



Colchester School District

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August 6, 2021

CSD Community,

This week, we received [recommendations](#) from the Vermont Agency of Education (AOE) and the Vermont Department of Health (VDH) regarding COVID-19 mitigation measures that will be implemented for the upcoming school year to keep our school community as safe as possible. This is the first of several advisory memos that will be released over the next few weeks. We expect to see additional guidance about music, winter sports, and contact tracing. With input from administrators and district nursing supervisors, we are in the process of creating a comprehensive guide that will provide more details on how these state-level recommendations will impact our school communities here in Colchester. For now, here's an overview of what we know will be in place for the school year.

Masks

For the first 10 days of school (Wednesday, August 25 to Wednesday, September 8), students and staff in **all** of our schools will be *required* to wear a mask when inside school, regardless of vaccination status. Masks will not be required outdoors. Any school-sponsored events occurring before the first day of school, such as open houses or Smart Start activities, will also require universal masking of all participants.

As we continue into the school year, after the 10-day mark, masks will remain a requirement at Malletts Bay School, Porters Point School, and Union Memorial School because they all serve students who are younger than 12-years-old and not yet eligible for the vaccine.

For Colchester Middle School and Colchester High School, where the majority of students are 12 years or older and subsequently eligible for the vaccine, the AOE and VDH recommend dropping the mask mandate once 80% of students at an individual school receive the second dose of the vaccine. This means the school would then operate using the same structure that VDH currently has for all Vermonters; it would be a recommendation that unvaccinated individuals wear a mask, however, no one would be required. We will be working with the AOE and VDH to determine the current vaccination percentages at both schools and will provide updates as they come.

Bus and Specialized Transportation

Regardless of an individual or school's vaccination status, *everyone* using district transportation, including school buses, specialized services, and driver's education vehicles, will be required to wear a mask per federal regulation.

Amy Minor
Superintendent
of Schools

George Trieb
Business & Operations
Manager

Carrie Lutz
Director of Student
Support Services

Gwendolyn Carmolli
Director of Curriculum
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Other Mitigation Measures

Physical distancing is no longer required by the AOE and VDH, however, we will space students out as much as possible in their classrooms. Schools will continue to open windows to increase fresh airflow and we will be utilizing the many outdoor classrooms around our campuses as weather permits. In addition to regular cleaning and sanitization procedures, there will be hand sanitizing stations placed in high traffic areas and we will allow adequate time for handwashing throughout the day.

Rationale

Governor Phil Scott and his team, including Education Secretary Dan French and Health Commissioner Dr. Mark Levine, cited the state's high vaccination rate and the fact that Vermont has continually been a national leader in the way it has handled the COVID-19 pandemic. They stated that they have carefully reviewed the recent recommendations from the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) and the American Association of Pediatrics (AAP) and consulted local experts familiar with Vermont's conditions when considering how to apply the broad nature of those national-level recommendations. Vermonters have done exceedingly well following the advice of top health officials and it shows in the general health and success of our state throughout the pandemic. The Colchester School District will continue to follow guidance crafted by our state's experts and officials.

Vaccine Clinic

As we did in the spring, we will be working with VDH to offer vaccination clinics in our district. Plans for potential clinics later this month and in September are in the works. As soon as we have finalized dates and registration links, we will share that information with the school community. If you're looking to book an appointment now, you can view nearby clinics through www.healthvermont.gov/myvaccine.

District Nursing Supervisors

Our beloved long-time District Nursing Supervisor, Deb Deschamps, retired at the end of last school year. She was an instrumental part of our district's success, not just last year, but over the course of her entire 24-year career in Colchester. We wish her well in her well-deserved retirement. I am proud to share that Nurse Moriah McCullagh from Porters Point School and Nurse Lindsey Campion from Colchester High School will be joining forces to serve as District Nursing Co-supervisors and COVID Coordinators. They bring significant expertise and knowledge to our district and we are grateful to have these two incredibly talented health care professionals supporting our schools.

Families and employees can expect to start receiving more regular communication from their school and the district as more information becomes available. For a full list of conferences dates, early release days, holidays, and vacations visit www.csdvt.org/calendar. Enjoy the last few weeks of summer!

Be well,

Amy Minor
Superintendent of Schools