

The communication below provides important information from the Public Schools of Brookline. Translated versions are available at the following links:

- [Arabic: الرجاء الضغط هنا للترجمة العربية](#).
- [Chinese: 点击这里查看中文翻译](#).
- [Haitian Creole: Klike la a pou tradiksyon kreyòl ayisyen an.](#)
- [Hebrew: אנא לחץ כאן לצפייה במסמך בעברית](#).
- [Japanese: ここをクリックして日本語の翻訳にアクセスしてください](#).
- [Korean: 한국어 번역을 보시려면 여기를 클릭하십시오](#).
- [Portuguese: Clique aqui para a tradução em português](#).
- [Russian: Нажмите здесь, чтобы получить доступ к русскому переводу](#).
- [Spanish: Haga clic aquí para acceder a la traducción al español](#).
- [Vietnamese: Nhấn vào đây để truy cập bản dịch tiếng Việt](#).

Greetings PSB Families and Staff,

Welcome to the start of the 2021-22 school year in Brookline! We are excited to begin the new year with you and your students. The excitement of the first day of school is often accompanied by a tinge of nervousness and anxiety for many of us - students, families, and staff. As we open schools in the continued shadow of the COVID-19 pandemic, these feelings of nervousness may be compounded. Each of us worked to overcome various socio-emotional and learning challenges last year, and we are ready to build upon the skills of resilience, compassion, and support that we have developed to ensure that the school year ahead is successful for us all.

Our capacity to provide and maintain high-quality education for our students is built upon the health and safety of our community. To this end, PSB will begin our school year with several COVID-19 mitigation strategies in our buildings. **When the 2021-22 school year begins, all Public Schools of Brookline students, staff, and visitors must wear a mask or facial covering upon arrival at and in school buildings, transportation, and/or school-sponsored activities, regardless of their vaccination status.**

A summary of these protocols can be found in the [Back to School Overview](#) document. We have also created a [Back to School Frequently Asked Questions](#) document in an effort to answer your questions and concerns, as well as keep you informed and updated as we work with local boards, departments, and groups.

In the meantime, I encourage you to take the time to build relationships with our students, with our educators, and with fellow parents, guardians, and neighbors. It is clear to me after just a few weeks here in Brookline that our staff and families are deeply committed to creating educational communities in which everyone feels safe and welcome, physically and mentally. We all bring our varied backgrounds and experiences to school with us, and we believe in respecting and celebrating those unique perspectives in our school. Taking the time to take care of each other - and yourselves - will go a long way in supporting our students' social-emotional development and their academic achievement.

I look forward to visiting many classrooms over the course of the year to get to see and know all of our great work in action. We are going to have a fantastic year!

Warmest regards,

Linus J. Guillory Jr., PhD
Superintendent of Schools

PSB Back to School 21-22: Overview

Updated as of August 20, 2021

We have established health and safety protocols designed to mitigate the transmission of COVID-19 in our school communities. Last school year, based on mitigation strategies for schools recommended by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), as well as the Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE) and the Department of Public Health (DPH), there was minimal spread within schools across the Commonwealth. We will continue to use most of the successful mitigation strategies that we used in the 2020-21 school year. These include but are not limited to:

- Masking for all PSB students, staff, and visitors;
- Maintaining our enhanced ventilation systems;
- Asking staff and students to stay home when sick;
- Maximize distancing and spacing indoors as possible;
- Targeted COVID-19 testing and reporting;
- Continued hand hygiene vigilance;
- Encouraging and facilitating COVID-19 vaccinations; and
- Fostering other healthy behaviors and habits within our community and ourselves.

Over the course of the year, we will continuously monitor and revise these transmission mitigation strategies in response to the latest public health data and recommendations/guidelines by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), as well as the Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE) and the Department of Public Health (DPH) and other local departments and boards.

Masking

[As of August 9, 2021, the town of Brookline has mandated face coverings when inside any public town buildings. The Brookline School Committee also approved a face-covering policy on August 17, 2021.](#)

When the 2021-22 school year begins, all Public Schools of Brookline students, staff, and visitors must wear a mask or facial covering upon arrival at and in school buildings, transportation, and/or school-sponsored activities.

This policy applies to all individuals at PSB, regardless of their vaccination status. At the discretion of PSB staff, individuals may also need to wear a mask or face covering while outdoors.

Mask Recommendations and Requirements

A face covering that completely covers the nose and mouth must be worn by all individuals upon arrival to and in school buildings, on school transportation, and at school-sponsored activities even when social distancing is observed. Face coverings must fit snugly against the sides of the face, secured with ties or ear loops. Gaiters, balaclavas, bandanas, and coverings with valves are prohibited.

