



# Colchester School District

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April 8, 2020

Dear Colchester School Community,

I continue to be incredibly grateful to be part of the Colchester learning community. Our faculty and staff have logged countless hours collaborating on ways to continue to support each other and to provide opportunities for connections, continued learning, and ongoing support for all of our children. While distance learning is not a replacement for the classroom experience, we do believe all students can learn and grow through this time away from our schools. In this new, unprecedented reality, we as educators are also learning and doing everything that we can to support our students. Thank you for being flexible as we implement this new way of learning. In the coming weeks, we will send out a survey to families asking for feedback on how we are doing so that we can identify what needs improvement and what is working well.

While I'm aware that you have been getting a lot of communication from your building principal and teachers, I have just a couple of updates and other useful information to share with you.

**April Vacation:** The Vermont Secretary of Education recently announced that school districts should follow their approved calendar. This means that our scheduled April vacation during the week of April 20-24 will still happen. We think it is important that as a school community we take a collective deep breath and step away from distance learning for this week. There is no doubt that this transition has been hard on everyone. Each family has different burdens and hurdles to overcome while schooling their children at home. This break is well deserved and we hope you are able to have some fun engaging in some backyard adventures. However, while adventuring, please remember to adhere closely to the most recent social distancing guidelines and other public health directives.

**Meals During April Vacation:** Even though we don't normally provide meals to families during school vacations, I think we can all agree that this is not a normal time. We know that our meals have brought comfort and relief to many of our families and in light of that, our staff and bus drivers have stepped up and said they are willing to work over April vacation. Because of that, we are planning to continue providing meals the week of April 20-24.

**Childcare for Essential Workers:** The school district is not currently operating a childcare center, however, there are centers in our area who are. Essential workers who need help finding child care should visit [this website](#) and fill in the requested information. Families can also call 2-1-1 ext. 6, or call 1-877-705-9008 to speak to a child care referral specialist.

**Playground Reminder:** As a reminder, we closed all of the school playgrounds on March 20. Additionally, Colchester Parks and Recreation is now also asking people to avoid town playgrounds and instead encouraging them to choose one of the many other outdoor activities that Colchester has to offer.

**Accessing Our School Buildings:** Some families have reached out to their schools asking when students/families will be allowed back in our buildings for various reasons, most commonly to empty their locker or pick things up. At this point, our school buildings will remain closed until further notice. The guidance from Governor Scott continues to shift as the pandemic evolves, so we do not have a set date for when this closure will be lifted. Once we have further information, we will be sure to share that with you.

**Next Year's School Calendar:** Through all of this, we are still continuing to plan for next school year. This is happening through a number of ways such as virtual hiring committees, building schedules, and finalizing the school calendar. We are pleased to share that the 2020-2021 school calendar has been agreed upon and is now posted on the calendar page of our website, just below the current year's calendar. You can view it here: <https://www.csdvt.org/district/about/calendar.php?selection=cal-schyr>

We recognize that there is a lot going on in your world these days and not just as it relates to schooling. We want to make sure you have the resources to take care of your emotional health during this pandemic. The [Center for Disease Control](#) and the [Vermont Department of Health](#) have a number of resources listed on their websites to help cope with stress, fear, and anxiety that can sometimes feel overwhelming during a crisis. In addition to being linked in this letter, we have also added them to our [CSD COVID-19 page](#). That page houses district information on video conferencing, internet resources, meal delivery routes and menus, as well as some other resources such as how to make your own cloth mask and tips for talking to children about COVID-19.

As always, please reach out to your teacher, principal, counselor, or us here at Central Office if you need anything.

Sincerely,

Amy Minor  
Superintendent of Schools