

September 11, 2020

Dear Parents and Caregivers,

To begin, I'd like to extend a sincere thank you to all who worked diligently over the summer to prepare for this year's unprecedented school year opening. The efforts of our administrators, faculty, staff, and the Reopening Task Force needed to account for the fact that the COVID-19 pandemic is very fluid. Information and guidance is rapidly changing as scientists and public health experts learn more about this novel coronavirus. The Colchester community's participation and support was outstanding, and it was truly a community effort to begin school smoothly this week with the systems and protocols in place to provide the best possible learning environment for our students. It has been wonderful to see students, staff, and faculty back together. We had a great opening week!

Efforts to Prevent the Spread of COVID-19

We are collectively implementing extensive strategies in schools to prevent the spread of COVID-19: social distancing, use of masks, hand hygiene, limiting extracurricular activities, and use of cohorting in our hybrid model. Our educational model was carefully constructed in a hybrid, cohort system so that the continuity of education is not interrupted for the entire school (or district) should someone in our community test positive for COVID-19.

District Response to a Positive Case

Any report of an individual who tests COVID-19 + will result in the following actions:

1. District will notify Chatham Public Health (CPH) to assess the risk of transmission and to determine any necessary additional steps.
2. The COVID-19+ individual will be isolated immediately. Contact tracing: working collaboratively, CPS nursing staff and CPH will reach out to identify contacts of the individual who tested positive. All activity around this will operate within the statutory requirements of confidentiality.
3. If the COVID-19+ individual was in contact with staff or students for more than 15 minutes, CPS will ask those affected to quarantine while continuing uninterrupted instruction to unaffected cohorts and schools. In other words, if a single class is impacted, that cohort will immediately start remote learning and the other classes and schools will remain open.
4. If it has been determined that there is wide-spread COVID-19 transmission in a school, we will implement a complete 14-day shutdown of that school only and move all staff and students to remote learning.
5. The entire district will only close if we have been informed by an outside agency that there is community-wide transmission. At that point CPS will close for 14 days and re-evaluate at the 10 day mark based on the best information available at that time.

All District responses to COVID-19 + tests in our learning community will be based on sound decision making informed by CDC and state/local health official guidance. In addition, we will be using the following chart to assist in our decision making: [CHD CSDA_DPH Flow chart of](#)

[suspected COVID-19.pdf](#) It is my hope that all in our community will follow this guidance as well so that we can continue to provide an in-person continuity of instruction.

Student/Staff Health Screener

Every day, the District is sending to all parents, students, and staff a link to a Google survey that will gather information on an individual's daily health status (e.g., Do you have a fever exceeding 100.4 degrees?). (Full-time, voluntary at-home learners do not need to complete the screener.) Please complete this survey for each student who lives in your household. The survey will also be sent to the school-issued emails of students in Grades 6-12 for them to complete. As a prevention strategy, our nurses will review the results of the daily survey and contact staff or families if responses indicate an individual might be experiencing COVID-19 symptoms, or has been in contact with someone who has tested positive for COVID-19. The results of the screener are confidential and will only be viewed by the school nurse. All screener results will be deleted daily. Our SchoolMessenger system delivers text messages with important information about events, school closings, safety alerts and more. *However, you MUST opt-in to this service by sending a text message of "Y" or "Yes" to the number 67587.*

New Mask Policy

On September 8, 2020, the Board of Education approved a new temporary, COVID19-related policy on face coverings: [5000.4T Face Coverings in School \(3\).pdf](#)

Parent Resources and Guides to Reopening

If you're looking for resources, forms, or district created guides related to the reopening of schools, please access the [Reopening Resources for Parent](#) page on the district website under the Teaching & Learning tab.

Technology

If parents are having difficulty with Chromebooks or connectivity to the Internet, please resource the [Chromebook and Connectivity Troubleshooting Guide for Parents](#).

Attendance for Voluntary At-Home Learners

This video clarifies attendance expectations and protocol for students participating in the voluntary at-home learning model: [Attendance Voluntary At-home Learners \(Parents\).webm](#)

For the most current update from the CDC, please visit [ct.gov/coronavirus](https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus)

Lastly, please enjoy this slideshow from Bacon Academy's Unified Artists: [Bacon Academy Unified Artists MISS YOU project.pdf](#)

Best Regards,



Jeffrey Burt

Superintendent