COLCHESTER SCHOOL DISTRICT

GUIDE FOR THE SCHOOL YEAR

2021/2022

COLCHESTER
SCHOOL DISTRICT

WHERE WE ARE NOW

While COVID-19 remains in our community and cases will continue to occur, Vermont has achieved among the highest vaccination rates in the world which is allowing our schools to fully reopen for five days per week, in-person learning.

CSD Community,

When many of us left for the summer back in June, we thought we'd be returning to a mostly normal school year this fall. Clearly, that is not the case. While some things will feel a little more normal (like having all of our students in-person, five days a week!), without the availability of a vaccine for children under 12 years old, we are continuing to keep a number of layered safety measures in place. Vermont Health Commissioner, Dr. Mark Levine, has made it clear that the Delta Variant is in our community and therefore, we also expect it to enter our schools. However, with our knowledge and experience from last year, along with

our families' commitment to follow the recommendations outlined by the Vermont Department of Health and those listed in the following pages of this guide, I'm confident we can have a wonderful school year.

The primary recommendations to keep our school community safe include staying home when you're sick, mask-wearing, regular testing and quarantining when necessary to stop the spread of the virus.

Thank you for your continued support. We cannot wait to welcome your student for the 2021-2022 school year.

Amy Minor

Superintendent of Schools

H E A L T H   &   S A F E T Y

If you send your student to school, we assume...

By sending your student to school, you are certifying that they are well. As a district, we will assume that every child who boards a bus or enters a school building is feeling well, not displaying any symptoms of illness, and has not been knowingly exposed to a person who has tested positive for COVID-19.

Symptoms of COVID-19: fever, cough, shortness of breath, sore throat, runny nose, loss of taste or smell, nausea or vomiting, chills, diarrhea, fatigue, muscle aches, headache.

Based on current data and the state's high vaccination rate, this year the Vermont Agency of Education (AOE) and Department of Health (VDH) issued advisory recommendations which include fewer mitigation measures than last year.

There are three primary strategies highlighted in the recommendations:

