

REOPENING INFORMATION

For Families

2020-21 School Year

INTRODUCTION

This document is based on [A STRONG AND HEALTHY START: Safety and Health Guidance for Reopening Schools, Fall 2020](#). numerous meetings with the Colchester School District Leadership Team (DLT) and the work of the following Union Memorial School Faculty and Staff:

Christine Anderson, Kindergarten Teacher

Katie McIntyre, First Grade Special Educator

Chris Antonicci, Principal

Sherry Thibault, Second Grade Teacher

Kathleen Kelly, School Nurse

Sarah Thompson, Instructional Assistant

Carol McCleary, School Counselor

We are starting the year at **Step 2**, which means:

- schools are open for in-person instruction with *restrictive modifications* in place,
- students will learn in-person two days per week and remotely for three days per week,
- buildings are closed to the public and
- groups are limited to 75 people indoors and 150 people outside.

The decision to move from Step 2 to Step 3 (and if necessary, back to Step 2) will be made based on the epidemiological evidence (metrics) at the regional level and in coordination with the AOE and the Health Department. **Step 3** means:

- schools are open for in-person instruction with *less restrictive modifications* and
- buildings are closed to the public.

There is also the possibility we will need to move back to **Step 1**, which means:

- all students are engaged in remote learning and
- buildings are closed to all.

Finally, the District has identified the following priorities for reopening its schools during the pandemic:

- approach the work as one district,
- the health and safety of all members in the learning organization,
- the social and emotional wellbeing of students and the staff,
- equity and access to high quality teaching and learning for all,
- equitable and fiscally responsible use of resources,
- clear, effective channels of communication with all stakeholders,
- supporting families and community partnerships and
- responsive and flexible decision-making based on most recent data.

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ARRIVAL

Daily Health Screening

The [Daily Health Screening](#) will include a series of questions and temperature check. Employees will complete the CSD Employee Health Screening form (sent via email) prior to the start of the school day. Students will be screened as described below. The Daily Health Screenings will be conducted by trained school personnel. If there is a question about the results, the nurse will conduct a screening and make a final decision.

Bus Arrival

Students will board the bus and go to their assigned seat. Students will be physically distant on the bus as much as possible. Once they have arrived at UMS, buses will only be disembarked one at a time and students will enter the building through the main entrance. The Daily Health Screening will be done once the students arrive at school.

Vehicle Arrival

There are two checkpoints for students who arrive to school via a personal vehicle. The process upon arrival in the parking lot is:

1. Pull up to one of the checkpoints (indicated by the stars) and/or form a line.
2. The adult in the vehicle will remain in the vehicle (unless there is a problem with the student exiting the vehicle) and answer screening questions for the student.
3. The student will step outside the vehicle, have his or her temperature checked and be provided hand sanitizer.
4. After a successful screening, the student will enter the building through the middle doors and go directly to his or her classroom.



Some other notes regarding students who arrive by personal vehicle:

- Parking is not allowed in the staff parking spots (along Main Street) or the parking spots along the fence.
- If you arrive before 8:10 AM, please stay in your vehicle and pull up to one of the checkpoints. The playground is closed at this time of day and the structures are closed indefinitely.
- The travel lane must remain open.
- Visitors are not allowed in the building. If you need to drop something off (like paperwork) the adults at the checkpoints will take it for you. If you need to speak with someone, you will need to call them.

- All open parking spots are available for use during dismissal.

Late Arrivals

The administrative assistant (or other adult if she is unavailable or otherwise occupied) will meet the student and their parent/guardian outside the main entrance and perform the Daily Health Screening (see above). Upon a successful screening, the student may enter the building.

Students Who Leave and Return

Students who come to school and are checked and then leave for an appointment will need to be checked again upon returning to the building.

Once the Students Arrive

Students will report directly to their classroom once they have arrived.

Faculty and Staff Parking

Faculty and staff need to park in the spaces on the south side of the main parking lot (the spaces closest to the sidewalk and Main Street) or in the newly paved parking lot on the west side of the building between the school and Claussen's. There will be no parking along the north side of the building (outside Anderson's, Hughes', Mulcahy's, Barnett's and Davis' classrooms) as students will be using this area as a walkway and potentially for quick body/brain breaks.