Students and staff should come to school wearing a mask and with at least one extra mask on hand. PSB will continue to provide masks for any students, staff, or visitors, whose mask does not meet these requirements or for students who do not bring a mask to school. Students and staff will not need to wear a mask during mask breaks or when they are eating or drinking in a seated position. If a PSB activity is hosted at a non-PSB venue, the stricter rules for masks and facial coverings will apply at the non-PSB venue.

PSB will continue to review data, including vaccination rates and community metrics related to COVID-19 in our schools, and work with the Town of Brookline in determining the need for the continuation of the mask mandate.

Mask Breaks

Regular breaks from masking and opportunities for outdoor instruction (where masks are not required) have become part of our routine in our schools. Students will be provided with mask breaks at least once in the morning and once in the afternoon.

Mask Exemptions

In some situations, individuals may be excused from the mask requirement. Following CDC guidelines, face coverings will not be required for anyone who has medical, behavioral, or other challenges making it unsafe to wear a face covering. Face shields or physical barriers may provide an alternative to face coverings as an exemption in some instances, subject to written approval from a physician and an exemption waiver granted by PSB Student Health Services. Parents and guardians may not excuse their students from the mask requirement.

Physical Distancing

PSB will continue to enforce a policy of physical distancing indoors as feasible. Any form of distancing implemented at PSB buildings should not impede students' learning experience. Implementation of physical distancing will vary from school to school, based on their building size and enrollment. We will work to maximize the distance between students during masked and unmasked times.

Health Protocols

As of August 20, 2021, PSB will be using the following health protocols for all students and staff:

- [Protocol for In-School Close Contacts, Test to Stay Program](#)
- [Protocol for Symptomatic Testing](#)

The collective commitment to staying home when ill remains critical to a successful school year. As with the 2021-22 school year, staff and families are asked to assess their child's state of wellness daily, before leaving home for school. The form for families can be found at www.brookline.k12.ma.us/healthattestation. The form for staff can be found in the [PSB Staff Portal](#).

We encourage you to develop routines to incorporate the daily health assessment into your family's schedule, such as:

- Keeping your thermometer near your cereal cabinet or your coffee pot;
- Setting your cell phone timer to do the health assessment at breakfast;
- Placing a sign on your refrigerator or at the door exiting your house: "Did I check my child's temperature today?" Did I ask about COVID symptoms today?"

Below is the list of COVID-19 symptoms for which caregivers should monitor their children, and staff should monitor themselves.

- **Fever (100.0° Fahrenheit or higher), chills or shaking chills**
- **Difficulty breathing or shortness of breath**
- **New loss of taste or smell**

- **Muscle aches or body aches**
- Cough (not due to other known causes, such as a chronic cough)
- Sore throat, when in combination with other symptoms
- Nausea, vomiting, or diarrhea when in combination with other symptoms
- Headache when in combination with other symptoms
- Fatigue, when in combination with other symptoms
- Nasal congestion or runny nose (not due to other known causes, such as allergies) when in combination with other symptoms

Testing

[With DESE support](#), PSB will offer two targeted COVID-19 testing plans:

- A BinaxNow rapid antigen test for individuals who become symptomatic while at school, and
- A “Test to Stay” program for individuals who are determined to be a close contact, according to DESE/DPH definition.

Please note that testing can only be done on individuals with a signed consent form. The form can be found at www.brookline.k12.ma.us/healthattestation

Vaccinations

[According to the CDC](#), the COVID-19 vaccine in the United States is highly effective (including against the Delta variant) and strongly reduces an individual’s risk of contracting the virus. As of August 20, 2021, all individuals 12 years or older may receive the vaccine.

PSB encourages that all eligible individuals receive the COVID-19 and is committed to ensuring that 100% of all eligible individuals are vaccinated against COVID-19. The Student Health Services Team held a Pfizer vaccination clinic open to everyone in the Brookline community at the Lincoln School on August 18, 2021. A second clinic will be held on September 8, 2021. Individuals may receive their first or second dose of the vaccine at that time. More information on future clinics will be posted and communicated with the PSB community.

<i>(Numbers as of August 16, 2021)</i>				
	Enrollment	Fully Vaccinated *	First dose	Percentage
7th	543	274	343	50.5%
8th	486	321	352	66.0%
9th	540	404	429	74.8%
10th	504	331	364	65.7%
11th	491	349	380	71.1%
12th	512	407	442	79.5%
Total	3076	2037	2238	66.2%
* Using data from MIIS and info shared by parents. There may be international students or out of state who are not included in vaccine numbers.				