

Orange East Supervisory Union

*Serving the town of Bradford, Corinth, Groton, Newbury,
Ryegate, Thetford, Topsham, Wells River*
Tel. 802-222-5216 Fax 802-222-4451

64 Main Street
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Bradford VT 05033
www.oesu.org

August 19, 2021

Dear OESU Community:

As summer draws to a close and we prepare to welcome students and staff back into our buildings, we wanted to send an update regarding the COVID protocol communication from last week and expectations moving forward. Over the past week we have had conversations with health professionals, received updates from the Department of Health and Agency of Education, and had conversations with faculty, staff, and the leadership team. From these, we have been able to clarify some questions that have been asked and to outline more clearly the expectations for the start of school. As with the communication from last week, we will include the caveat that this is an evolving situation and likely to be altered going forward as the situation changes.

Please know that each school will be sending home specific procedures that outline the plan for their buildings. These have been discussed with the COVID Coordinator and will be consistent throughout the OESU. Of course, as each building has needs that are specific to them, they will adapt to meet these needs while still maintaining consistency with the health and safety protocols. Below you will find details regarding the general OESU protocols and guidelines.

- All students and staff will **wear a mask** inside the schools. Students may take their mask off outside when social distancing measures are in place.
- Students will have **assigned seating** in classrooms and physical distancing will be in place. These protocols will help us in the event contact tracing is necessary.
- **Remote Learning** - Per guidelines from the Vermont Agency of Education, we will not have a remote or hybrid learning option and the expectation is that all students will be present in school for classes. Given the uncertainty of COVID-19, should a school (either in its entirety or specific grades/classes) have to move to remote learning, information will be provided regarding remote learning, class schedules, etc..
- **Stay Home When Sick.** It is critical that students and staff stay home when experiencing COVID-19 symptoms.
- All schools will have a COVID **isolation room**. Any student experiencing COVID-19 symptoms will be placed in the isolation room until he/she can be picked up by a parent/guardian.
- If your child **tests** positive for COVID-19, or has direct contact with someone who does, it is essential that you communicate this to the school nurse immediately.
- **Field Trips** must be approved by school and/or OESU administration and increased safety measures will be in place. No international field trips will take place this school year.
- **Visitors and volunteers** will be based on necessity to begin the school year. This will help to limit exposure and in the event that contact tracing becomes necessary.
- **School athletics** will proceed as normal at this point. Any specific information for parents will be communicated out by the school.

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- All students and staff riding a **bus** will wear a mask while on the bus, and we ask all students riding a bus to bring their own mask. In the event that someone forgets their mask, masks will be available. Traditional seating on the bus will be acceptable.
- The Vermont Department of Health is offering no-cost weekly **COVID-19 surveillance testing** conducted by the school nurse on Tuesdays. Students and staff ages 5 and up regardless of vaccination status are eligible. Testing is optional, parental consent is required and the results will be available to students and parents via a private login to a personal testing portal. In the event of a positive test, the family will receive a call from the Vermont Department of Health (preceded by a text message from 86361). If the student is determined to have been infectious while at school, the district/school administration will be notified and **contact tracing** will take place.
- **Vaccination clinics** for students (ages 12 and up), family and community members will take place on the following dates:

August 25, September 15 and October 6 at Oxbow High School: 9 am-5 pm

August 27, September 17 and October 8 at Blue Mountain Union School: 2 pm-8 pm

Here is the link to register: <https://vermont.force.com/events/s/selfregistration> .

In general, the safety protocols are very similar to those that were in place in the spring. Our hope is that with the high vaccination rate in Vermont, as well as the many safety protocols schools and communities are putting into place, this particular surge of the COVID variant will be short-lived and we can re-assess some of these protocols. Until that time, we will continue to do our best to ensure the health and safety of our school communities and while seeking to ensure that our students and staff have a positive and productive start to the school year.

As always, if you have any questions about this letter, please do not hesitate to contact the OESU or your building principal.

Sincerely,

Emilie Knisley, Superintendent
Randy Gawel, Assistant Superintendent
Susie Tann, COVID Coordinator