# Communicable Disease-COVID-19 Exposure Control Plan

On July 28, 2021, Governor Asa Hutchinson declared Arkansas to be in state of a public health emergency due to a surge of cases of Delta variant of COVID-19 and our hospital I.C.U. beds are at capacity or near to capacity. On August 3, 2021, the Arkansas Legislature voted to approve the Governor's public health emergency.

The Delta variant has caused an increase in the number of Arkansas children being hospitalized, placed on ventilators, and who have died from COVID-19. Children younger than 12 years old are not eligible to receive the COVID-19 vaccine.

In consideration of the recommendations and guidance issued by the Centers for Disease Control (CDC), the Arkansas Department of Health (ADH), and the Arkansas Division of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE), the **Barton School District** is implementing this Emergency Exposure Control Plan for all students and employees of the District as part of Communicable Disease Policy (Policy 4.34) and Licensed & Classified Personnel Use of PPE Policies (Policies 3.55 & 8.43).

## SCREENING

At this time based on our recommendations from our COVID Guidance Committee, screenings **will be implemented** for students and employees of the District. For approved visitors to buildings, screening by nurses and office staff with digital thermometers will continue as well as proper signage regarding COVID 19. The frequency, manner, and place of such visitors allowed and screenings shall be implemented under the direction of the Superintendent or his designee.

## FACE COVERINGS

On July 28, 2021, Governor Asa Hutchinson declared Arkansas to be in state of a public health emergency due to a surge of cases of Delta variant of COVID-19 and our hospital I.C.U. beds are at capacity or near to capacity. On August 3, 2021, the Arkansas Legislature voted to approve the Governor's public health emergency.

Masks have been proven to reduce the transmission of COVID-19 and are a necessary tool for protecting those not yet eligible for vaccination. The Centers for Disease Control (CDC), the American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP), the Arkansas Department of Health (ADH), and the Arkansas Division of Secondary and Elementary Education (DESE) recommend that individuals, older than the age of two, wear a mask in public indoor settings if they are in an area of substantial or high transmission. The entire state of Arkansas is considered to currently have a high transmission rate of COVID-19.

**FACE COVERING OPT-OUT**

The CDC and AAP recommend that children return to in-person education where it is safe to do so, and the District recognizes the importance of in-person learning. As a result, the District recommends and will assume that all parents want their children to wear masks while in school to prevent the transmission of COVID-19 and to allow in-person learning to continue for the 2021-2022 school year. **This recommendation is not mandatory, and each parent has a choice to opt their student out of wearing a mask while at school. The Opt-out form will be available online, at open house, and in the principals' offices. Students will be required to wear a facing covering until the opt-out form has been turned into the appropriate office. Faculty/staff will be required to wear a facing covering until the Faculty/Staff Opt-Out Form has been completed and returned to the District Nurse, Marla Bond (District POC).**

**STUDENTS**

Until further notice, all students in kindergarten through the 12th grade, **regardless of vaccination status**, are required to wear a mask or face covering (a) while attending school or a school function in any school building, facility or other area of a school campus, and (b) when riding in school-provided transportation. All masks and face coverings must cover the nose and mouth of the student. This applies to students waiting outside school buildings before and after school, and to students on buses. Students shall wear masks and face coverings at all times except for the following:

- Students may remove masks and face coverings for eating or drinking;
- Students may remove masks and face coverings when appropriate social distancing measures are in place as determined by a School District staff member;
- Students may be exempted from this Emergency Plan by the school administration due to a documented medical condition of the student;
- Students may remove masks and face coverings on a case-by-case basis for specific instructional needs, including physical education activities, as determined by a teacher, in which case the teacher will require appropriate social distancing measures to the extent possible; or
- Students may be exempted from this Emergency Plan due to special behavioral or individualized needs as determined by the Director of Special Services or the administration.
- **Face coverings do not have to be worn if the Student Mask Opt-Out Form has been submitted to the appropriate office.**

***Students who fail to wear PPE when necessary at school or at a school function under this Exposure Control Plan shall be subject to enforcement consistent with District Policy.***

**EMPLOYEES**

Until further notice, all District employees, **regardless of vaccination status**, shall be required to wear a mask or face covering while working or attending a school function in any school building, facility or other area of a school campus. All masks and face coverings must cover the nose and mouth of the employee. Employees shall wear masks and face coverings at all times except for the following:

- Employees may remove masks and face coverings for eating and drinking;
- Employees may remove masks and face coverings when appropriate social distancing measures are in place- i.e. working in an office; or outside away from others
- Employees may be exempted from this Emergency Policy by the Superintendent due to a documented medical condition of the employee.
- **Face coverings do not have to be worn if the Staff/Faculty Mask Opt-Out Form has been submitted to the appropriate office.**

***Employees who fail to wear PPE when necessary at school or at a school function under this Exposure Control Plan shall be subject to enforcement consistent with District Policy.***

**CLEANING and SANITATION**

Until further notice, all District employees will be required to help with cleaning as needed while working or attending a school function in any school building, facility or other area of a school campus. All employees shall assist as needed in the following manner:

- Cleaning common spaces, high touch surfaces, restrooms, and students desks will be cleaned and disinfected throughout the school day as scheduled.
- Sanitizing buses after each route.
- Athletics will continue to adhere to all guidelines set by the ADH and Arkansas Activities Association which includes all disinfecting and sanitizing of facilities and equipment.
- Cafeteria will assist in advanced sanitization practices
- Frequent hand washing and hand sanitizing will be encouraged by staff for students using schedules.

Barton School District is implementing this Emergency Exposure Control Plan for all students and employees per ADH, DESE and CDC guidance and as part of Communicable Disease Policy (Policy 4.34) and Licensed & Classified Personnel Use of PPE Policies (Policies 3.55 & 8.43) We reserve the right to make changes as information is updated by the CDC, ADH and DESE.