZOOM, the capacity for every remote student to do so on a consistent basis is not feasible at this time.

Building Protocols

Students will still be cohorting by grade-level. The class sizes still remain small. While there is one classroom with 17 students assigned to it, the majority of classes will number between 12 and 14.

During lunch, students will still eat in the cafeteria every other day. On the days where a grade-band of students (ie. 5/6 or 7/8) is eating in the cafeteria, one grade will eat in the cafeteria and the other in the gymnasium, to allow for maximum space.

During recess, students will be spread out across the two school playgrounds, so that single-grade cohorting remains intact.

Times for mask breaks have been built into the schedule and staff will prioritize bringing students outside for small chunks of time each period to provide for mask breaks as needed.

During passing times, markers have been identified along the walls to ensure that, as students wait to enter a classroom, they are appropriately distanced from one another. In addition, adults will continue to be present in the halls to ensure safety as well as physical distance.

Cleaning Protocols

Every classroom will continue to be cleaned on a daily basis, with high-needs areas (ie. bathrooms, stall handles, railings) will continue to be cleaned at least two times per day. In many cases, the staff is also cleaning desks, keyboards, and other items between classes, although information from the state continues to emphasize the fact that cleaning once daily is sufficient. In addition, buses will continue to be cleaned on a daily basis. Please visit the following resource for more information about state guidance on cleaning protocols:
<https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/Coronavirus/20200622-DPH-Guidance-for-the-Cleaning-and-Disinfection-of-Schools.pdf>

Drop Off/Pick Up/Transportation

Student drop-off and pick-up will remain the same. If you need to familiarize yourself with this process, please visit the following link (<https://drive.google.com/file/d/1WAr1tT1ykMf2m4AHfYvuo-KkpAxFo7mF/view>) to see a video on the BMS Covid-19 procedures, which include drop off and pick up. Please remember that drop off begins at 8:00 AM (students will not be allowed into the building prior to 8:00) and pick up begins at 3:00. Parents with students at both schools should pick up at CES before coming to BMS.

If parents would like to make a change to their student transportation needs, please reach out to Mrs. Jill Smith. If you are switching a student from parent pick up to bus transportation, we will need 48 hours to ensure runs are updated.

As always, students on the bus must sit in their assigned seats and must keep their masks on during the entire bus ride.

Positive Covid-19 Test Protocols

BMS will not be testing students for Covid-19 at our school. We continue to remind parents to make responsible decisions regarding the health of your children. If any child or parent is sick, children should not be sent to school. If a child has a fever, coupled with any other Covid-19 symptoms, please do not send your child to school. Instead, you should call the school nurse, Kim Jodoin, at 860-546-9421.

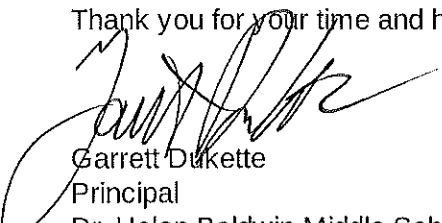
If a child in our school were to test positive, we would work with our local health board to identify the next steps, which could include any number of responses, including partial or full school closure for anywhere from two days to two weeks, or longer. In the case of a positive test, families will be notified if, through contact tracing, their child has been exposed and is in-need of mandatory time away from the school building.

Change in Educational Placement

As always, it is your right as a family to make a change at any time to the educational placement of your student. If you are considering changing your child from in-person to remote, or from remote to in-person, we request notification at least 48 hours in advance to allow for staff to adjust schedules, supplies, and instructional plans.

Overall, I hope this information has been helpful to you. As always, please do not hesitate to reach out to me with any other questions or thoughts that you might have. I am optimistic that we will be able to continue to provide a safe and meaningful educational experience for our BMS students, both in-person and remotely.

Thank you for your time and have a great weekend!



Garrett Duketete
Principal
Dr. Helen Baldwin Middle School