1. Stay home when sick,
2. Universal mask-wearing, and
3. Regular testing and quarantining when necessary.
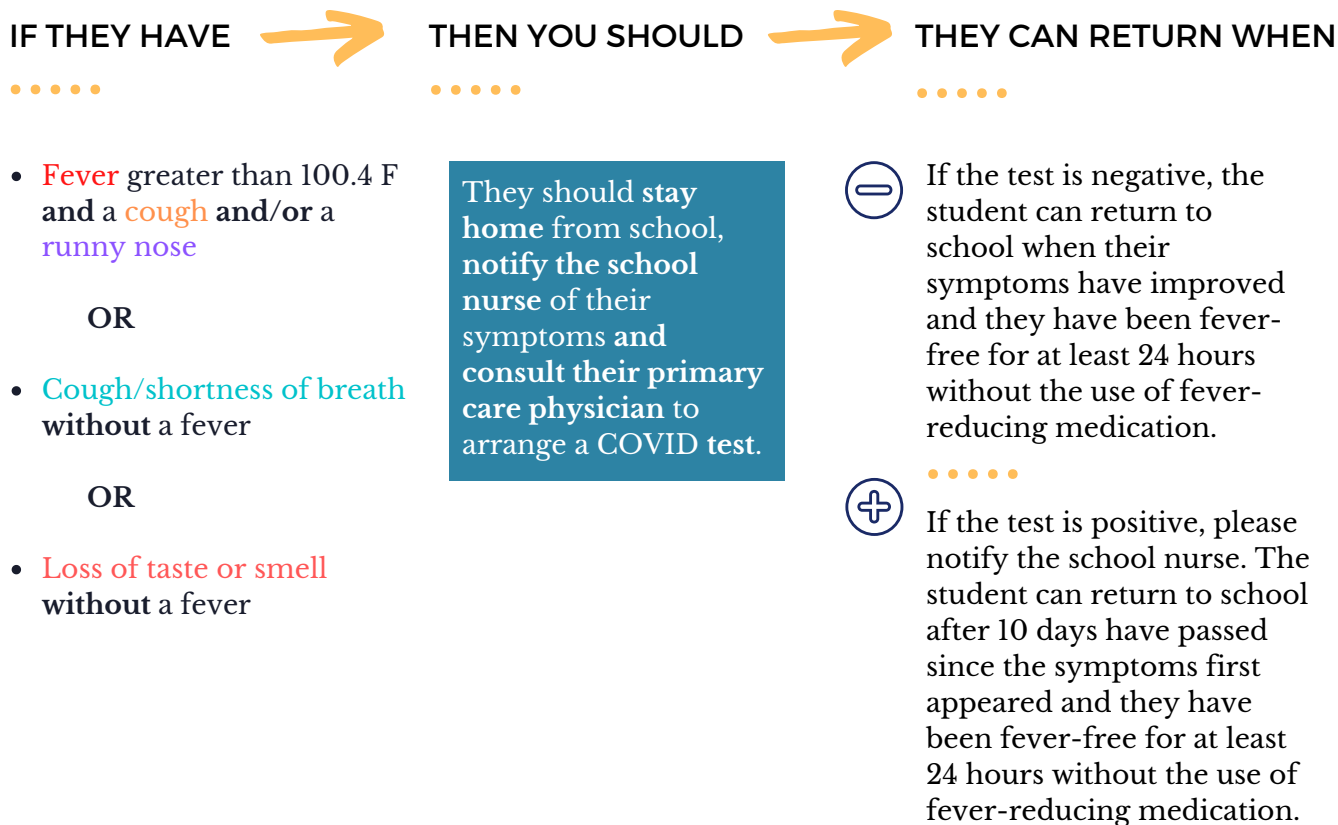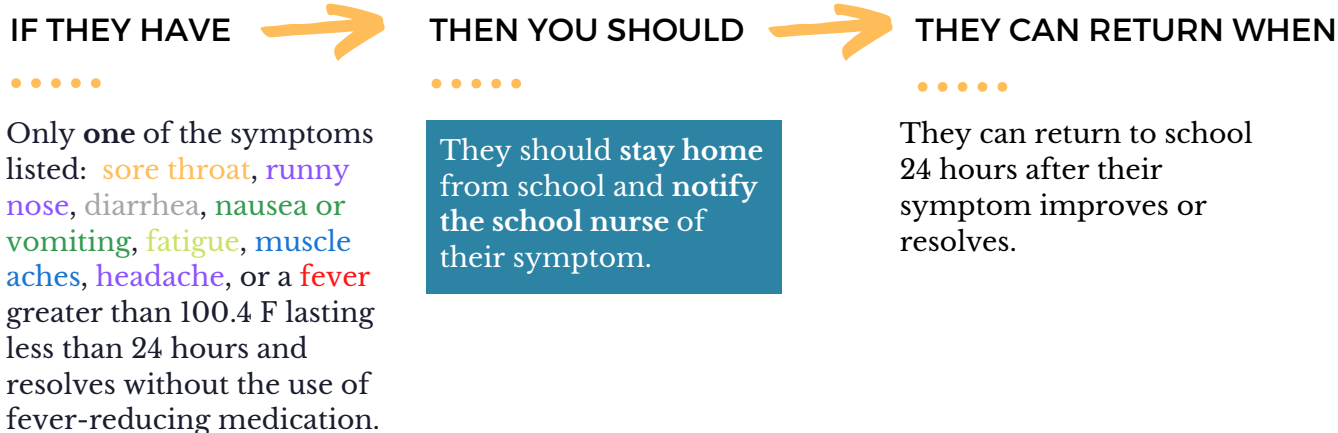
①②③ Stay home when sick

Students and staff who are sick should stay home. **This is the most important prevention measure.** If symptoms begin while at school, the student or staff member will be sent home as soon as possible. All families should have a plan in place to have an adult able to pick up their child **within 30 minutes**.

Students and employees MUST stay home if:

- They are showing any symptoms of COVID including a fever;
- They are currently in quarantine due to close contact with an individual with COVID; or
- They are in isolation due to testing positive for COVID.

WHAT IF...

If your student wakes up with COVID-19 symptoms, what you should do is based on **how many** and **which symptoms** they are experiencing. The following recommendations are based on a flowchart created by the University of Vermont Children's Hospital.

IF THEY HAVE

Only **one** of the symptoms listed: sore throat, runny nose, diarrhea, nausea or vomiting, fatigue, muscle aches, headache, or a fever greater than 100.4 F lasting less than 24 hours and resolves without the use of fever-reducing medication.

THEN YOU SHOULD

They should **stay home** from school and **notify the school nurse** of their symptom.

THEY CAN RETURN WHEN

They can return to school 24 hours after their symptom improves or resolves.

