

# COVID-19 Updates for Returning to School

September 7, 2020

Hello Everyone!

Tomorrow marks the beginning of a new school year that is very different from any other year in many ways. Different from the beginning of the day until the end with new drop-off procedures and locations, new schedules in all schools, new classroom structures and new ways to learn and accommodate for the safety of each other. However, most importantly what has not changed is our focus on student learning. The commitment never waivers, to provide the best instruction to each student that meets their individual needs and provides for their safety, personal growth and development, and future success.

This year I need you to pay close attention to the following changes which are designed to keep you safe, your family safe and our staff safe.

First, there are strict rules in place for the entire State of Vermont to combat this pandemic. These rules include clear guidance for travel outside of Vermont. Everyone must follow this guidance and refer to the map identifying locations where, if you travel to these locations, upon return you must quarantine when you return. The map on this site is updated every Friday to include those locations that are currently considered hotzones, and which require Vermonters or our employees to quarantine upon return. There is no perfect way for me to enforce or make sure that everyone is adhering to this guidance however following this guidance is CRITICAL to keeping us all safe! Please see the map at: <https://accd.vermont.gov/covid-19/restart/cross-state-travel>

Second, remember that masks are mandatory for everyone in Vermont. Hartford School District requires all students and staff to wear masks throughout the day, unless outside where social distancing can be ensured. In rare circumstances some students and staff will have medical exemptions from wearing masks, in these cases, strict adherence to social distancing and the use of other personal protection will be mandatory. If you do not have a mask the school has a limited supply of both cloth and paper/disposable masks. Remember, it is important to know how to put on/take off, wash and care for your mask. Mask guidance can be found at: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/prevent-getting-sick/diy-cloth-face-coverings.html>

Third, expect delays this week at morning drop-off and pick-up at your child's school. We have encouraged parents to drive their children to school to ensure social distancing and safety on buses. Thank you, as many parents have indicated that they intend to drive their own children to and from school. This will cause delays, especially the first week of school as we all get used to the new procedures and schedule changes.

Fourth, the federal government is offering free breakfast and lunch to all students through December, 2020. Please see the forms at the district website or in your child's back to school paperwork.

Last, the district has two COVID Coordinators to plan, prepare and deal with all things related to our district response to the COVID pandemic. If you have a question or concern and do not feel your child's school has provided an adequate response, please contact one of the coordinators or myself at any time. The Co -Coordinators are:

- Andrea Davis, RN, at [davisa@hartfordschools.net](mailto:davisa@hartfordschools.net)
- Felica Hayes, RN at [hayesf@hartfordschools.net](mailto:hayesf@hartfordschools.net)

Thank you for your attention to this important information. Together we can do this, both provide a safe and healthy environment for our youth to learn and grow, and keep our community safe. As always please feel free to call or email me at any time with questions, concerns or suggestions.

Sincerely,

Tom DeBalsi  
Superintendent of Schools  
Hartford School District