



Colchester School District

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

Phone: (802) 264-5999 • www.csdvt.org • Fax: (802) 863-4774

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CSD Community,

I cannot tell you how excited we are to have students return to our buildings. In planning for the reopening of school we have put many health and safety precautions into place. To help communicate the changes we've made a [2-page visual flyer](#). It has also been placed on our website: www.csdvt.org/covid19. While it doesn't include *everything* we're doing, it's a great snapshot of the general mitigation tactics we're using to reduce transmission of the virus.

We are so grateful to have an incredible team of nurses serving every school in our district. Yesterday, two of them took the time to record a video for families which gives great information about what to expect this year and how you can help keep yourself, your student and our whole community safe. The video is about 18 minutes long and we would appreciate it if you took the time to watch it: <https://youtu.be/fuUByJTeIAA>. *(The closed captioning is auto generated at the moment. We'll be working to fine-tune it soon.)*

Below is some important information that families should know as we get ready to bring students back into our buildings.

Q: How will we know everyone entering school is healthy?

A: Ultimately, by sending their student to school, the caregiver of each student is certifying that they are well. It is your responsibility to **only** send your student to school if they are not showing symptoms, haven't traveled to an area that requires quarantine, and have not come into close contact with an individual who has tested positive for COVID-19. Essentially, it is incredibly important to stay home when you're sick. Every student and employee should be monitoring their health each morning when they wake up. As a district, we will assume that every child who boards a bus or enters a school is feeling well and not displaying any symptoms of illness. The district will also assume that if a child is sent to school, the child has not knowingly been exposed to another person who has tested positive for COVID-19. It is everybody's responsibility to stay home if you're not feeling well.

Q: How long do we keep a child home if they're feeling ill? Should they get a COVID-19 test if they have symptoms?

A: We are currently developing a guide called *COVID-19 Symptomatic and Positive Cases: Triage, Evaluation, Testing, and Return to School Information for CSD*. This will answer many

Amy Minor
Superintendent
of Schools

George Trieb
Business & Operations
Manager

Carrie Lutz
Director of Student
Support Services

Gwendolyn Carmolli
Director of Curriculum
& Instruction

questions about what to do in certain scenarios and how the district would notify families if there is a positive case in the district. We expect to email the guide out to families and staff early next week. The nurse's video (link can be found in the opening paragraph of this email) also goes over some of this information. If you have specific questions about illness or symptoms, please contact your school nurse.

Q: The first day of school is Tuesday, September 8th but my student is scheduled for remote learning on that day. What will they do and how will they get their assignments?

A: Teachers will be sending out information regarding the learning that will take place during the first week of school. On the remote learning days, even if that happens to be your student's first two days of school, students will receive lessons online using SeeSaw for grades K-2 and Google Classroom for grades 3-12. If you need a device, you can pick it up from the Technology Department. Dates and times for pick up are listed in the next question.

Q: When can I pick up my student's device?

A: Students in all grades and learning models, K-12, are invited to pick up their device directly from the Technology Department Monday - Friday between the hours of 7:30 am - 3:30. Additionally, the Technology Department is hosting a weekend pick up option *this Saturday, August 29th from 8:00 am - 2:00 pm*. The last day you can pick up your device before school starts is **Wednesday, September 2 from 7:30 am - 3:30 pm**. After 9/2, the devices will begin moving to individual classrooms and will not be available for pick up. If you choose not to pick up your device early, your student will get it on their first in-person day.

Device pick up will be at the Technology Department which is located on the far side of the high school using door D18. [A map showing how to get to door D18 is listed here.](#)

Q: Will classes be held outside when the weather is good?

A: Yes! We are encouraging our staff to take advantage of the beautiful green space that our campuses offer. As you may have seen driving by our buildings, each of our schools are having tents set up and many have other outdoor spaces that will also be used. Knowing this, please ensure your child is prepared to spend time outdoors. This means sunscreen in the warmer months and layers of clothing in the colder months.

Q: What will PE, Music, and Art look like this year?

A: In many cases, our teachers will be using outdoor spaces as classrooms so they can continue to follow the guidance set by the State. Depending on the course, grade level, and lesson plan, teachers are planning their curriculum in creative ways. For music, the State's guidance does not permit singing and brass/woodwind instruments to happen indoors, so moving outside and physically distancing may be an option. Your student's teacher will be sharing more information with you soon.

Q: Will students have their temperatures taken before they board the bus?

A: Yes. Students riding the bus will have their temperature checked when they board the bus.

However, we strongly recommend that you take your child's temperature every morning before they leave the house to go to school or out in the community. Knowing the symptoms of COVID-19 and checking for a fever is a critical component to keeping our entire community safe. We have ordered digital thermometers that will be mounted near the steps on every bus. We are still waiting for them to arrive but are hopeful that we will be able to install them before the first day of school.

Q: Can my student wait at the bus stop alone?

A: We do not recommend your student wait at a bus stop alone. If they register a temperature greater than 100.4 F when boarding the bus, they will need to return home. Again, it is critical that you verify that your student does not have a temperature before your student leaves the house.

Q: When will bus schedules be released and how will we know when they're ready?

A: Mountain Transit is in the process of finalizing our bus routes and we are aiming to have them out to families next week via email. They will also be posted on the transportation page of our website. With the hybrid model learning model only bringing half the students to school each day, assigned bus seats and temperature checks when boarding, it will take a few weeks to dial in the exact times for bus stops. Thank you in advance for your patience and flexibility around this.

Q: Do you have an update on childcare options for remote learning days?

A: Colchester Parks and Recreation is offering a remote learning day program for students in grades K-5 during student assigned remote learning days. Additionally, there are other childcare organizations that are running remote learning programs during the hybrid learning phase. 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: What will meals look like this fall?

A: Meals will look different than they have in past years. We are rolling out an online ordering system that will allow families to select if their student will be ordering a school meal in advance. Since the meals will be delivered to classrooms, it will be required to order ahead of time so the kitchen knows how many to prepare. More information on how to use the online ordering system will be sent to you next week. For remote learning days, families will have the option to order a meal for their student(s) ahead of time and pick it up at any of our schools.

Q: Will meals be free for all students this year?

A: The Federal Government has ended the free meals program that we were able to capitalize on this spring and summer. This means that families will have to go back to paying for meals just like any other school year. 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 is accessible 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: Are students allowed to bring their own lunch?

A: Yes. Students are absolutely allowed to bring their own lunch, however, students are not allowed to share any of their food with others. This includes any celebratory baked goods for birthdays or other occasions. If your classroom has any allergies, your child's teacher will let you know.

Q: Is there somewhere that all of this information is kept? Where can I find a list of all the FAQs that have been sent this summer?

A: Yes. We have compiled all of our [FAQs onto our COVID-19 website](#). We are keeping it updated as information continues to be released.

In closing, we really want everyone to understand the role they play in keeping our schools open and safe. It is critical that you monitor your child's health closely this year if we are to remain open for in-person instruction. We cannot stress enough how important it will be for you to keep your student home if they show any signs of illness. Doing so will help keep other students and our employees healthy, which is our top priority.

Be well,

Amy Minor
Superintendent of Schools