ATTENDANCE and STUDENT DAY

More information on attendance will be coming soon. Students and families will be more accountable than this past spring.

These times (which include a time for recess) are what the Vermont AOE is defining as a student day during remote learning:

Kindergarten	2 hours
Grades 1-2	4 hours

BIRTHDAY TREATS AND PARTIES

Students will not be allowed to bring in an edible treat or other individual items (e.g. pencils, stickers) to share with their classmates. Birthday treats for sharing are limited to non-food items, such as donating a book or game to the class in honor of the student if a family so chooses. A student can bring their own edible treat.

Classroom parties that include outside edible "treats" and/or visitors will not be allowed.

BREAKFAST

Breakfast will be consumed in the classroom and is free for all students until December 31, 2020. The breakfasts will be delivered in a cooler and handed to each student by an adult. Students are not allowed to go into the cooler. If more are needed, the adult supervising the room will need to call the kitchen.

BUILDING USE

ACE is the only program that can use the building other than the usual students, faculty and staff. There will be no non-school meetings (e.g. 4H, scouting, condo association, PTA). There will be no Rec programs (other than ACE) or other student programs.

CHAMP BANDS

Adults will still recognize expected behavior with language and showing a Champ Band. Instead of handing the Champ Band to the student, it will be placed directly in the classroom container.

CLASS SIZE and PLACEMENT

Due to the hybrid model and some families choosing to have their child(ren) do full time remote learning, class lists must be redone. Not only are balanced classrooms important, we need to ensure the number of students in a room is as small as we can make it to allow for physical distancing. Class lists and teacher assignments will be sent out as soon as possible. As of this writing, there will be 8-10 students per classroom during the hybrid model. Class sizes will be about double those numbers when the students are back to full-time, five days a week in person learning.

COHORT GROUPS and CONTACT TRACING

There are essentially three (3) cohort groups and students may be a part of one (1) or all the groups. The cohort groups are:

Bus – If a student rides a bus to/from school, they are part of the bus cohort group. It is possible for a student to be a part of more than one (1) bus cohort (e.g. they ride Bus 10 from home to school in the morning and Bus 4 to daycare in the afternoon).

Classroom – Every student will belong to a classroom cohort group and spend the near entirety of their day with this cohort. Lunch and unified arts classes (except for PE when the weather allows it to be outside) will happen in the classroom.

Grade Level – Students may be in a grade level cohort group for support services (e.g. Title I) which will require them to be in a cohort with other students in their grade level. We will do everything possible to minimize the use of these types of cohorts and, whenever possible, create support groups that are composed of students in the same classroom cohort. There will be no cross-grade level instructional support groups/cohorts.

Should there be a confirmed case of COVID-19 at Union Memorial School, the nurse will participate in contact tracing as determined by the Vermont Department of Health. To assist with this, each room/office will post a sign in sheet (included in these guidelines). Any adult who is not scheduled to be in the room/office (e.g. the behavior specialist does an observation for an Functional Behavioral Assessment) will need to sign in and sign out. They must also use hand sanitizer upon entering

and exiting the room/office. Adults and students who are regularly scheduled to be in the room/office do not need to sign in and sign out.

CONFERENCES

Both the November and March conferences will be done virtually either using Zoom or Google Meet or over the phone.

Parents/Guardians will sign up for a 20-minute timeslot through Sign-up Genius.

COVID-19 COORDINATORS

The Colchester School District COVID-19 Coordinator is Deborah Deschamps. She can be reached at 264-5724 or

deborah.deschamps@colchestersd.org. The Union Memorial School COVID-19 Coordinator is Kathleen Kelly. She can be

reached at 264-5948 or kathleen.kelly@colchestersd.org.

DISMISSAL

ACE

ACE students will be dismissed at 3:15.

Bus

Buses will be called one at a time. Students will go directly to their assigned seat on the bus. They will not line up in the hallway as they have in the past. There will be adults helping guide the students, particularly in the beginning of the year as we get used to this new procedure. **IMPORTANT:** Teachers cannot send their students to another classroom to be dismissed. If a teacher needs to leave early, they must find coverage for their room.

