



Colchester School District

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CSD Community,

Next week, we anticipate the Agency of Education will release a revised version of their original reopening guidance ([A Strong and Healthy Start: Safety and Health Guidance for Reopening Schools](#)). Please know that we are prepared to immediately review any changes or additions to the state's guidance. This review will take some time to make sure any subsequent changes that the district will have to make are the right ones and are sustainable for the operation of the district. As always, we are committed to keeping you informed and will communicate any CSD specific changes as soon as we can.

Below you'll find some new updates and answers to questions we've received in an FAQ style.

Q: Will there be a fall sports season this year?

A: This morning at the Governor's weekly press conference, he announced that the official guidance from the Vermont Principal's Association regarding sports will be released early next week. However, he did preview that there *will* be a fall sports season. While this is very exciting, he cautioned that players, coaches and families should prepare themselves for the season to look much different, especially when it comes to high contact sports. It won't be what we're accustomed to and it will not be a "normal" season, but their goal is to have the fall sports season in some fashion. He stated that practices will begin when classes start on September 8.

Q: I used to volunteer a lot in my child's classroom and I'm disappointed I can't be in the schools as a volunteer this year. Is there another way for me to help out and be involved?

A: Yes! We know we're going to need substitutes this year, in all schools and in a variety of roles. A substitute's schedule is completely flexible, they are in charge of when and where they sub. It may only be once in a while or it could be every week. Along with parents and caregivers who might have extra time, we're also hoping to attract some college students who are home for the fall taking classes online. Substitute teachers make \$120 per day. If you or someone you know is interested, visit www.csdvt.org/sub or contact Amy Silverston in our HR department at Amy.Silverston@colchestersd.org or (802) 264-5976.

Q: Is it possible that we will see unexpected classroom or school-wide closings this fall? Should I have a backup plan for childcare in case of a closure?

A: Yes, it is possible. We may need to close a school or individual classroom as a result of a positive COVID-19 case or even as a result of a staffing shortage. In this morning's press

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conference, Dr. Lavigne shared that there are currently no outbreaks of COVID-19 within the borders of Vermont and while we are hopeful that Vermont's public health data will remain strong, if we have an outbreak in our community, it is possible that some of our employees would need to quarantine as a result. The potential for staffing shortages is a challenge that all Vermont schools are facing and we want families to consider this in their planning. Families can help alleviate some of our staffing concerns by encouraging folks to apply to serve as substitutes in our schools so that we can remain open. If you or someone you know is interested, visit www.csdvt.org/sub or contact Amy Silverston in our HR department at Amy.Silverston@colchestersd.org or (802) 264-5976.

Q: Is there any update on options for childcare for remote days?

A: We recognize that childcare will be a challenge for Vermont families this fall. We are still in regular communication with several local agencies, both private and public, who are working to provide options for school-aged children on remote learning days. If you are seeking care for your child(ren) we encourage you to visit the [Childcare Resource](#) or to call them at (802) 863-3367. They are maintaining a (growing!) list of agencies and centers who are prepared to provide care during remote days. If you're experiencing financial difficulties, we also encourage you to look at the [Child Care Financial Assistance Program](#) which helps eligible families with the cost of childcare.

Q: My family is planning a late summer vacation. How can I find out where we can travel without having to quarantine so we don't miss the first couple weeks of school? (This is a repeat question from our last FAQ.)

A: The State of Vermont created a [cross state travel map](#) that shows what locations you can travel to without needing to quarantine upon your return to Vermont. The map is updated weekly on Fridays and is populated with raw data from Johns Hopkins University. Please be aware that if a CSD student or employee travels to an area that requires quarantine, they will need to follow the State's guidelines prior to returning to our school buildings. [Read more about quarantining at the Vermont Department of Health website.](#)

Q: What are some things I can do to help my child get used to wearing a mask? Do you have any tips to help us be successful?

A: As much as you can, give them time to practice wearing their mask. Try a few different options, either homemade or store bought, to see which are most comfortable to them. We've also seen some families encouraging their kids to decorate their masks to put their personal touch on it. And of course, modeling is always a helpful tool. With the recent mask mandate, people of all ages are wearing masks out in public. If you haven't yet, it is also beneficial to explain *why* people are wearing masks to help them understand that wearing face coverings can prevent the spread of germs. The Vermont Department of Health recently put together a fact sheet with more information about [Face Coverings for Children](#) for those that are interested. The CDC also has a [visual storyboard](#) for how to wear facial covering properly.

Q: I have a question about the reopening, who can I send it to?

A: We've gotten some great questions so far which is what originally framed this regular FAQ style email. Keep them coming! To make it easier, we've created this [Reopening Questions Google Form](#) with an open text box for anyone to submit an anonymous question. Because it is anonymous, you will not get a personal or direct response. If it is a popular question we will answer it here in an upcoming FAQ. If it is more specific, we will make sure to pass it along to the appropriate reopening committee for consideration.

Next week we're excited to debut our new Reopening Schools/COVID-19 website. We'll also send out another FAQ document with information on learning expectations for both instructional models, an update on our planning for school meals, more information about sports based on the new guidance, and answers to any questions we receive through the Google Form.

Be well,
Amy Minor
Superintendent of Schools.