



July 8, 2020

Hello Bethany Lutheran Families,

While I know that many of you are working to make the most of the summer months, I wanted you all to know we here at BLS are working even harder to prepare the school for the students return and working on how to safely reopen our school campus in the fall of 2020. Given the ongoing global COVID-19 pandemic, the school has developed an overall plan for teaching and learning at Bethany.

A reopening committee of faculty and staff and medical personnel are in the process of developing a more detailed plan on how to conduct school in a safe manner. This document will highlight the key needs and responsibilities and is not intended to be exhaustive. Likewise, the Centers for Disease Control promoted its Considerations for Schools, the California Public Health Office shared its Industry Guidance for Schools, Solano County Office of Education Considerations for Reopening. As a school, we have studied these documents and are incorporating the guidelines into our plan. Of these, the Industry Guidance for Schools from California Public Health seems to be the most useful for safe practice and planning purposes.

The essential questions we have as a school are:

1. How can we properly plan for the 2020-21 school year with much uncertainty still lingering?
2. How do we continue to provide the best education possible both on campus and, if need be, off campus?
3. How can we all best work together to provide not only a great education but also support one another and respect each other's needs?

It is clear from parent and staff feedback that there are a wide variety of ideas and opinions about how we address the needs of students and the opening of our campus. Bethany Lutheran wants to meet those needs as much as we can, but we also need to make sure that we are moving forward with an approach to learning that is safe and in accordance with public health guidance and the direction of local authorities. We want to balance the need to have students on campus in person with their teachers and classmates as much as possible while at the same time ensuring a healthy environment. There are no easy answers to how to do this. We are in the middle of a pandemic and need to be safe, but child development and learning are also at risk and will be sacrificed if their educational needs continue to be hampered. Therefore, as it stands today and after very careful consideration, Bethany Lutheran does plan to open this fall, with special modifications and precautions in place.



Because we are a very small community of learners and instructors, we fully believe that we can safely execute a positive, loving, nurturing, and safe environment with the following modifications in place:

- Upon arrival to campus, all students and staff will have visual wellness checks, temperatures will be taken with a no-touch thermometer. Any person with a temperature will be asked to return home for a period of no less than 24 hours.
- We will ask all individuals about COVID-19 symptoms within the last 24 hours and whether anyone in their home has had COVID-19 symptoms or a positive test.
- Every other urinal will be closed. One person at the sink at a time.
- Touchless soap in all bathrooms and touchless hand-sanitizers in both buildings.
- Students will **NOT** be mandated to wear masks while in their classrooms or out on the playgrounds.
- Bathrooms are now and have been since March 17th professionally cleaned and sanitized by a professional cleaning company.
- Chapel will be streamed to all classrooms, so no assemblies will be held to ensure safety.
- Lunch: Students will use a rotational basis to eat in the multipurpose room or in their classroom – subject to change.
- Janitorial staff will clean and sanitize at night, and staff members will help sanitize during the day.
- Campus visitors: No more than 5 visitors allowed adhering to social distancing protocols.
- Desks will be socially distanced and separated as much as possible.
- Students will wipe their desk before and after school.
- Each child should have a personal device that can be used to access the internet and the tools needed for communicating with the teacher and complete assigned work should we be forced into another quarantine event.
 - o Limited Sharing
 - Each child's belongings will be separated and in individually labeled storage containers, cubbies or areas. Ensure belongings are taken home each day to be cleaned.
 - BLS will ensure adequate supplies to minimize sharing of high-touch materials (art supplies, equipment, etc.) to the extent practicable or limit



use of supplies and equipment to one group of children at a time and clean and disinfect between uses. Each student will have their own caddy with pencils and supplies. (TK-8 classroom and supply lists are posted on the gobethany.com website)

- Avoid sharing electronic devices, clothing, toys, books and other games or learning aids as much as practicable.

In addition to the aforementioned practices, Bethany Lutheran will continue to encourage safe practices among the faculty, staff, and students. Healthy hygiene practices consist of:

- Teaching and reinforcing washing hands, avoiding contact with one's eyes, nose, and mouth, and covering coughs and sneezes among students and staff.
- Teach students and remind staff to use tissue to wipe their nose and to cough/sneeze inside a tissue or their elbow.
- Students and staff should wash their hands before and after eating; after coughing or sneezing; after being outside; and before and after using the restroom.
- Students and staff should wash their hands for 20 seconds with soap, rubbing thoroughly after application, and use paper towels (or single use cloth towels) to dry hands thoroughly.
- Staff should model and practice handwashing. For example: for lower grade levels, using bathroom time as an opportunity to reinforce healthy habits and monitor proper handwashing.
- Students and staff should use fragrance-free hand sanitizer when handwashing is not practicable. Sanitizer must be rubbed into hands until completely dry. Note: frequent handwashing is more effective than the use of hand sanitizers.
- Ethyl alcohol-based hand sanitizers are preferred and should be used when there is the potential of unsupervised use by children. Isopropyl hand sanitizers are more toxic and can be absorbed through the skin.
- Children under age 9 should use hand sanitizer under adult supervision.
- Minimize contact at school between students, staff, families and the community at the beginning and end of the school day.
- Students should remain in the same space and in groups as small and consistent as practicable. Keep the same students and teacher or staff with each group, to the greatest extent practicable.