Pick-ups

Pick-ups will be dismissed one grade level at a time as they have in the past. Students will still need to be signed out on the clipboards (as we have done in the past). Teachers will ask the adult picking up the student if they have been signed out on the clipboards. Once the student has been signed out, they will exit the building as follows:

- Students in classrooms that face the playground (Thomas, Trieb, Bassett, Kelly, Collins and Thibault) will exit through their classroom's exterior door:
 - Thomas – **D18**
 - Trieb – **D16**
 - Bassett/Kelly – **D14**
 - Collins/Thibault – **D13**
- Students in Davis', Barnett's and Mulcahy's classrooms will exit through the back doors (**D12**).
- Students in Hughes', Anderson's and Helfrich's classrooms will exit through the middle doors (**D15**).

During winter, when it's unsafe to be under the roof overhang due to ice buildup, all students will be dismissed either through the middle doors (**D15**) or the back doors (**D12**).

Late Buses

If a bus is running significantly late (e.g. it broke down and they must send a replacement), the students on that bus will wait in the cafeteria, physically distant from one another and the ACE students, with facial coverings and proper physical distancing or on marked spots in the hallway near the main office. We'll see which one makes more sense.

Early Dismissal

For students who are picked up early, the adult will “buzz” the main office. The administrative assistant (or other adult if she is unavailable or otherwise occupied) will call the student to the front of the building and escort them outside. In the case of inclement weather, the adult may wait in the vestibule. Otherwise, they will have to wait outside the building. Calling ahead is encouraged to reduce the amount of wait time for the adult.

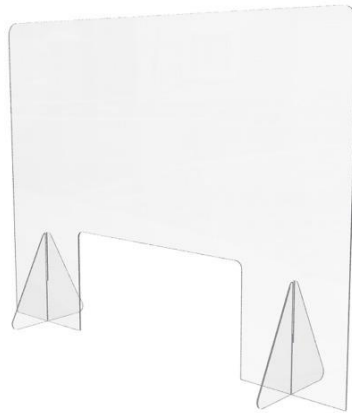
FACIAL COVERINGS and OTHER PERSONAL PROTECTIVE EQUIPMENT

All staff and students are required to wear facial coverings (mask and/or face shield) that cover their nose and mouth while in the building, as well as outside where physical distancing cannot be maintained. Facial coverings may be removed during outdoor activities where students and staff can maintain physical distancing. Students should wear one facial covering and have two (2) to use throughout the day. Staff are encouraged to secure multiple cloth coverings so they may be properly laundered on an ongoing basis. Disposable face masks will be available.

The use of clear facial shields for students and adults is allowable if they meet all the health guidance of the Vermont Department of Health. Face shields should extend below the chin and to the ears laterally and there should be no exposed gap between the forehead and the shield’s headpiece.

See Noncompliance section for information on what happens when a student refuses to wear a facial covering.

Classroom teachers will be issued two (2) of the Personal Sneeze Guards (32” by 24”) to use during small group instruction where physical distancing is impossible:



We have also ordered some extra sneeze guards for the 1:1 instruction that will happen outside the classroom (e.g. speech) and a dozen of these to use when there is no need to pass something back and forth:



Here is a link to a good video for young children that explains the importance of wearing a face mask:

<https://www.facebook.com/watch/?v=280152349901209>

Here is a link to another series of videos in case you do not have a Facebook account:

<https://www.uvmhealth.org/pages/coronavirus/staying-healthy/masks-and-kids-what-you-need-know.aspx>

FIELD TRIPS

No field trips are allowed. Walkable destinations (i.e. Burnham Library and Food Shelf) **may** be allowed if we end up being in Step 3 for an extended period. As of right now, they are not allowed either.

FIRE AND SAFETY DRILLS

Fire and safety drills must continue according to state guidelines. We have 30 days to complete the drills, so we'll wait until the end of September to do the drills.

