



*Dr. Edythe B. Austermuhl*  
Superintendent

BERLIN TOWNSHIP SCHOOL DISTRICT

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September 2021

Dear Parents and Guardians:

Happy New School Year! On behalf of the Berlin Township Board of Education, faculty and staff, I would like to welcome you to the Berlin Township School District and the 2021– 2021 school year. As the Superintendent of Schools, I am excited as the new school year begins. Each year brings the anticipation of discovering new areas of interest and working to master old skills. I look forward to working with everyone in the Berlin Township School family in order to continue providing an educational experience reflecting high academic standards and expectations for all students.

In preparation for the 2021-2022 school year, the principals, administrators, central office staff, secretaries, and building and grounds staff have been busy the entire summer. They have been cleaning and refurbishing each building, upgrading technology, ordering supplies, revising curricula, and reviewing all the necessary student related paperwork. The teachers are ready to provide an exciting and challenging academic experience for all students, supported by the administration and Board of Education. Due to the continuing Pandemic, student and staff health and safety continue to be a high priority. The district continues to follow the recommendations and guidelines of the New Jersey and Camden County Departments of Health along with the New Jersey Department of Education, and the relevant Executive Orders issued by Governor Murphy.

As we begin the 2021-2022 school year the district will follow the guidelines below:

- School will be in session 5 days a week (except for designated holidays as per the adopted district calendar) for a full day. DDE hours are 8:10am - 2:40pm and JFK hours are 8:45am – 3:15 pm.
- Parents/guardians are required to sign a Statement of Assurance (as part of the First Day Packet) that they will screen their child for COVID-19 symptoms each morning before school and will not send any child with COVID-related symptoms or any other illness to school.
- Students and staff are required to wear masks on the school bus. Buses will be wiped down between runs and thoroughly cleaned after all morning and all afternoon runs.
- Students, staff and visitors are required to wear masks in the building except for when they are eating lunch.
- Students and staff will continue the Wash-in/Wash-out practice when leaving and entering a room or the building. Hand sanitizer will be used frequently!
- Frequently touched surfaces will be cleaned throughout the day, with more extensive cleaning and sanitizing done at the end of each day.
- The recommended social distance of 3 feet will be used to the best of our ability. With the requirement to have all students return for full day instruction, distancing is difficult, which is why masks must be worn in the classrooms and building at all times to minimize the potential spread of COVID-19.
- Contact tracing will be done when school personnel are notified of an infected person (staff member or student) has been in the building and in contact with others. The nurses, building principals and teachers will work together to determine who was in close contact with the infected person.

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- Close contact has been redefined for students and staff differently. As per NJ Dept. of Education guidance:
  - “In the **K-12 indoor classroom** setting the close contact definition **excludes students** who were **within 3 to 6 feet of an infected student** (laboratory confirmed or a clinically compatible illness) where both the infected student and the exposed student(s) correctly and consistently wore well-fitting masks the entire time. This exception does not apply to teachers, staff or other adults in the indoor classroom setting.”
- Quarantine and isolation timelines are determined by the COVID-19 Risk Level as determined by the NJ Dept. of Health and the region one lives in. This information will be posted on the district’s website for your reference. The risk levels are updated on Thursday of each week.
- Exclusion criteria for persons with COVID – 19 compatible symptoms is based on testing results (including strep test or influenza swab) and the NJ Dept. of Health guidance document for other illnesses.

The daily guidelines listed above are mostly the same as they were last year and continue to change as the positivity rate and infection rate changes within the Southwest Region of New Jersey and Camden County.

Visitors and field trips have been suspended at this time and we hope that changes by the Spring. Some co-curricular activities will take place this fall, as we are able to implement them within the changing status of the Pandemic. Large group indoor events, such as Back to School Nights, will be held using the Zoom platform. Smaller group events may be held in person, based on the number of anticipated attendees and the current COVID -19 risk level in our community.

In addition to health related safety, the district is committed to the physical safety of our students and staff while they are on campus. The Board of Education has renewed the agreement with Berlin Township for the services of a School Security Officer for the 2021-2022 school year. The officer will be floating throughout the campus based on the unique activities and needs at each school. Welcome Back Officer Wilson and Officer Annacone.

As the District motto states, our goal is to ensure that every child has a quality educational experience in order to be successful and thrive in their future endeavors. By working and communicating as a team, we will be able to meet this goal for each child in the Berlin Township School District. Once again, I look forward to working with you and your children this year. Welcome back and have a great school year! Stay safe and healthy!

Sincerely,

*Edythe B. Austermuhl, Ed. D.*

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Superintendent

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