



# Colchester School District

Administrative Offices, 125 Laker Lane, PO Box 27, Colchester, Vermont 05446

Phone: (802) 264-5999 • [www.csdt.org](http://www.csdt.org) • Fax: (802) 863-4774

---

August 13, 2020

CSD Community,

Earlier this week, the Agency of Education in conjunction with the Department of Health, released a [revised edition of the guidance](#) that schools must follow in their reopening plans. I want to assure you that the District Leadership Team is reviewing those changes and working to come up with adjustments or modifications to our district and building plans as needed. Most likely, those changes will be finalized next week. We'll share them with you as soon as they're ready.

Below is the latest round of questions and answers. We cover calendar changes, schedules and class placement, waiver requests, school meals, busing, and more. If you have a question, you can ask it using our anonymous [Reopening Questions Google Form](#). 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.

**Q: Will there be any changes to the school calendar?**

**A:** We are working to finalize the revisions that need to be made to the 2020-2021 school calendar. As you know, the start date for school was delayed by the Governor to September 8. We're working to see where we can make up some student learning days here and there without extending into June.

Additionally, knowing that we're opening in a hybrid learning model, there are some holidays and non-student days that land on Mondays and Fridays which we are hoping to move to Wednesday to ensure both learning groups have two full days of in-person instruction each week. Conversely, when the "off day" cannot be shifted (Labor Day for example) we may opt to hold the in-person day on Wednesday instead. (That's a hint for the first week of school! It's not finalized yet, but very possible that the Blue Group and Lakers Group will attend in person on Tuesday 9/8 and Wednesday 9/9.)

I am hoping to get a final calendar out to families by the end of August. I know that in a typical year, our calendar is finalized much earlier and I appreciate your understanding of the challenges that we are overcoming.

---

**Amy Minor**  
Superintendent  
of Schools

**George Trieb**  
Business & Operations  
Manager

**Carrie Lutz**  
Director of Student  
Support Services

**Gwendolyn Carmolli**  
Director of Curriculum  
& Instruction

**Q: Are school hours going to change?**

**A:** No, hours for each school will remain the same. There will be some flexibility at the beginning of the year as we all adjust to the new arrival and dismissal procedures. Each building will be sending out information with specific instructions for how and where students should be dropped off, and how and where they will enter and exit the building.

Colchester High School:	7:45 - 2:20
Colchester Middle School:	7:30 - 2:15
Malletts Bay School:	8:30 - 3:00
Union Memorial School:	8:30 - 3:00
Porters Point School:	8:15 - 2:45

**Q: When will we find out if our waiver request to attend on the opposite days is approved?**

**A:** Each building is going through their waiver request list to ensure that they can continue to keep classes balanced. They have been contacting families directly once a student's placement is finalized. If you haven't heard from your school yet, be assured that they are working through the list and will get back to you as soon as they can, with the absolute latest being next Friday (8/21).

**Q: When will we find out our schedule or class placement? When will we know what we need to get for school supplies?**

**A:** Scheduling and class placement is a huge piece of what we're working on every day right now. It is a giant puzzle that has many complex layers to it. I assure you that we know how important these details are and we will get them to you as soon as we finalize them. We are aiming for the end of next week or the start of the following week. As for school supplies, your building principal or assigned teacher will share a supply list with you.

**Q: I selected full-time virtual schooling. Will my student also get assigned to a physical class in case we decided to do in-person learning in the future? Will we be included in things like picture day?**

**A:** Virtual Learning students will be assigned a virtual teacher. In the event you decided to transition your student from virtual learning to in-person learning (which can happen at the trimester mark in grades K-5 and the quarter mark in grades 6-8), they would be assigned to a classroom at that time. Our full-time virtual students will continue to be part of their school and they will have the opportunity to come to school to have their school picture taken. The building principals will communicate those details at a later date.

