

Good Afternoon Everyone,

As with every week, I hope this finds you well. Trees are budding and soon, our foliage will return. The warming weather has brought about renewed energy in our schools and the progress on vaccinations has been associated with a tremendous increase in optimism. There has been a large amount of news released recently regarding the easing of restrictions and that has added to our collective sense of hope for a return to more typical times.

We have not yet been able to fully review the new guidance but there are some significant changes that stand out:

- A transition to universal guidance and less of a reliance on sector-specific guidelines - this is captured on the Vermont Agency of Commerce and Community Development Site
- Scaling back certain measures - We will no longer be conducting temperature checks on students and staff upon their arrival to school.
- Reducing spacing between secondary students - the new Strong and Healthy Start allows for three feet of spacing of students in classrooms.
- Clarification around quarantine requirements - staff who have been vaccinated do not need to quarantine upon exposure to the COVID virus.
- Phased reductions in restrictions related to vaccination rate benchmarks - this is captured in the Vermont Forward plan and represents an opportunity to consider how planning for large community events will take place.

New Screening protocol for students

Temperature checks should be performed at home before departing for school. Individuals with fever (100.4 or greater) should not come to school. Tickets do not need to be submitted.

If your child has been in close contact with someone confirmed to have COVID-19 in within the last 14 days they should stay home and quarantine.

Close contact means being within six feet for a total of 15 minutes or more over a 24-hour period, of someone with COVID-19 during their infectious period.

The infectious period is when the person with COVID-19 is contagious. It starts two days before symptoms began and continues until they are recovered. For people who haven't had symptoms, the infectious period starts two days before they had a positive test.

COVID-19 symptoms include the following:

- Cough
- Fever (100.4 or greater)
- Shortness of breath, or difficulty breathing
- Chills
- Fatigue
- Muscle pain or body aches
- Headache
- Sore throat
- Loss of taste or smell
- Congestion or runny nose

- Nausea, vomiting or diarrhea (diarrhea is defined as frequent loose or watery stools compared to one's normal pattern)

Guidance Links

[Updated Strong and Healthy Start Guidance](#)

[Vermont Forward](#) - Phased Reopening Plan for Vermont

[Universal Guidance - VT ACCD](#)

This past week, there were COVID related classroom closures at a handful of our schools. Our COVID dashboard (<https://www.wsesu.org/covid-19-dashboard.html>) has been updated to reflect cases as of 4/8/2021. As excited as we are to see vaccination rates increase and restrictions be reduced, it is critical that we maintain our vigilance in mask wearing and other mitigation measures.

Our 2021-2022 calendar has been posted to our district website and can be found at <https://drive.google.com/file/d/1-KCq5r7Yfor0HCiVWChLULkz5nrkrmpR/view>. We are continuing to evaluate the use of different opening models to identify opportunities for professional development and collaboration for our staff. The goal with this is to find the ideal balance with time so that we are meeting our students' needs and also finding ways to enhance our collective use of data so that we can enhance our practices so that student learning improves. More information will be provided in the coming weeks.

Despite starting planning for the coming school year, our focus remains on our present one. Schools are scheduling the SBAC and have started to announce to families the timeline for taking the annual assessment. The Agency of Education has submitted a waiver to not use any of the accountability measures related to student performance and participation. With that, though, it is important that students try their best as the data we do receive will provide important insights related to our instructional needs for the coming school year. In simpler terms, the results will help let us know how we can better serve our students.

The SBAC also presents an unexpected challenge for our remote students. The SBAC must be administered in schools and there is not an option to implement it at home. Because of this, many of our schools will be using Wednesdays for the SBAC for remote students through the end of May. As a result, Wednesdays will remain remote throughout the remainder of the school year. I do not anticipate any directives that would change this and I will notify families if there are any changes.

Have a great weekend,

Andy

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