Plan for When a Staff Member, Child or Visitor Becomes Sick (COVID-19 INDUSTRY GUIDANCE: Schools and School Based Programs)

- Work with school administrators, nurses and other healthcare providers to identify an isolation room or area to separate anyone who exhibits symptoms of COVID-19.



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- Any students or staff exhibiting symptoms should immediately be required to wear a face covering and be required to wait in an isolation area until they can be transported home or to a healthcare facility, as soon as practicable.
- Establish procedures to arrange for safe transport home or to a healthcare facility, as appropriate, when an individual is exhibiting COVID-19 symptoms:
 - o Fever
 - o Cough
 - o Shortness of breath or difficulty breathing
 - o Chills
 - o Repeated shaking with chills
 - o Muscle pain
 - o Headache
 - o Sore throat
 - o New loss of taste or smell
- For serious injury or illness, call 9-1-1 without delay. Seek medical attention if COVID-19 symptoms become severe, including persistent pain or pressure in the chest, confusion, or bluish lips or face. Updates and further details are available on CDC's webpage.
- Notify local health officials, staff and all families immediately of any positive case of COVID-19 while maintaining confidentiality as required by state and federal laws. Additional guidance can be found here.
- BLS will close off areas used by any sick person and will not use again before properly cleaning and disinfection. To reduce risk of exposure, wait 24 hours before you clean and disinfect. If it is not possible to wait 24 hours, wait as long as practicable. Ensure a safe and correct application of disinfectants using personal protective equipment and ventilation recommended for cleaning. Keep disinfectant products away from students.
- Advise sick staff members and students not to return until they have met CDC criteria to discontinue home isolation, including 3 days with no fever, symptoms have improved and 10 days since symptoms first appeared.
- Given standard guidance for isolation at home for at least 14 days after close contact, the classroom or office where the patient was based will typically need to close temporarily as students or staff isolate.

What Bethany Lutheran will do should a community member test or become positive for COVID-19:



It is Solano County Public Health who will take the lead in determining what steps our school will need to take. From the [California Industry Guidance document for schools](#) BLS will implement the state approved measures when a student, teacher or staff member tests positive for COVID-19 and had exposed others at the school:

- In consultation with the local public health department, Bethany may decide whether school closure is warranted, including the length of time necessary, based on the risk level within the specific community as determined by the local public health officer.
- Given standard guidance for isolation at home for at least 14 days after close contact, the classroom or office where the patient was based will typically need to close temporarily as students or staff isolate.
- Additional close contacts at school outside of a classroom should also isolate at home.
- Additional areas of the school visited by the COVID-19 positive individual may also need to be closed temporarily for cleaning and disinfection.
- Implement communication plans for school closure to include outreach to students, parents, teachers, staff and the community.
- Include information for staff regarding labor laws, information regarding Disability Insurance, Paid Family Leave and Unemployment Insurance, as applicable for local educational agencies.
- Provide guidance to parents, teachers and staff reminding them of the importance of community physical distancing measures while a school is closed, including discouraging students or staff from gathering elsewhere.
- BLS will develop a plan for continuity of education.
- Maintain regular communications with the local public health department.

All signs point to another incredible and productive school year despite the challenges created by the pandemic. Our skilled and devoted staff is already planning and preparing for your child(ren) to return safely to school. Our enthusiastic office is registering new families, ordering needed materials and updating student files. Our hard working and conscientious custodian has spent the entire summer thoroughly cleaning and disinfecting the facility. And, our much-appreciated and energetic new senior pastor, Phillip Pledger, is gearing up to welcome families, provide spiritual leadership and exciting chapels for the school. We are indeed a joyous and caring community with the common goals of nurturing responsible, caring students and promoting high-level learning at BLS.

While I know many larger school districts are still struggling with a plan to return to campus this fall, I fully believe that the school's smaller student body will make it easier to follow state



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and federal guidelines to keep gatherings small. I also believe and trust that God has a wonderful plan for Bethany. Therefore, I look forward to the future weeks ahead when I can yet again hear the wonderful sound of children on campus, witness courses being taught, and being part of a Christian environment following the path of our Lord and Savior in shaping Christian leaders of the future. Please also understand that there may come a time when we might have to move to distance education again because of another outbreak, but until that time we plan to resume our educational life back on our beautiful campus, and we pray that you all will join us, safely.

In HIS Service Always,

Dr. Chris E. Smith

Principal, Bethany Lutheran Schools