IF THEY HAVE

- Fever greater than 100.4 F **and** a cough **and/or** a runny nose

  OR

- Cough/shortness of breath **without** a fever

  OR

- Loss of taste or smell **without** a fever

THEN YOU SHOULD

They should **stay home** from school, **notify the school nurse** of their symptoms **and consult their primary care physician** to arrange a COVID **test**.

THEY CAN RETURN WHEN

If the test is negative, the student can return to school when their symptoms have improved and they have been fever-free for at least 24 hours without the use of fever-reducing medication.

If the test is positive, please notify the school nurse. The student can return to school after 10 days have passed since the symptoms first appeared and they have been fever-free for at least 24 hours without the use of fever-reducing medication.

WHAT IF... *continued*

IF THEY HAVE ➡ **THEN YOU SHOULD** ➡ **THEY CAN RETURN WHEN**

A fever alone that persists for more than 24 hours.

OR

A fever greater than 100.4 F **with any** of the following:
- Sore throat
- Nausea or vomiting
- Diarrhea
- Muscle aches
- Headache
- Fatigue

OR

Any combination of:
- Sore throat
- Nausea or vomiting
- Diarrhea
- Muscle aches
- Headache
- Fatigue
- Runny nose

They should **stay home** from school, **notify the school nurse** of their symptoms and **consult their primary care physician** to determine if there is a need for a COVID test.

✓ If it is decided **not to test and an alternative diagnosis is made** (i.g. strep throat), they can return to school when their symptoms have improved and they have been fever-free for at least 24 hours without the use of fever-reducing medication.

✕ If it is decided **not to test and no alternative diagnosis is made**, they can return to school when their symptoms have improved, it has been at least 10 days since their symptoms first appeared and they have been fever-free for at least 24 hours without the use of fever-reducing medication.

⊖ If a **COVID test is recommended and the result is negative**, the student can return to school when their symptoms have improved and they have been fever-free for at least 24 hours without the use of fever-reducing medication.

⊕ If a **COVID test is recommended and the result is positive**, please notify the school nurse. The student can return to school when their symptoms have improved, it has been at least 10 days since the symptoms first appeared and they have been fever-free for at least 24 hours without the use of fever-reducing medication.

STAY HOME

HEALTH & SAFETY

①②③ **Mask-wearing**

Masks are universally required in all school buildings and on all modes of transportation (buses, vans, drivers education, and contracted vehicles) until notified otherwise by the district. Masks are not required outdoors. The Agency of Education (AOE) and Vermont Department of Health (VDH) have recommended that schools continue to require universal masking until 80% of eligible students in a school are vaccinated. We will continue to assess public health conditions statewide and in our community. The district will provide families with advanced notification if any changes are made to the district's universal masking requirement.

①②③ **Regular testing & quarantine**

SURVEILLANCE TESTING

With COVID-19 testing, people who test positive can get care earlier. Contacts of the positive individual can be traced and self-isolation or quarantine started sooner to help **stop the spread of the virus**.


The district will be offering optional COVID-19 testing for all students and staff. This is the same program that was available to CSD employees last year through the state. This year, it has been expanded to include students as well. Parents and guardians will have the option to sign their child up for testing at school. We are still waiting for specific details from the state that will include who will be administering the tests and how often they will be available. Outside of school-based testing, anyone can still get tested for COVID-19 at locations throughout the state, free of charge. Click here to find a testing site near you.

HEALTH & SAFETY

CONTACT TRACING

Colchester School District will work closely with the Vermont Department of Health (VDH) if a case of COVID-19 is confirmed in a student or staff member at a school. The district will only be notified by VDH if the individual with COVID-19 was in school while infectious. **If someone tests positive but was not in a school facility while they were infections, the school will not have a role in contact tracing or communicating with families**.
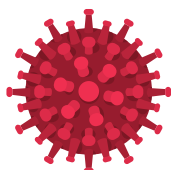
The infection period is when someone with COVID-19 can spread the virus to others. It starts two days before symptoms begin - or for people who don't have symptoms, two days before they got tested - and continues until they have recovered.

CLOSE CONTACTS & QUARANTINE

When the district is notified of a positive individual, the CSD COVID Response Team will use information including attendance records, classroom and bus seating charts, class schedules, activity or co-curricular participation records to identify who at the school had close contact with the positive individual.

A close contact is someone who was within six feet of the sick person, with or without a mask, for more than 15 minutes or sharing a space for more than four hours. Anyone identified as a close contact will be contacted by the district or VDH. Close contacts will need to quarantine unless they are fully vaccinated and are not having any symptoms, or have recovered from COVID-19 within the past three months.

