



Colchester Public Schools

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Dear Families and Caregivers,

One month into the school year, and 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. Here is an update:

Masks

As of Wednesday, September 29, 2021 the Executive Orders mandating masks for all students and staff have been extended to February 15, 2022. Details may be found in this [press release](#).

Positive Cases & Contacts from source outside of school

The guidance for isolation or quarantine of staff or students is the responsibility of the Chatham Health Department when there is the identification of a positive COVID-19 case in a setting outside of school or school-based extracurricular activities. The District will be notified by either the CHD or the associated outside organization (e.g., sports leagues, day care centers, etc.) of the names of students or staff that are required to quarantine and the expectation is that those individuals will not report to school for the duration of their quarantine. The school will then contact those individuals to confirm the duration of their quarantine and to confirm the instructional mode during that time.

REVISED: Over-the-counter COVID-19 tests are *NOT* acceptable

Because of the possibility of false negative results due to user error, both the CT Department of Public Health and Chatham Public Health have advised the District against accepting over-the-counter COVID-19 tests. Individuals in quarantine due to close contact will no longer be able to use these tests to return to school before the recommended 10 days. For the latest quarantine guidance from the CDC, visit [COVID-19 Quarantine and Isolation](#).

Staff Vaccinations

Per the Governor's Executive Order 13G all school staff, "covered workers" and contractors that have regular contact with students (e.g., bus drivers) had to provide proof of vaccination by

Monday, September 27th. Exemptions to this requirement include a medical exemption, a religious exemption or testing in lieu of vaccination. According to our records, approximately 96% of our staff are fully vaccinated and the remaining 4% will provide weekly test results as a requirement of their exemption status.

Safe Return to In-Person Instruction and Continuity of Services Plan

Please see this guide for all protocols relating to masks, vaccines, quarantine, cohorting, and instruction: [Safe Return to In-Person Instruction and Continuity of Services Plan](#).

Updated Guidance for the Operation of Interscholastic, Youth and other Amateur Sport Activities during the COVID-19 Pandemic

Please see [Updated Guidance for the Operation of Interscholastic, Youth and other Amateur Sport Activities during the COVID-19 Pandemic](#) from the CT-DPH on the revised guidance for sports activities.

COVID-19 testing and vaccine sites

The following resources will help you locate COVID-19 testing and vaccine sites:

- [Upcoming Vx and testing | Chatham Health](#)
- [2-1-1 Connecticut](#)

Third Dose of COVID-19 Vaccine Available

Please see this notice from CDPH: [Third Dose of Vaccine](#)

Effective immediately, Chatham Health District will offer third doses of COVID-19 vaccine at all of our community-based and in-office vaccine clinics in accordance with CDC and DPH recommendations. Patients will be required to sign an attestation form indicating that they are eligible for the third dose of vaccine as a person who is moderately or severely immunocompromised but will not be required to provide any medical records or physician notes as proof.

Adapt, Advance, Achieve: Connecticut's Plan to Learn and Grow Together — Fall 2021

Please see this important update from the CSDE: [Fall 2021 Mitigation Guidance](#).

Buses

The bus situation has improved since the start of school and we are seeing greater consistency in pick up and drop off times. However, we know that some issues remain, especially with the need to combine runs on an almost daily basis and we know that creates frustration for our students and families. The root cause of all of these issues continue to be a state-wide driver shortage. Administration and Board members have been, and will continue to, advocate for significant changes by lobbying state agencies. To date, we have not seen any proposed

solutions at the state level, but we are hopeful that innovative solutions will be forthcoming. You can help us by adding your voice to the call for the State to make this a priority in the coming weeks and months by reaching out to your state representatives.

Inclement Weather Protocols

Please review the memo on inclement weather protocols: [Parent Letter on Weather](#).

Regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Jeffrey Burt", with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Jeffrey Burt

Superintendent of Schools