For fire drills, we will do it in two (2) phases:

Phase 1: Mr. Antonicci will make an announcement and the alarm will be sounded for a short period of time. Students will not exit the building. Instead, the classroom teacher will explain what is to happen and why it's important to practice evacuating the building.

Phase 2: Each classroom teacher will devote one of their outside times to practice evacuating and reentering the building. Everyone in the classroom will exit the building as per standard protocol. Upon reentering the building, classes should keep physical distancing requirements in mind and use your exterior classroom door. Everyone must use hand sanitizer before resuming their day.

For safety drills, all protocols are in place except moving everyone to a secure location in the room. Everyone will maintain physical distancing. Teachers will demonstrate (either themselves or with a student volunteer) where to sit during an actual event. Think of safety drills being more of a classroom discussion with your students as opposed to the traditional drill.

HALLWAYS

There will be very little need to travel as a class in the hallway. If there is a need, facial coverings and physical distancing must be maintained as described in these guidelines.

HAND HYGIENE

Staff and students will receive education on proper hand hygiene. All students, staff and contracted providers should engage in hand hygiene at the following times:

- arrival to school
- after staff breaks
- before and after preparing food or drinks
- before and after eating, handling food or feeding students
- before and after administering medication or medical ointment
- after using the toilet or helping a child use the bathroom
- after coming in contact with bodily fluid
- before and after handling facial coverings/face shields
- after playing outdoors
- before and after playing with classroom toys or manipulatives
- after handling garbage
- before and after cleaning and
- prior to switching rooms or locations.

Wash hands with soap and water for at least 20 seconds. If hands are not visibly dirty, alcohol-based hand sanitizers with at least 60% alcohol can be used if soap and water are not readily available. Steps for proper hand washing can be found on the [CDC website](#).

HEALTH OFFICE

Nurse Kelly will share the new Health Office procedures with faculty and staff during the August in-service. Families will receive a brochure explaining the new procedures later in summer.

LUNCH

Lunch will happen in the classroom and be increased to 30 minutes to allow for distribution, cleanup and free **limited** choice time. Here are the assigned lunch times:

11:25 – 11:55 Grade 1 (Bassett, Hughes, Kelly and Mulcahy) and Kindergarten (Anderson and Helfrich)

When students are done eating and cleaned up, they will be given a limited choice of activities based on the classroom teacher's recommendation.

MEDICAL WAITING ROOM (aka Champ Chill Zone)

Students who are identified during the school day as potentially having the Coronavirus will stay in the medical waiting room until an adult can come to school and get them. The medical waiting room is in a section of the art/music room with a walkway directly to/from the Health Office. This allows the nurse to monitor the student in isolation while still running the Health Office. It also lets the student exit the building through the art/music room exterior door, eliminating the need for the adult who is picking them up to enter the building.

MEETINGS

Meetings that involve non-school personnel (e.g. parents, guardians, physicians) will be held virtually either using Zoom or Google Meet or over the phone.

NONCOMPLIANCE

The Vermont Agency of Education (AOE) requires every child attending a public school to wear a facial covering and physically distance during the pandemic. If a parent/guardian refuses to allow their child to wear a facial covering and/or physically distance, the student will have to learn remotely. What follows is how noncompliance will be addressed for students who are learning in person.

As we do with all expected behaviors we want to encourage, we will approach the wearing of a facial covering and physically distancing in a positive way. That means we will:

- teach the expected behaviors,
- model the expected behaviors,
- reinforce the expected behaviors and
- provide logical consequences when a student does an unexpected behavior.

All these things are in alignment with Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (PBIS).

This approach should be successful for most students. What is challenging with expecting young children to wear a face covering and physically distance is how new these behaviors are for everyone, the developmental level of our students and the serious consequences for noncompliance. We can only be just so patient and understanding.

For the **very few** cases where there is a documented medical reason a student cannot meet the facial covering and/or physical distancing requirements, a school-based team will consult with medical personnel and develop a plan.

If there is a documented behavioral reason a student cannot wear a facial covering and/or physically distance, a school-based team will determine the need and develop appropriate accommodations and a training protocol for moving the student toward compliance with the guidelines.

