

Bitney Prep High School 2020-2021 Reopening Plans FAQs

Learning at Home with Technology Learning Center - Frequently Asked Questions

1. Why are more students not returning to campus for in-person learning this fall?
 - After reviewing guidelines for the California Department of Education, the California Department of Public Health, and the Nevada County Department of Public Health our staff believes that this is currently the best approach for providing our students with meaningful learning opportunities while protecting the safety of both students and staff.
 - This approach avoids the challenges of changing our educational delivery model after the beginning of school if Nevada County gets on the State Watch List because of increasing COVID 19 cases and/or confirmed cases of COVID 19 cases in students, staff or immediate family members.
 - This approach enables Bitney to provide equity for students who do not have reliable internet access.
 - This approach allows Bitney's staff to focus sanitation and safety measures on a much smaller portion of our school facility.

2. Will our students be working from home indefinitely?
 - We know that the course of the COVID-19 Pandemic has been hard to predict; consequently, it would be inappropriate to predict exactly when it will be safe and appropriate for us to return more fully to in-person learning. However, Bitney staff will continue working with the Nevada County Superintendent of Schools Office and the other public schools in Nevada County to monitor changing conditions. We will reassess the situation and bring recommendations to the Charter Council at the end of the Fall Quarter.

3. Who will be able to work on campus in the Technology Learning Center?
 - After our first experience with distance learning last spring, we know that there are a number of Bitney students who do not have access to the internet at home. Students without access to the internet will have first priority to participate in the TLC program.
 - The TLC will be limited to 10 students. The intent is that this will be a consistent cohort of students who will be present on campus on Monday, Tuesday, Thursday, and Friday. For safety purposes, students who are not in the TLC cohort will not be able to use this space.

- Through CARES Act funding, Bitney has access to funding to potentially provide some families with Hotspots that will use cellular networks to provide internet access. We will be working to identify students who live in areas where the hotspots will provide effective internet access.
4. Will students be able to work from hard-copy paper packets?
 - We will not be providing instruction and assignments to students using hardcopy paper packets. While these packets were helpful last spring when we did not have time to put a more effective and equitable system in place, these kinds of packets do not provide students with the learning opportunities that they need in high school.
 5. How will online classes and learning opportunities be improved from the distance learning that took place last spring?
 - We will be providing students with synchronous learning in classes where they will be able to interact with both their teachers and peers.
 - Students will be accountable for their attendance and participation and will benefit from following a regular class schedule.
 - The experiences and focus on interest-based learning that were lost when we had to suspend Bitney's Internship Program will be replaced by Learning Through Interest projects that all students will complete on Wednesdays.
 6. Why are we switching to a block schedule?
 - Last spring we had consistent feedback from students that it was difficult for them to keep on top of the learning in five, six, or seven different classes. Our teachers strongly believe that changing to a block schedule will address this problem by allowing students to focus on a smaller number of classes each semester.
 - With the block schedule, students will be able to take as many classes over the course of the year as they would with a traditional class schedule.
 7. How can I access my student's assignments and grades?
 - Grades will be reported through our Student Information Service - Pathways using the grade portal on the Bitney website.
 - All Bitney teachers will be using Google Classes for each of their classes. Parents will be able to access weekly reports from Google Classes to see whether or not their students are keeping up with their work.

8. Internships and LTIs

- Wednesdays will still be focussed upon interest-based learning. Each student will work with their Advisors to develop Learning Through Interest projects.
- It is very important for both parents and students to understand that Wednesdays are mandatory school days. While students will not be participating in synchronous classes on Wednesdays, they will still have projects that they must work on and document.

9. School Calendar

- We will be following the school calendar that was adopted by the Bitney Charter Council last spring. The first day of school for students is Monday, August 17, 2020. Students will be logging into their classes and participating starting at 8:20 am that morning.

10. Wilderness Week and Field Trips

- For health and safety reasons, we will not be scheduling any field trips until we are able to fully reopen school.
- Teachers will be taking students in their classes on virtual field trips so that they can continue to explore their world safely.

11. How are we addressing student social and emotional needs?

- Bitney staff will continue with our philosophy and practice of working with one student at a time.
- Teachers will build activities that promote social and emotional support into their curriculum, especially in Advisory class.
- Advisors will continue to use this class to develop supportive relationships with the students.
- Staff will work to create groups where students can provide peer support and mentoring through group time built into the end of each day.
- Bitney's staff will continue to focus on developing consistent communication with families.
- School-based counseling and crisis support will continue to be available.