



BYRON CENTER CHARTER SCHOOL

9930 Burlingame Ave. SW, Byron Center, MI 49315 Mark Kasmer, Principal
Phone: (616) 878-4852 - Fax: (616) 878-7196 Email: office@byroncentercharter.org

8/12/20

Dear Parents /Guardians of BCCS Students,

As of last Friday the KCHD changed their position about students wearing masks in school. All K-12 students are expected to wear masks in schools. In the [Return to School Roadmap](#) the advisory council indicated that while students in grades 6-12 were required to wear masks during school, students in grades K-5 were expected to wear masks during transitional times and not in the classroom. On August 6th, a [Kent County Health Officials letter](#) was included in a KCHS School Teachers and Administrators COVID -19 Toolkit stating the change and reasons for the decision. In the past two days we have been seeking clarification from local health officials to assure we have an accurate understanding of the current disposition. Health officials state the State of Michigan only lists three instances that would preclude the use of a face mask:

1. Children younger than 2 years old
2. Anyone who has trouble breathing
3. Anyone who is unconscious, incapacitated, or unable to remove the cloth face covering without assistance

Incidentally, the KCHD recommends students who cannot wear masks at school consider online schooling.

It is important that you are aware of this change. In addition, the CDC has a few recommendations for schools to share with parents/caregivers to help prepare students for wearing masks:

- Encourage parents, caregivers, and guardians to practice wearing cloth face coverings with students at home before the first day of school. If parents, caregivers, and guardians model appropriate use of face coverings and help students get used to wearing them, students may be more comfortable using them.
- Introduce students with sensory concerns/tactile sensitivities to face coverings with a variety of materials, prints, and textures, and allow them to choose which face covering is most comfortable.
- Use behavioral techniques such as positive reinforcement to increase the likelihood that students will comply with face covering guidance and other prevention practices.
- Encourage parents, caregivers, and guardians to include students in the selection of their cloth face covering and/or the material that is used to make it. This might increase a child's acceptance of wearing the cloth face covering.

We have received a fair amount of questions about masks in particular what is considered an acceptable mask for school. I share this link from the CDC regarding masks in schools ([CDC Mask Guidance](#)). This is the guidance schools mostly use and was updated on August 11 . The webpage

provides guidance for mask types, cleaning, and general expectations for mask usage in the school setting.

There are a few other time-sensitive topics to share:

On-Line Classes

The deadline for notifying the school of a request for the fully online option for the first semester of school is Monday , August 17. Once the requests are processed, the school will hold grade span virtual informational and course registration meetings.

BCCS Back to School Plan

The BCCS back to school plan was approved by the Board of Education this past Tuesday. The plan will be posted to the website by the end of the week along with a Parent/ Guardian Guide (*DRAFT*) outlining the expectations for face to face instruction. Please note: given the recent update with the masks the guide and plan have to be revised, therefore, please know the guide and plan are fluid documents and will be revised as changes are made from state and local governing and health agencies.

Open House/ New Family Orientation

Our school plans to hold an Open House/Meet the Teacher Night on Thursday August 27. Details will be forthcoming, yet we will likely have staggered times for specified groups/families while following the recommended COVID safety precautions. I encourage all able families to attend. It is important that we remain unified in our purpose and mission.

New family orientation will be a virtual meeting this year. Later today I will send a letter with a link to a pre-recorded informational and welcome video to families new to BCCS; a small but mighty school. Normally, as part of our onboarding process, parents/guardians unable to attend the orientation are required to notify the office of their commitment to attend within two business days. However, given the current disposition, families will be asked to send an email to the office verifying the intent of attending BCCS this school year. Information will be provided with the video link.

In closing, our BCCS faculty and staff are working diligently to prepare for the 2020-21 school year. We recognize there is a fair amount of consternation about reopening of schools across the nation, yet I want to assure you that we will be ready to adapt to the needs of our school family. Your continued understanding and support is appreciated.

With Care,

Mark R. Kasmer

BCCS Chief Administrative Officer