**Q: Will the free summer meals delivery program be extended since the start of school has been delayed?**

**A:** Yes! We're excited to announce that we are officially extending the summer meals program. It was slated to conclude tomorrow but we are going to run for another two weeks. If you're not familiar, we've been using vans to deliver meals to 20 locations throughout Colchester. The

meals are completely free, just stop by one of the locations and grab a bag from one of our friendly employees. For a full list of times and locations visit:

<https://www.csdvt.org/district/about/summer-meal.php>

**Q: Will meals be free this school year for all students like they were in the spring?**

**A:** Since our initial closure in March, we've been able to offer meals for free to all families, regardless of income. We are still waiting to hear if it will be possible to continue offering free meals to all families this fall. There is currently a bill in front of Congress that includes funding for school meals but we're unsure if it will pass. At this point, and until we (hopefully) hear differently, we'll be charging for meals as we do in a normal school year. That being said, we would like to encourage our families to fill out a [Free & Reduced Meal Application](#). If you qualify, all students in your household will get their meals for free. The application easy to access online and easy to navigate. Even if you haven't qualified in the past, you may qualify now, especially if you have had a loss of income during the pandemic. Only one application is needed per family.

The [online application](#) is available in 7 languages: English, Spanish (Español), Arabic (العربية), French (Français), Filipino (Tagalog), Vietnamese (tiếng Việt) and Chinese (Mandarin (官話)). The paper application is available in [Nepali](#) (नेपाली).

**Q: Is there an update on busing? Are the routes going to change? If my student isn't a regular rider, can they still use the bus every now and then?**

**A:** We are not anticipating any *significant* changes to our bus routes. With many families finding ways to transport their students to school (thank you!) there will ultimately be fewer stops to make. Mountain Transit believes that having fewer stops will balance out the extra time that will be needed during boarding and additional cleaning between runs. That being said, there may be some minor time changes here and there. Bus schedules will be emailed out to families and posted on our website the week before school starts.

Families in grades K-5 filled out their child's transportation plan when they verified their enrollment. That is the plan we will use for the school year and you do not need to do anything additional for your student to ride the bus. Students in grades 6-12 do not need a transportation plan on record with the school and can ride as needed.

**Q: I have students at UMS and MBS which have the same start and end time. How should I plan to drop them off and pick them up?**

**A:** Our recommendation is to drop off and pick up at UMS first, then MBS. The schools are understanding that our families can sometimes be spread out around the district and will work with them to be flexible.

**Q: Are there any updates for families with students who have IEPs? When should we expect to hear from the team and/or special educator?**

**A:** Letters regarding case managers will be going out the week of Aug 24th. We are working with the data from the family survey about virtual/in-person instruction to identify class placement

which will in turn guide who the case manager will be. Special educators and speech language pathologists will work together with families between Aug 20th and Sept 4th to identify the exact services that will be provided. All students who qualify for special education will be assigned a case manager regardless of the instruction model. In the hybrid model, students may receive support both in person on the days they are attending and remotely on the days they are not in the buildings. This could include support on Wednesdays. For students who are doing virtual learning, the case manager will work with the virtual instructors to support the students in the curriculum. In addition, they will work with the families to identify the special education services that will be provided remotely for the students. Paraeducators may also be assigned to assist the student with the curriculum.

**Q: It was announced that there will be no field trips this year, does that include afterschool trips like the CMS Ski and Board Program?**

**A:** That's correct. There will be no off-campus school-sponsored trips. We will continue to reevaluate this decision as the year progresses, but it is safe to say that programs like ski and board will not run this winter.

**Q: Guidance for fall sports was released this week, when is the earliest that teams will hold tryouts and practices?**

**A:** Our Athletic Directors at CMS (Jim Olsen) and CHS (Mark Ellingson) will communicate with families directly about fall sports. They'll need a little time to review the guidance and figure out how to logistically implement it here in Colchester. However, the guidance is clear that the first day of practice and/or tryouts will be on the first student day, which is Tuesday, September 8.

**Q: Is all of this information and previous FAQs housed somewhere I can easily access?**

**A:** Yes! We just redesigned our COVID-19 webpage to make it easier to access the Reopening Guide, letters from the district, as well as information about meals, technology, and COVID-19 precautions. It's still under construction, but we will be putting the finishing touches on it over the next week. Check it out here: [www.csdvt.org/covid19](http://www.csdvt.org/covid19).

We're looking forward to welcoming our teachers and support staff next week! Continue to send in any questions you have and keep an eye out for additional communication directly from your school.

Be well,  
Amy Minor  
Superintendent of Schools