

10/30/2020

Good Afternoon Parents,

The falling snow is a gentle reminder that winter is right around the corner. Steve Damon from Guilford Central School shared that this Saturday is a blue moon, the second full moon in a month, and that the next blue moon on Halloween will occur in 2039. I'm not sure what the statistical probability of snow fall, a blue moon, Halloween, and an upcoming time change all happening within two days of each other but it must be pretty low.

The updated Strong and Healthy Start document ([here](#)) was just released. There are some changes in the guidelines that are set to be implemented as of November 16th. The guidelines clarify using three feet of spacing for students in preK - 6th grade and a minimum of six feet of spacing in grades seven through twelve. Our team is reviewing those guidelines as we prepare for the remainder of this semester and start to ramp up for the second semester. One notable difference is the move away from plexiglass as a way to provide a barrier instead of the physical distancing guidelines.

One of the small but impactful changes in the document is the addition of a question about traveling to counties requiring quarantining on our daily screening documentation. Please be sure you are reporting accurate information as it is critical in contact tracing and virus containment efforts.

Our elementary and middle schools will be surveying remote families in order to obtain feedback on remote learning. This information is important to us as we evaluate our planning and engage in continued conversations about improving the learning environment for all our students. Your participation with this is greatly appreciated.

We continue to stress the importance of following the Agency of Commerce and Community Development guidelines in planning travel. The ACCD updates its website([here](#)) on Tuesday around midday. With the surging number of COVID-19 cases nationally and regionally, it is important to follow the guidelines, especially as they pertain to leisure travel.

### **Community Survey (non-WSESU survey)**

The Child Care Counts (CCC) coalition is interested to learn from parents and caregivers where children are spending their days during these challenging times. Vermont's "childcare hubs," created to provide care for children during their days of remote learning, are not all full. Local early learning programs are also not fully enrolled, so CCC would like to get a sense of how families are arranging care so they can understand and respond to the needs of families in our community. Please let the coalition know "Where

are your children while you work?" via [THIS LINK](#).

### **Vermont Department of Health Updates**

The Vermont Department of Health is addressing questions surrounding the upcoming holiday season. Their website ([here](#)) contains useful information related to all aspects of public health, especially as they relate to COVID 19. They have an updated COVID dashboard that highlights the many statistical categories related to the COVID-19 virus.

Vermont, like most other states, is experiencing COVID-fatigue, letting our guard down and encouraging greater risks. The following guidance was provided for families to consider as they contemplate planning family or other personal gatherings.

### ***Have you had the “COVID Talk”?***

As life continues in the shadow of the pandemic, we are learning there is a lot to discuss about how to feel comfortable and stay safe before seeing friends and family. Here are four tips to help have the “COVID Talk” – a conversation to negotiate boundaries and establish expectations ahead of time.

1. Ask questions. Before you get together, start with an open and honest conversation about what everyone has been doing to stay healthy and how they have been socializing. Consider everyone’s worries, boundaries and possible COVID-19 exposure risk so you can all get on the same page.
2. Focus on what you need. Using “I” instead of “you” statements helps avoid people feeling defensive or judged. In fact, blaming and shaming may actually increase push back and the likelihood of risk-taking behaviors. We recommend sharing what you’re comfortable with, based on your own perspective instead of making demands of others.
3. Share why it is important to you. Share what level of risk works for you and why. It might be different for others. Some people feel comfortable taking on a moderate amount of risk in their lives. Others may not feel comfortable taking on any risk. Focusing on your own reasons for staying safe can help people to better understand and get on board.
4. Set boundaries and stick to them. We are all for keeping it friendly, open and non-judgmental – but that doesn’t mean you have to skimp on your safety! It’s OK to be clear and straightforward about what you need to feel safe and comfortable. It’s also okay to decline invitations or leave situations that feel too risky. You should never have to feel bad or apologize for prioritizing your safety. Lead by example by sticking to what works for you and avoiding judgment.

Learn more and find some examples of the “COVID Talk” [on our website](#).

As always, thank you for your continued support.

Best,

Andy

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