

Slate Valley Frequently Asked Questions for Families
Reopening of Schools
Update: August 31, 2020

Health and Safety

1. What happens if there is a COVID-19 positive case in my classroom or school?
Any suspicion of COVID-19 diagnosis will be sent home immediately, recommended for COVID testing, and School Nurse Leader or Superintendent informed.

The classroom will be closed and cleansed.

Testing will be decided by the medical provider. When they are sent to their provider, this does not guarantee a test will be performed.

The school nurse or designee will continue to follow up on student's symptoms and return to school will be determined by no fever (less than 100.4) without fever reducing medication) for 24 hours (or according to updated recommendations by the VDH) prior to re-admittance **and** has felt good (meaning zero other symptoms) for 10 days.

If a COVID test comes back positive, The School Nurse Leader or Superintendent needs to be called immediately. They in turn, will contact the VDH (the doctor's office and the lab are to do this, but it needs to be done by the school as well).

No symptomatic or COVID-19 positive workers are allowed on site and any worker(s) who have close contact for more than 15 minutes with a worker or any other person who is diagnosed with COVID-19 are required to quarantine for 14 days.

2. How is a decision made to close a school due to COVID?
Assessment of the number of cases and action to be taken will be guided by the VDH and Superintendent in regard to school closure.
3. Is there adequate ventilation in all of the school buildings?
The district has hired an engineer to provide recommendations in terms of the ventilation in each of the buildings. The ventilation for each room should be between 15-30 cfm. All of our rooms meet that requirement. One of the benefits in having largely out of date inefficient heating systems throughout the district is that ventilation is not an issue.
4. Are all students and staff required to wear facial coverings:
PreK-12 students and staff will be required to wear facial coverings with the exception of when they are eating or drinking. (This is a state requirement.) We are not providing face coverings unless needed. We recognize that each student may have their own preference in terms of facial coverings and want them to be as comfortable as possible.

Mask Parameters (As of August 24, 2020)

1. Masks are required for all Students and Staff in the building.
2. Masks are required outside when physical distancing as mandated (as this can change) is not able to be maintained (students should follow the direction of their teacher who will provide updates).

Acceptable forms of masks are:

- Cloth face covering 2 ply that cover the nose and go securely below the chin with ear loops, not ties.
 - Surgical mask that cover the nose and go securely below the chin pinching the metal insert to form fit over the bridge of the nose
 - KN95 masks that cover the nose and go securely below the chin pinching the metal insert to form fit over the bridge of the nose
 - N95 masks-mostly for the nurses, but you may use them if you prefer, but they are not necessary unless you are in the presence of someone with COVID like symptoms receiving an aerosolized treatment such as a nebulizer treatment. (Hartford Healthcare, 2020)
3. Parents should be introducing masks and teaching children how to safely put them on and off prior to the start of school so they are independent to the extent possible.
 4. Masks must follow the dress code procedure (no inappropriate words, design, or pictures).

Unacceptable forms of Masks:

- Knitted mask
 - One layer cloth mask
 - Bandanas
 - Neck gaiters
 - Masks with vents-CDC does not recommend use of masks or cloth masks for source control if they have an exhalation valve or vent (CDC, August, 2020)
5. Face Shields can be added to anyone who would like to add extra protection, but they do not replace wearing a mask and face shields are not necessary if maintaining 6 feet of distance.
 6. Exceptions for removing a mask while wearing a face shield:
 - Those who have physician orders to not wear a mask in school with documented diagnosis.
 - For students who are deaf, hard of hearing or struggle with communication while wearing a mask can remove their mask during direct services with their teacher or speech language pathologist (SLP). Masks with clear panels are recommended for educators providing services to the students. The student will keep on the face shield and as much distance as possible between them while services are provided.
 - Students requiring interventions under rule 4500. See the specific guidelines for care during and after interventions for both students and staff.
 - Masks need to be washed after every use at the end of the day. Having several on hand will be more convenient.
 7. Wearing a mask correctly:
 - Wash your hands before putting on your mask
 - Put it over your nose and mouth and secure it under your chin
 - Try to fit it snugly against the sides of your face
 - Make sure you can breathe easily (CDC, August, 2020)
 8. Students' cloth face coverings should be clearly identified with their names or initials, to avoid confusion or swapping.
 9. Students' face coverings may also be labeled to indicate top/bottom and front/back to help them put it on correctly.
 10. When not in use, facial coverings should be stored in individually labeled containers or paper bags. Breakaway lanyards can also be utilized for students to wear and clip their mask onto it.
 11. Face coverings should be washed:
 - every evening (hand washing with soap water and hanging to dry overnight or washing machine)
 - before being used again if a weekend

