

Windham Southwest Supervisory Union

Office of the Superintendent of Schools

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This document will be continually updated as new information is received: Revised 8/27/2020

Based on guidance from the VT DOH and VT AOE.

School Reopening Frequently Asked Questions

In Person Schooling

When is the first day of school? Tuesday, September 8th, is our first day of school for ALL students, those joining us in person for the Hybrid 4/1 Option, and those enrolled in the Fully Remote Option. Please note that September 8th - September 18th are half days of school for those students who chose the Hybrid 4/1 Option and attending school in person. **Please also note that Wednesday the 9th and Wednesday the 16th are half days in the building and are not remote learning days. The Wednesday remote learning days will begin Wednesday the 23rd.**

How many students will be in each classroom/cohort? Specific cohort size will vary throughout the district based on size of space. Cohort size will not exceed the maximum number that allows for 3-6 feet for K-5 and around 6 feet for 6-12th grades, between students.

How will TV high school students remain in one core group all day when their classes/electives vary each semester and will this limit the availability of class options? Students in grades 9 and 10 will be scheduled by cohorts. We will do our best to vary the electives in these cohort schedules over the course of the year. Students in grades 11 and 12 will be considered one cohort due to low numbers of in person students. This will allow them to move from class to class and intermingle each block without limiting their course options.

How many teachers are going to be traveling between classrooms? It is our goal to limit the number of staff moving between cohorts as much as possible. It is recommended that all staff keep a diary or log of all the people they come into contact with each day.

How much additional outdoor time will students receive? Staff will be encouraged to integrate frequent movement breaks and to utilize outdoor spaces as much as possible.

Are specials/unified arts such as art, library, music and PE still going to be offered? When we are in person, specials/unified arts will continue to be offered within the classroom. Specials/unified arts teachers will travel between classrooms. PE will occur outside, except in the case of inclement weather.

If some students choose the VTVLC Fully Remote Learning Option and some go to school how will students in the same class stay connected? While these are separate tracks of learning, we recognize the value of connection among all students within a class. We plan to offer virtual connection to whole school remote events and weekly newsletters. The VTVLC Fully Remote Learning Coordinator will support remote students in maintaining social connections with their classmates and teachers through Google Meet during homeroom/advisory on Wednesdays.

How are we preparing for the potential of going remote? All teachers are expected to work from a learning management platform that can allow them to easily transition to remote learning.

What is the academic plan to address the students who may have fallen behind? Offering in person instruction is the best way for us to help support students who have fallen behind. Schools will also continue to use the MultiTiered System of Supports to meet students' learning needs.

Who will be responsible for overseeing the schools COVID-19 Health and Safety Plan? The COVID-19 coordinators for each school, the building principal and the nurse, will be overseeing the implementation of their school's COVID-19 Health and Safety Plan.

What support systems are available for students dealing with fear and anxiety due to COVID-19? The social and emotional wellbeing of our students and staff is our top priority. All existing guidance and counseling systems of support will remain intact for students choosing in person instruction and students choosing the VTVLC Fully Remote Learning Option.

Facial Coverings

Are students allowed to remove their cloth facial coverings in class if they are 6ft apart? Other than for eating, we can only provide breaks from wearing facial coverings while outdoors and maintaining physical distancing. For this reason, students will be given many opportunities to go outdoors.

Do families need to provide facial coverings for the school week? Yes. Students are expected to arrive at school with at least two cloth facial coverings each day, labeled with their name. Facial coverings will be available for students if they do not have them. Cloth facial coverings should be washed after each use¹.

Are all students expected to wear a facial covering, even if they have special problems that impact their breathing? All students are expected to wear a cloth facial covering. However, students with a documented medical or behavioral reason for not wearing a cloth facial covering will not be required to do so. Documentation must be provided to the school

¹ [CDC: How to wash a Cloth Facial Covering](#)

nurse or on record. Cases will be reviewed on an individual basis to identify alternative safety measures. Please reach out to your school regarding your child prior to the first day.

Are there face coverings that are not acceptable?

The Department of Health guidance informs us that we are not allowing gaiters, bandanas, or any mask with exhalation valves. We are encouraging 2 or 3 ply facial coverings. For safety, no facial coverings with ties for younger children.

