



Colchester Public Schools

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Dear Colchester Families,

As Colchester Public Schools prepares to welcome students back, we continue to refine our procedures for ensuring a safe and healthy learning environment that considers the needs of all in our community. Everything we do must be in compliance with CT State Reopening guidelines. However, a constantly shifting and evolving pandemic has taught us that we must remain flexible to adjust according to the spread of the COVID-19 virus in our community, state, and nation.

REMINDER: First Day of School for all Students is September 8th.

In these uncertain times, I understand that you may be feeling anxious or confused with the difficult educational choices that have been presented to you. You may not feel certain that you have made the “right” choice. There has been an overwhelming amount of information provided to families, yet much remains uncertain on how the virus will continue to impact us. Chatham Health Department will receive data for evaluation of local incidences and public health officials will continue to work with state officials in providing guidance and mandates to public schools. Please know our priority is, as always, the safety, health, and wellbeing of our educational community.

Contact Tracing

The CSDE recently released Addendum 9 on Contract Tracing: [Contact Tracing Scenarios in Schools.](#)

Mask Requirements During COVID-19 Pandemic

Please review this document for appropriate [Mask Requirements](#). Gaiters are not acceptable. Please note that last week, a new state mandate requires preschoolers to wear masks.

Completion of Opt-Out Forms in PowerSchool

Until you complete the opt-out form for at-home learning in PowerSchool, we cannot identify you as an at-home learner. Please complete this form: [Opt-Out Form \(Parents\)](#)

and return to schools directly as soon as possible so we can properly plan for your inclusion in the at-home learning.

M&J Bus Information

Note from M&J: With all the changes taking place this school year we wanted to reach out directly to all the families we serve here in Colchester. We want to reinforce to you that our main goal is to keep all students safe as we transport them to and from school. With that in mind, we want you to know what we plan to do and ask for your patience as we get through the first couple of weeks.

- To keep students on buses the least amount of time, we will not cross students if your bus travels both sides of the road.
- Masks are mandatory before getting on and must remain on until departing bus at school or home.
- Buses will load back to front based on pickups. We have been instructed by the schools to at least split the bus by grades. JJIS will load back to middle & CES will load mid to front. We will be keeping the two front seats open to protect our drivers.
- We will have assigned seats within the first week of school in order to make loading quicker.
- Pickup and drop off times will vary during the first couple of weeks.
- Hand sanitizer is not allowed to be used on the buses due to allergies.
- Please make sure your student(s) understand the electronic use policy.
- Buses will travel with some or all windows open based on weather conditions. Please make sure your child is dressed appropriately.

[CES/JJIS Estimated Route Times 2020-2021](#)

[WJJMS/Bacon Academy Estimated Route Times 2020-2021](#)

Meals Update

“Grab and Go” meals will be available at William J Johnson Middle School on in-school learning days from 12:30PM to 1:00PM and on distant learning days from 9:30AM to 10:30AM.

Connecticut Interscholastic Athletics Conference Update

The CIAC has updated its fall sports plan: [CIAC Fall Sports Plan Update Press Conference](#). While the plan is subject to change, the CIAC does plan to sponsor all regular Fall high school sports.

Upcoming Communications

We will adopt the following practices to help you navigate schedules and requirements:

- Every Sunday evening, we will send a text of the upcoming week’s schedule. To opt in for SM texts, click here: [Text Message Opt-In Information](#)
- Health Self-Assessment: a message will be sent to all students every morning. They must sign into PowerSchool and enter responses to the health questions. That information will be provided to the nurses for them to evaluate any student who answers “yes” to any questions.

Opportunity to Send a Welcome Message to CPS!

Our District usually begins our year with Convocation: a time for all faculty and staff to gather for celebrations and recognitions, and share in the excitement of the upcoming school year. We invite parents/caregivers to record a brief (15-30 second) welcome video or audio message for our staff and faculty to enjoy. Please submit no later than Monday, August 31st to covid19@colchesterct.org.

Updated Q&A Document

Please visit our frequently asked questions: [CPS Parent FAQ](#)

Have a question or concern?

- **EMAILS**

General questions: covid19@colchesterct.org

Tech questions: techhelp@colchesterct.org

BOE questions: boardquestions@colchesterct.org

For six months, we have been planning for several different scenarios simultaneously. We are confident that we are doing everything possible to meet our safety and educational goals, but also recognize that we may need to pivot our approach based on state/federal mandates. Please take good care and stay healthy.

Best Regards,



Jeffrey Burt
Superintendent