- or if visibly soiled
12. KN95 and N95 masks can be reused after sitting for 3 days in a paper bag. Having three will provide for 1 to always be available for use. If visibly soiled, it should be discarded.
 13. Please consult with the District COVID Coordinator, Deborah Hanson, M.Ed., BSN, RN, School Nurse Leader with any questions or concerns. dhanson@svvvt.org

References

Agency of Education and Department of Health (August, 2020). A Strong and Healthy Start, Safety and Health Guidance for Reopening Schools, Fall 2020. Retrieved from: <https://education.vermont.gov/sites/aoe/files/documents/edu-vdh-guidance-strong-healthy-start-school-health-updated-8-1.pdf>

CDC (August, 2020) How to Wear Masks. Retrieved from: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/prevent-getting-sick/how-to-wear-cloth-face-coverings.html>

Hartford HealthCare (2020). Masks Save Lives: Duke Study Confirms Which Ones Work Best. Retrieved From: <https://hartfordhealthcare.org/about-us/news-press/news-detail?articleid=27691&publicId=395>

5. Are parents required to wear face coverings when dropping off or picking up their child?

Yes

6. If a student has a fever do they need a COVID-19 test?
Not necessarily, that would be a conversation between the parent and child's healthcare provider.
7. What is the "return to school" policy when a student has been out sick?
If a student is COVID positive, the school nurse or designee will continue to follow up on student's symptoms and return to school will be determined by no fever (less than 100.4) without fever reducing medication) for 24 hours (or according to updated recommendations by the VDH) prior to re-admittance **and** has felt good (meaning zero other symptoms) for 10 days.
If a student is not COVID positive, they may return after being fever free without fever reducing medication for 24 hours and symptom free for 24 hours.
8. What happens if my child travels out of state to a county that is on the quarantine list?

You need to monitor this website frequently if you are considering any leisure travel out of state. <https://accd.vermont.gov/covid-19/restart/cross-state-travel> This is updated on Fridays and changes each week. In some cases, it may change while you are on vacation. If you have traveled to one of these areas you should not be reporting to work in person. You need to let your supervisor know, contact the VDH and contact Jennifer Book in Human Resources.

Educational Expectations/School Day

1. What is the first day of school?
As of August 3, 2020 the first day of school will be September 8th for all students.
2. What are the attendance expectations for students?
During distance & in-person learning, it is expected that students will be working on schoolwork **daily and attend any scheduled online and in-person learning sessions**. If a student is not

able to complete work on any given day, contact should be made with the school reporting the students as absent from learning on that day.

On each day for which attendance is recorded, an educator must make contact with a student by video chat, telephone, or “seeing” the student log into a Learning Management System (Google Classroom/Seesaw) and engaging in the day’s learning activities (e.g., completes asynchronous assignments, assessments, etc.).

