

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
P O Box 396
Bradford VT 05033
www.oesu.org

August 10, 2021

Dear OESU Community,

We wanted to take a minute to write to you regarding the recommendation from the Vermont Agency of Education and the Vermont Department of Health regarding returning to school for the 2021-2022 school year and the measures that are being asked of schools as we continue to try to stay one step ahead of COVID-19 and its variants. Based upon the recommendations from these agencies (released 8/5/21), the Orange East Supervisory Union will be adopting the recommended masking and vaccination guidelines to begin the school year. These will begin on Monday, August 16th. The guidelines are outlined below:

- To allow schools time to calculate the percentage of currently eligible students and staff who have received two doses of a two-dose vaccine, schools will require universal masking for *all* students and staff (when indoors) for the first 10 instructional days of the school year. Currently, all Vermonters ages 12 and older are eligible to be vaccinated.
- Following the first 10 instructional days of the school year, masks will no longer be required for those who have been vaccinated when the vaccination rate (two doses of a two-dose vaccine) among students and staff is equal to or greater than 80% of the school's population. Proof of vaccination will be required to accurately assess the percentage of those vaccinated. Further details are forthcoming.
- Masks will be required indoors for students younger than 12. (Children younger than 12 are not eligible to be vaccinated at this time.)
- Masks, when required, may be removed briefly, and only when needed, for instructional or operational purposes.
- Masks are required for *all* passengers on buses per federal regulation, regardless of age or vaccination status.
- Masks are not required outdoors.
- Unvaccinated students and staff will be required to wear a mask while inside on school property.
- These requirements also apply to all offices within the OESU as well.

As was the case last year, students and staff should stay home if they are exhibiting symptoms of COVID-19. If they have a fever (temperature greater than 100.4°F), are currently in quarantine due to close contact with an individual with COVID-19, or are in isolation due to testing positive for COVID-19. Please know that if a student or staff member is exhibiting symptoms at school, they will be sent home as soon as possible, and isolated from other staff and students until they can.

We are also pleased to announce that the OESU will be hosting two vaccination clinics beginning this month, one at Oxbow and one at BMU. These clinics will be coordinated for OESU by Susie Tann, our District COVID Coordinator, in collaboration with the AOE. The dates for the clinics will be as follows:

- Oxbow High School - August 25th, September 15th, October 5th.
- Blue Mountain Union - August 27th, September 17th, October 7th

These and other correlative safety measures are all part of the “duty to care” that we as members of a school and community take on, informing, as it should, what we do when it comes to our students, our community, our

Cultivating a Love for Learning!

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colleagues, and ourselves. To this end, we will continue to follow the guidelines from both the Agency of Education and the Department of Health as concerns the safety, health, and welfare of all within the Orange East Supervisory Union. We anticipate that further guidance may be issued prior to the start of school, and we ask for your continued support and cooperation as we work to implement these changes.

If you have questions regarding these guidelines, please do not hesitate to contact us.

Sincerely,

Emilie Knisley, Superintendent
Randy Gawel, Assistant Superintendent
Susannah Tann, District COVID Coordinator