For the student whose parent/guardian wants them to wear a facial covering and physically distance, there is no documented reason they cannot do those things, ***all the things listed above have been tried*** and they still refuse to comply, we will do the following:

1. If the rest of the students in the classroom can maintain a safe distance, the student will remain in the classroom and the parents/guardians will be contacted.
2. If the rest of the students in the classroom cannot maintain a safe distance, the student will be removed from the classroom and the parents will be contacted. Every effort will be made to find a safe space for the student to remain until they are willing to comply.
3. If there are repeated occurrences, a school-based team will meet to develop a plan.
4. There may come a point, at the discretion of the principal, where the student needs to be suspended from school for the safety of the other members of the classroom/cohort.

OUTSIDE TIME: BRAIN/BODY BREAKS, RECESS and TEACHING LESSONS

Because the lunch recess time has been eliminated, classrooms have been assigned two 20-minute outside times per day to use for brain/body breaks, recess and/or teaching lessons. All structures, swings, Tether Ball, etc. are closed, but students will be able to run around, take a break from wearing a facial covering and “play.”

The soccer field area is reserved for PE classes and is off limits during those times. Also, there will be a large tent installed on the soccer field so PE can be outside as much as possible – even during a light rain.

PARENT-TEACHER ASSOCIATION (PTA)

The Parent-Teacher Association (PTA) will continue to meet on the second Tuesday of the month from 6:30 PM to 7:30 PM. All meetings will be held virtually through Zoom. As always, all parents are welcome to attend. A link to each meeting will be sent out in advance.

PHYSICAL DISTANCING

Physical distancing to reduce the frequency of close contact between individuals is still the single most effective way to slow the spread of Coronavirus. As much as possible, and especially when facial coverings are not being worn (e.g. you are outside having recess), adults should maintain a distance of six (6) feet and students as much as the space allows, preferably three (3) to six (6) feet. Brief periods (defined as less than fifteen (15) minutes) of closer contact can do things like: conference with a student, assist with clothing and pass out materials.

Given the developmental level of our students, hugs, handholding, high-fives and handshakes are going to happen, but should be discouraged. “Air” high-fives and hugs should be encouraged to let students know they are acknowledged and valued. The adult must wear a facial covering while helping the student and wash their hands afterward.

See Noncompliance section for information on what happens when a student refuses to socially distance.

PICTURE DAY

Picture Day has to be rescheduled (it is currently scheduled for Wednesday, September 23 and no students are here on Wednesdays). Individual student pictures will be taken in the cafeteria. There will be floor markings (likely poly spots) to facilitate physical distancing while waiting in line. There will be no class picture. Instead, there will be a collage of the student pictures. There will be a plan developed for students who are learning at home full time once we know how many and who those students are.

PULL-OUT SERVICES

English Language, Reading, Title I and Special Education

These services will “push in” as much as possible. When it is not possible, students will ideally be grouped with their classroom cohort, but never grouped across grade levels, wear facial coverings and physically distance as described in these guidelines.

Guidance Groups

Guidance groups will continue in the guidance office with facial coverings and physical distancing as described in these guidelines.

Social Work and Therapy

We will work with the Howard Center and University of Vermont Medical Center to develop guidelines for services.

Speech-Language/Articulation

Speech-Language/Articulation will continue to be a “pull-out” model. Plexiglass barriers will be utilized, as necessary. Students may remove their facial coverings as directed by the Speech-Language Pathologist and Speech-Language Pathologist Assistant.

SINGING

Singing (including adults and students) is not allowed inside the building. Unfortunately, singing increases the spread of respiratory droplets. Singing is allowed outside provided there is proper physical distancing.

SPECIAL EVENTS

Book Fair (typically September 27-October 2)

The book fair will be done exclusively online.

First and Second Grade Open House (typically August 25)

This event is canceled. Teachers will set up virtual family conferences the week of August 31-September 4).

Kindergarten Orientation (typically August 25)

This event is canceled. Teachers will set up virtual family conferences the week of August 31-September 4).