If the close contact needs to quarantine, it means staying home and away from others for 14 days. They do have the option to end quarantine early if they do not have symptoms and get tested with a PCR test on or after day seven and get a negative test result. All close contacts will receive information outlining quarantine in more detail including the dates on when they can test and return to school. For more information on close contacts, testing, and quarantine, click here to visit the VDH's website.

TRANSLATED MATERIALS

What to do if you are a close contact of someone with COVID-19
မြန်မာစာ | Français | Kirundi | नेपाली | Soomaali | Español | Swahili | Tiếng Việt | العربية

What to do if you test positive for COVID-19
မြန်မာစာ | Français | Kirundi | नेपाली | Soomaali | Español | Swahili | Tiếng Việt | العربية

L A Y E R E D   S A F E T Y   M E A S U R E S

As we welcome teachers, staff, and students back into our buildings for the 2021-2022 school year, the district has been working diligently to implement layered safety measures throughout all of our schools.

Access to the School
- All of our school buildings will be open for employees and students with limited visitor access.

Masks
- Masks are universally required in all school buildings and on all modes of school transportation until notified otherwise by the district. Masks will be provided to those who come to school without one.

Transportation
- Students will use hand sanitizer as they board the bus. Assigned seats will be distanced as much as possible. Weather permitting, windows will be opened to increase air circulation.

Distancing and Podding
- Classroom seating will be configured with maximum allowable space between students.
- At the elementary level, students will be podded/grouped with their class.

Eating and Drinking
- K-5 students will eat in their classrooms.
- 6th graders will primarily eat in their classrooms but will have scheduled rotations to eat in the cafeteria.
- Based on vaccine eligibility, students in grades 7-12 will be allowed to eat in school cafeterias, outside in tents and/or other designated alternative locations in order to space students out while eating to the greatest extent possible.
- Ala Carte will be closed until further notice but that decision will be continually assessed as the school year goes on.
- Water fountains have been disabled, students should bring a water bottle and they can utilize our refillable water stations.

Cleaning & Hygiene
- All buildings will undergo cleaning and disinfection on a regular basis. Frequently touched surfaces will be cleaned often.
- Students and staff will be frequently reminded about the importance of proper handwashing. Hand sanitizer will be available on all buses, in high-traffic areas throughout the school, and in each classroom.

Field Trips
- Field Trips will be approved on a case-by-case basis. No overnight, out-of-state or international trips will be considered until further notice.

COVID-19 VACCINATION

Vaccination for all Vermonters who are eligible is the key to keeping our schools, our families and our communities safe. Vaccines are the surest way to prevent serious illness and death, prevent widespread outbreaks in our schools and our communities, and, ultimately, move past the COVID-19 pandemic. Click here to view a letter from Education Secretary Dan French and Health Commissioner Dr. Mark Levine to all Vermont parents and guardians, urging them to get their children vaccinated.

Currently, anyone 12 years and older is eligible for the vaccine.

The Delta variant of this virus has changed the game, for the U.S. and here in Vermont. Nonetheless, the vaccines are doing what they are designed to do — prevent severe illness, hospitalization and death. The vaccines are estimated to have saved some 279,000 lives and prevented 1.25 million hospitalizations (according to a study led by Yale School of Public Health). That's pretty amazing to consider. We have learned a great deal about the virus – an almost unprecedented amount – in the more than 18 months of this pandemic. We have a very powerful tool — vaccines that are highly effective at preventing the most serious outcomes of the COVID-19 virus, including against the Delta variant.

Colchester School District is hosting a number of school-based vaccine clinics through the Vermont Department of Health and the Vermont National Guard. Upcoming clinics will be held on Wednesday, September 8 and Wednesday, September 29.

Clinics will take place at Colchester Middle School from 9:00 am to 5:00 pm and will be offering first or second dose of the Pfizer vaccine to anyone 12 years and older. You can walk-in or visit www.healthvermont.gov/myvaccine to make an appointment. You can also call 855-722-7878. If the school-based clinics don't work for your schedule, you can also walk-in at CVS, Hannaford, Walmart, Walgreens, Price Chopper/Market 32, Rite Aid, Shaws, or Costco.

Click here to learn more about the vaccines available and to hear Vermont's Commissioner of Health, Dr. Mark Levine, addresses common questions about the COVID-19 vaccine.