

Highlights

We Are Rappahannock!

Reboot Bulletin- Aug. 18, 2021

Message from Dr. Grimsley

Dear RCPS Family,

While we all had high hopes to start this school year as normally as possible, many challenges have surfaced that we have had to grapple with together. We have seen the first week of school what a single case can cause within the school system, causing quite a disruptive learning environment for everyone. While a return to normalcy is yearned for, we must work together to ensure a structure and continuation of a new normal for a while longer. The administrative team met this week to debrief, regroup, and reboot. We do need to adjust our procedures and practices and get back to the basics we know worked so well in order to sustain a school year where every student thrives. This bulletin will explain these necessary adjustments that have been made. Thank you for your feedback, suggestions, and flexibility as we work through this year's version of a "new normal." We are resilient! We are Rappahannock!

Enhanced Safety Mitigations

Due to the recent COVID cases, RCPS will be returning to many of the safety mitigation practices that were in place last school year.



Student Seating

RCES students will be placed in intentional seating in small groups, or pods, to reduce possible exposure. Should a positive case arise in a classroom, this will reduce the number of students that will be subject to quarantining. At RCHS, strategic seating will be used to reduce close contact.

Desk shields are currently in place at each desk and/or table to further protect each student.

Disinfecting and Cleaning

We will continue our sanitization practices at both schools. Student desks are routinely disinfected after use and in between classes. Also, the school buildings are being deep cleaned in the evenings. Additionally, our air scrubber filters have been cleaned to ensure the best air quality for the buildings.



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Important Reminder for Families

Please help us reduce the chances of a short-term switch to distance learning or classroom quarantines by keeping your child at home if you think they may have been exposed to the virus or if they have any symptoms, including mild symptoms:

- *Temperature of 100.4 degrees or higher
- *Sore throat
- *Cough (for students with chronic cough due to allergies or asthma, a change in their cough from baseline)
- *Difficulty breathing (for students with asthma, a change from baseline breathing)
- *Diarrhea or vomiting
- *New onset of severe headache, especially with a fever

If you have any questions or need more guidance regarding a possible exposure, please call your child's school nurse. They are here to assist you while keeping our students and staff safe.

RCES- Robyn Murray 540-227-0200 ext. 3012

RCHS- Courtney Atkins 540-227-0745 ext. 3471

If your student tests positive for COVID-19, please notify your school nurse ASAP so that we may begin contact tracing in order to reduce the possible spread.

Masking in Schools

Virginia Health Commissioner, Dr. Norman Oliver, has issued Public Health Order, requiring all students, staff, and visitors to wear masks while indoors at K-12 settings. RCPS, as a public school, must follow all federal and state health orders, and therefore will expect all students, staff, and visitors to wear masks while indoors in all school buildings. The Order specifies that any person who declines to wear a mask because of a medical condition or any person with a sincerely held religious objection to wearing masks in school may request a reasonable accommodation.

While the recent masking mandate allows for exemptions and accommodations, we will be requiring all students, staff, and visitors, regardless of exemption, to wear a mask should we be in a containment situation with VDH (typically an outbreak scenario—two or more interrelated cases or four sporadic cases in the same building). The exemption will allow students to access alternative accommodations, including the option to switch to distance learning for a minimum of two-weeks and up until the containment period is over. Families that have submitted mask exemption waivers will be emailed details shortly from the school principals.

Masking on School Buses

By federal order, masks are **required** on all school buses and are not subject to masking exemptions.



Enhanced Safety Mitigations (continued)

Cafeterias



RCES- At the elementary school, breakfast and lunch will be held in classrooms, like last year. This will help to limit possible exposure and the need to quarantine should there be a positive case.

RCHS- To limit the number of students in the cafeteria, there has been an additional lunch shift created. This will help to further promote physical distancing between students.

Masks

As a reminder, masks are to be worn in the school buildings unless special accommodations are needed (see sidebar).

According to the Virginia Department of Health, a student who is within 3 to 6 feet of an infected student is not considered a close contact as long as both the infected student and the exposed student correctly and consistently wore well-fitting masks the entire time.



Student Devices & Canvas Update

If your student has not already received a device, they will be assigned one on Wednesday, August 18th. While we have experienced some technical difficulty with Canvas, our remote learning platform, we expect to have it fully operational next week. We sincerely apologize for the delay and will ensure that all students receive lessons and assignments by alternative methods in the short term.

Important Reminder

If you or your student is feeling anxious or depressed, we are here to help!

Call or text our

EMOTIONAL SUPPORT HOTLINE:

540-683-0437

Additional Mental Health & Wellness Resources

The RCPS Mental Health Innovators Team has created a thorough, multi-page Mental Health and Wellness Resource document that includes contact information for many helpful services. To view this document, visit our district website homepage at www.rappahannockschools.us

Subs Needed

We are in need of substitutes for the classrooms, school offices, and cafeterias. For more information, please contact Michelle Berta at 540-227-0023 or by visiting www.rappahannockschools.us and clicking on Human Resources tab.