Kindergarten Screening (typically May prior to school starting)

This event has been canceled. We will use our demographic data and the information we receive from the preschools, daycares and our early education programs to make balanced classrooms.

PTA Welcome Back BBQ (typically September 9)

This event has been canceled.

Open House (October 1)

An in person Open House is not allowed. The district is exploring virtual alternatives.

Musical (typically April)

This event has been canceled.

SUPPLIES

General Information

In general, things that cannot be cleaned and disinfected (e.g. playdough and cards) must be stored or provided for each individual student. Cleaning and disinfecting guidelines will be posted soon.

Books

Books can be shared and do not need to be cleaned or disinfected unless they go home with a student. In that case, they must be “quarantined” (e.g. set aside and/or placed in a bin) for three (3) days.

Cards and Games

Students must wear a facial covering, wash their hands and maintain a proper physical distance while playing games.

Devices

Each student will be issued their own device (iPad for kindergarten and Chromebook for first and second grade) and charging cord. The reason for this is twofold. One reason, obviously, is to use during remote learning. The other reason is to reduce contact and therefore the need to clean them between student uses. Some other information on devices:

- Students need to leave the device at school on the evening between their two in person learning days (Monday night for the blue group and Thursday night for the green group).
- The device will have the student’s name on it, you should consider having the student put their name on the charging cord.
- We are using all the devices we have for this, so there won’t be backups. If a device is broken, the student will likely have to go without until the device is fixed or replaced.
- Students who have a device at home to use must leave their school device at school.

Manipulatives, Dramatic Play and Toys

Hard, non-porous items that can be cleaned and disinfected may be used.

“Pencil Boxes”

All students must have their own supply of pencils, pens, markers, scissors, glue sticks, erasers, dice, crayons and dry erase markers. Pencil boxes and their contents will be provided by the school, labeled and stay at school.

VISITORS and VOLUNTEERS

Visitors will not be allowed to enter the building beyond the main office. The only exceptions to this are:

- approved vendors (i.e. psychologists, social workers, Climate Systems, the copier guy),
- parents/caregivers of anxious kindergarten students during the first week of school only,
- meetings the school team determines are better to be held in person (e.g. meetings that require an interpreter), and
- student teachers (provided physical distancing can be maintained).

An adult picking up a sick child will do so through the art/music room exterior door. Visitors who show up and want an impromptu meeting will be informed they must call the person with whom they wish to speak. UMS employees' children who attend school in a Colchester school may wait in the cafeteria or on the playground for the bus in the morning or until dismissal in the afternoon. They cannot enter classrooms.

Volunteers, including parent volunteers and those community members who help with curriculum, will not be allowed in the building. Teachers will have to find ways to accommodate (e.g. find a virtual solution) volunteers used in certain units like the Community Helpers unit in first grade.

APPENDIX A: Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

QUESTION: Is ACE still happening?

ANSWER: Yes, ACE is still happening. ACE is run by the Parks and Rec Department and they are still planning on running a program at Union Memorial School. Please contact them with any questions or to enroll your child if you have not done so already.

QUESTION: Does my child really have to wear a facial covering all day?

ANSWER: Yes, they do. There will be times when they don't (when they are outside or eating) and scheduled "mask" breaks, but other than that it is a state requirement for reopening schools. If you have not done so already, start getting your child(ren) used to wearing a facial covering. The only exceptions will be for documented behavioral or medical issues.

QUESTION: What happens if my child forgets, loses or dirties their facial covering?

ANSWER: Though we will not be providing facial coverings, we do have a supply of child-size masks we will be able to give to children.

QUESTION: What happens if my child flat out refuses to wear a mask?

ANSWER: These are young children and we are going to do everything we can to get them to wear a mask (teach, model and reinforce). I'll be honest, I have moments where I think it will all be fine; this age likes to please adults and do what is asked of them. Then there are moments I panic and have visions of walking into a classroom with half the students crying, their masks on the floor, because the masks itch or are hot or aren't the same color as their best friend's mask. The bottom line, though, is the safety of all students is critical and if a child flat out refuses to wear a mask and there is no documented medical or behavioral reason they can't, they won't be allowed to stay in school.