3. How much shorter will the school day be?
1 hour and 15 minutes across all buildings in the district to allow for staggered arrivals and dismissals. Please check with your school for an arrival and dismissal schedule.
4. What is the grading policy for the school year?
Teachers are carefully designing assessments that can be done in person and in a distance learning environment to track student progress and assess their learning. It is important that students do everything possible to complete and turn in assignments on time. It is important that each student completes teacher assignments as directed, as these are specially designed to assess student’s skills and proficiencies focused at a specific grade level. K-12 educators will use PowerSchool to monitor student progress.
5. What is the expectation concerning homework?
[Copy of ARSU Homework Expectations 8.15.16](#)
6. How will parent meetings occur?
Parent meetings will need to take place remotely as we are not permitted to have any visitors in the building. We will continue to hold IEP, 504 and EST meetings virtually, by phone or google meets.
7. Will state assessments occur this school year?
We have not received guidance on this to date.
8. Where will breakfast and lunch be served?
Cafeterias will be closed to large groups. Students will eat breakfast and lunch in classrooms, outdoors or in alternative spaces as necessary and in accordance with the Health and Safety Guidelines.
9. Will high school students be switching classes?
Yes, but it will be reduced greatly from previous years. We are moving to a block schedule for the 2020-2021 school year. We are also developing a one way flow of traffic on either side of the hallways and students will need to maintain 6 feet distance between them.
10. Will students be allowed to use their lockers?
Yes, with proper 6 feet physical distancing. Schedules are being developed in each school to adhere to the VT Guidelines. Students are highly encouraged only to bring with them necessary materials.
11. Will recess still be part of the student day?
Yes, masks will not need to be worn if the students are outside and adhering to proper social distancing.

12. Will playgrounds be open?

Students may use playground equipment only under the following conditions:

- a. Students need to wash their hands before and after playground use.
- b. They will need to wear facial coverings if proper social distancing cannot be maintained.

13. Will students be outside more than in previous years?

Yes, the intention is to have students outside much more than in previous years.

14. If students are going to be outside more will there be more of a law enforcement presence?

We are working closely with both Fair Haven and Castleton Police Departments and there will be an increased presence. Furthermore, we will continue to be practicing safety drills and all other safety procedures will continue to be in place.

15. How will my child's teacher and school communicate with families?

To the largest extent possible communication will be electronic. We want to limit the amount of paper that is traveling back and forth between households and around the schools each day. Please make sure that you have an email on file with the school district. In the case, where a family does not have internet access and/or email the school will make other arrangements.

Arrival/Dismissal/Transportation

1. What will the start and end times be for each school (siblings in different buildings)?

Buildings are coordinating their release times between buildings to give ample time for student drop off and pick-up.

2. Why are there staggered arrivals and dismissals?

To allow for proper social distancing and screening of students.

3. How will bussing run?

Bussing will be door to door to the greatest extent possible. Students will need to wear facial coverings, be screened prior to boarding the bus and maintain social distancing to the greatest extent possible. Bus windows will be open. There will be a bus monitor on all buses to reinforce the guidelines. Parents will need to remain at bus stops in case the health screening results prohibit their boarding of the bus.

Sports/Field Trips

1. What is the status of sports/extra-curriculars?

We just received the fall sports guidance. We are in the process of putting together a high school and middle school plan for both sports as well as all extra-curriculars.

2. Will field trips and assemblies be allowed?

Field trips are only allowed if the program is able to maintain all health guidance, as well as guidance from the [Agency of Commerce and Community Development](#), as it relates to public outdoor spaces and pools.

Virtual activities and events in lieu of field trips, student assemblies, special performances, school-wide parent meetings and spirit nights will be pursued whenever possible.

Facilities/Visitors

1. Will community building use be allowed?

Per the Agency of Education Reopening Guidelines school buildings are not available for community use at this time, including bathrooms. However, the school grounds are available for use.

2. Will visitors/volunteers be allowed in schools?

At this time, we are not permitted to have volunteers in the schools. No outside visitors and volunteers except for employees or contracted service providers for the purpose of special education or required support services, as authorized by the school or district.

Remote Option/Homeschooling

1. Is there a remote option for families that are not comfortable sending their child back to school for in-person instruction?

At this time Slate Valley is not offering this option with the exception of students with specific documented medical concerns.

2. What is homeschooling and what is the district's role in homeschooling, if any?

The Vermont Agency of Education is the entity responsible for approving home study applications in Vermont. The [Guidelines for Home Study in Vermont](#) contains information necessary to prepare and submit an enrollment notice for homeschooling. Excerpts from relevant statutes and rules are also provided. You can also find information pertaining to Special Education and home study [here](#).

3. What is home study and how do I apply?

Home study is completely independent of the public school. Parents may contact the Agency of Education for more information.

<https://education.vermont.gov/vermont-schools/school-operations/home-study>