



A Message from the Department of Human Resources

Dear district staff,

On August 5, the district announced the Reconnect Plan for the 2020-21 school year with students participating in all classes from home, using an improved, robust and flexible online and at-home learning model starting on September 8. We have been planning a staged, careful process for students to return to classes at their school. The full communications of our reconnect plan and stages can be viewed [here](#).

Although many of our employees will be working and/or teaching remotely, many of our staff will be continuing to work in our buildings and others returning to work throughout the stages of the reconnect plan as the conditions and needs change.

The district is working to gather information from employees who have conditions that put them at a greater risk and who are seeking accommodations to reduce possible exposure to COVID-19. No employee will be excluded from work on the sole basis that they are identified as being “high risk” and no employee is required to self-identify as “high risk.” However, if you believe you are at high risk and would like to explore accommodations, including but not necessarily limited to available leaves of absence or alternate work assignments, we would like to hear from you as soon as possible.

Alternative work arrangements will depend on the feasibility of a particular position working remotely. Alternative work arrangements may include, but are not limited to, telework, alternative or remote work locations, reassignment, and social distancing measures. We do not anticipate having many feasible alternative work arrangements, but the District will consider these requests on a case-by-case basis during the 2020-21 school year.

The CDC and Washington State Governor’s Office have identified adults age 65 and over as being at an increased risk for severe illness from COVID-19. In addition, people with the following conditions are designated as those who “are at increased risk”:

- Cancer;
- Chronic Kidney Disease;
- COPD;
- Immunocompromised state (weakened immune system) from solid organ transplant;
- Obesity (BMI 30+);
- Serious heart conditions (heart failure, coronary artery disease, cardiomyopathies);
- Sickle cell disease; and
- Type 2 diabetes mellitus.

The CDC has identified people with the following conditions as those who “might be at an increased risk”:

- Asthma (moderate-to-severe);
- Cerebrovascular disease;
- Cystic Fibrosis;
- Hypertension or high blood pressure;
- Immunocompromised state (weakened immune system) from blood or bone marrow transplant, immune deficiencies, HIV, use of corticosteroids, or use of other immune weakening medicines;
- Neurological conditions, such as dementia;
- Liver disease;
- Pregnancy;
- Pulmonary fibrosis;
- Smoking;
- Thalassemia; and
- Type 1 diabetes mellitus.

Employees who have a condition making them *at increased risk* are initially not required to provide medical verification that their condition puts them at increased risk. Employees who have a condition of which they *might be at an increased risk* are required to provide medical verification to determine whether or not they are at increased risk to perform their duties on-site as assigned. If an employee in either category seeks to use accrued leave or access other benefits, an employee may be required to provide medical verification of their condition consistent with District policy and the terms of the Collective Bargaining Agreement.

Staff members requesting alternative work arrangements based on the conditions identified above are asked to complete an electronic [employee information form](#). After completing the form, it will be forwarded directly to our human resources team. If you have questions, please email amanda.ingram@bellingshamschools.org.