**Special Education
Please Contact Your School With Specific Questions**

How are Speech, OT and other specialty services being offered? Special education case managers will be scheduling IEP meetings to review and revise plans to cover online or in person service delivery options on a case by case basis.

Will IEPs continue to be executed? Yes, IEPs will continue to be followed per state guidelines. Meetings will be held remotely when possible.

Health

What if my child is ill with a simple cold? We recommend that you contact your primary care physician. Please also contact your school nurse. The pediatric health care community along with school nurses use a return to school decision-making algorithms after illness. A document for parents is forthcoming from the Department of Health.

What are schools requiring for someone to return to school after testing positive for COVID-19? Please communicate with your school nurse and your primary care physician.

Who will be required to quarantine? We will follow the guidance from the VT DOH as to who is required to quarantine based on contact tracing and who they determine has been in close contact. The VT DOH has provided this reference guide to [COVID-19 at School](#).

How effective are cohort groups when students have siblings in other classrooms and other schools? While cohort groups alone are not a perfect prevention strategy, they along with the other measures we are taking support overall prevention. Every strategy used, makes a difference.

How do you plan to take a child's temperature for the Health Screening? Families are asked to take the student's temperature before leaving their homes. Temperature checks will also be done immediately upon the student arriving at school by a staff member using touchless thermometers .

If a student is exposed to someone suspected of having covid, or is undergoing testing but do not yet have results, should they stay home? Please contact your school nurse and your primary care physician.

Will families and staff members who travel to a high-risk area be expected to quarantine?

How will we know what a high-risk area or state is? The State of Vermont has determined that any county with less than 400 active cases of COVID19 per one million residents is now eligible for quarantine-free leisure travel. The Agency of Commerce and Community Development has developed a [map](#) populated with raw data from Johns Hopkins University which uses multiple factors to determine how many active cases are in each county. All locations not on the map are considered as high risk areas. Staff members and students who travel to a high-risk area must follow Vermont Department of Health guidance for quarantine upon returning to Vermont. [Vermont's Cross State Travel Rules](#).

What are the quarantine requirements for families and staff who live or work in a neighboring state?

Per the Vermont Department of Health, people who live near the Vermont border and regularly travel to and from a neighboring state may make day trips to Vermont for essential work, health care, and other essential needs like groceries or visitation for parental shared custody without quarantining. Details are in [Vermont's Cross State Travel Rules](#).

Absences

If a student is sent home to quarantine will they be offered some sort of remote learning tied to their classwork during that time if they are well enough to participate?

If a student is absent from school for three or more days, due to illness or quarantine directives, teachers will provide educational learning opportunities and practice of learned skills. A student's ability to address school work will be discussed on an individual basis, with the classroom teacher, as in the past when a student is absent.

If a student is ill, identified with COVID-19 or in quarantine, do they join the VTVLC Fully Remote Option?

No. If a child is in the Hybrid 4:1 Option, and is absent from school for more than 3 days, for any reason, they will receive practice work from their teacher, as we always do when a child is out for more than 3 days. The Fully Remote Option is through VTVLC and is a separate track of schooling than the Hybrid 4:1. Children do not readily go back and forth between these two tracks.

Is a student marked absent for staying home even if they are not ill? Yes, a student is marked absent if they are absent from school. It is helpful to let your school know when a student is going to be absent in the way that your school normally requests.

Will a student who is absent many days be considered truant under the present Vermont laws? We expect guidance from the AOE around this to be supportive and understanding that we are in a pandemic and that it is safer for everyone if people stay home when ill or under quarantine.

Does a family have the option to keep a child home when they think it is best? Yes, a family has the option of keeping their child home when they think it is best.

School Closures

How many suspected/confirmed cases in our community would warrant closing the school and transitioning everyone to remote learning? The decision to close schools on a regional basis will be made by the VT DOH based on county data. The decision to close specific classrooms or a school for in-person instruction will be made by the Superintendent after consulting with the VT DOH and the Board Chair. This decision will be based on a number of factors, including the level of community transmission, the number of students and staff infected and other indicators the VT DOH uses to assess the status of COVID-19. In addition, the ability of the school to implement mitigation strategies and to provide enough staff will be taken into account.