

## **River Bend Career & Technical Center**

### **Student Handbook COVID-19 Addendum**

#### **Why are we back in school?**

It has become clear that from March, 2020 our education system does more than just “teach” students. We, education professionals and families have known this all along. However, it has become apparent that educating students, assisting them in making progress in their future goals, and meeting their health, welfare and nutritional needs has been made more difficult by the disruptions caused by the Coronavirus. We are here, back in school because we need to resume in-person instruction of students as soon as safely possible, while continuing to strengthen our alternative in person education systems and our ability to move swiftly to any changes in the Coronavirus status and the switch to learning outside of our building.

This document and River Bend Career & Technical Center (RBCTC) guidance is led by the information released from the Center for Disease Control, the Vermont Department of Health, the Governor’s Office and from the Vermont Agency of Education. The guidance is intended to help School Districts and Supervisory Unions (SD/SUs) and independent schools prepare to reopen school in the Fall of 2020. This document is focused on safeguarding student and staff health while operating in- person instruction.

The guidance provided through the Vermont Agency of Education and the Vermont Department of Health references three steps. These steps, as they pertain to schools, are defined as:

- Step I: Schools are closed for in-person instruction. Remote learning opportunities should be provided for all students. Support provision of student services such as school meal programs, as feasible.
- Step II: Schools are open for in-person instruction with enhanced physical distancing measures and for students who live in the local geographic area only.
- Step III: Schools are open for in-person instruction with distancing measures. Restrict attendance to those from limited transmission areas only.

River Bend Career & Technical Center is opening for the 2020-2021 school year utilizing Step II guidelines.

#### **School Day**

The first day of school for students this year is on Tuesday, September 8th, 2020. Our hope is that all students can return in person, but this handbook includes guidelines for students who return to campus, as well as those who need to continue remote learning. Teachers and support

staff will still return to school on August 20th, giving staff several extra days to prepare for students' return. RBCTC staff have a monumental task before them. They must learn how to follow the safety guidelines and teach their students how to do so. They must modify all of their classroom and school-wide routines, and change the way they deliver in-person instruction. They must determine how to continue best supporting RBCTC Remote Learners at the same time. This extra time will allow us to prepare the school for your student's safe return, and to modify routines, instruction, and student and family support, in order to respond effectively as the pandemic evolves.

The school campus will be open from 7:30 a.m. - 2:45 p.m., except for Wednesdays, which will be a remote learning day (more details provided later in this document).

When students arrive, after the Daily Health Screening is complete, they will walk directly to their classroom's. The school day begins at 8:00 a.m. and dismissal for the morning class is that of the sending school designated dismissal time. The afternoon classes begin at 12:00 and is that of the sending school designated dismissal time.

Communication is key within these COVID-19 times. RBCTC understands that:

- A parent may choose to designate another adult to assume the care of their student at the bus stop and take the student home if he/she does not pass the Daily Health Check.
- A parent may designate an older sibling (9th grade or older) to serve as the "parent designee" for the younger sibling. In the event the younger sibling does not pass the Health Check, both students would need to return home and contact their parents in order to seek guidance from their doctor.
- A parent may give permission for their student to return home alone. Please use your judgement with regard to your student's age and abilities. The parent/student must call the school to confirm that the student has arrived home safely.

### **Weekly Schedule**

RBCTC is planning instruction in hybrid plan. The schedule is: Monday and Tuesday in person learning for the students of Rivendell Academy, Woodsville High School, and assigned Oxbow High School Students. Wednesday Remote Learning for all students. Thursday and Friday in person learning for Blue Mountain Union, Thetford Academy, and assigned Oxbow High School Students.

### **Remote Learning on Wednesdays**

On Wednesdays, all students will be remote learning. This will enable a deep cleaning of the school building, provide teachers with additional prep and collaboration time, and allow teachers to connect with students who are learning remotely.

### **COVID-19 Daily Health Check**

(Includes bus and car arrival, as well as students walking or biking to school)

The purpose of information in this section is to decrease the risk of individuals who could potentially be infected with COVID-19 from entering the school building. All students and staff must have a Daily Health Check at the first point of contact here at RBCTC.

All students must complete two parts of a daily health check; Part A: Parents will ask their student a set of questions determined by the school and follow the outlined procedures (and not send students to school who are experiencing symptoms or have had an exposure to someone with COVID -19), Part B: Completing the Daily Health Check immediately upon entering the school building.

### **The Daily Health Check**

The screening questions are:

1. In the last 14 days, have you traveled outside VT or NH? Y or N
2. Do you have any of the following symptoms: fever, cough, shortness of breath, runny nose, sore throat, chills, body aches, fatigue, headache, nausea, vomiting, diarrhea, loss of taste/smell, or a new rash? Y or N
3. Have you been in contact with someone who has tested positive for COVID-19? Y or N

Each student will then have their temperature taken with a non-contact thermometer. Students who answer “Yes” to any of the above questions or have a temperature greater than or equal to 100.4°F will not pass the Daily Health Check and must be returned to their parent/caregiver as soon as possible. The parent/caregiver will be instructed to call the student’s Primary Healthcare Provider for further guidance.

Note: Students with a written, documented diagnosis and a medical treatment plan for well-controlled asthma or environmental allergies, who do not have a temperature, may attend school with some expected coughing and clear nasal discharge.

## **Process for Bus Transportation**

Students who are participating in bus transportation will abide by the guidelines set forth by the sending school and bus company.

Students who are unable or unwilling to comply with these guidelines will be removed from the bus for their own safety as well as the safety of other students and the community.

## **Process for Arriving at RBCTC**

Student arrival for drivers/Parent drop off is from 7:45 to 8:00 a.m. Students arriving on foot or bicycle should proceed to the RBCTC entrance to receive a Daily Health Check. All students are expected to wear a facial covering for the Daily Health Check. When the parent/caregiver pulls up to school, the student should exit the vehicle and proceed right to the RBCTC entrance, observing social distancing.

All students will be asked the screening questions. All students will have their temperature checked. Students who do not pass the Daily Health Check must return home or visit their healthcare provider, and may not return to school that day. The parent/caregiver should be instructed to call the student's healthcare provider for further guidance.

Families can not enter the building with their students; they must call ahead to request an appointment if a meeting is needed. Meetings will be held virtually, by phone or Zoom. No drop off/arrival is allowed before 7:45 a.m.

## **Getting to the Classroom**

<b>Group</b>	<b>Screening Location</b>	<b>Notes</b>
Bus Transportation	Before getting on the bus	When students get off the bus, they will go directly to their classroom and proceed inside to wash their hands. Staff will be stationed around the outside of the classrooms to help direct students and ensure that safety guidelines are being met, and supervise prior to class starting
Car Transportation	Drop off between 7:40 and 8:00 a.m. Parents and caregiver, please stay in	When students get out of the car they will go directly to their classroom door and proceed inside to wash their hands. Staff

	the car.	will be stationed around the building to help direct students, ensure that safety guidelines are being met, and supervise classrooms
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### **Attendance**

It is our intention that all students attend school starting on September 8th, 2020. RBCTC will continue to use our existing attendance policy for students attending in-person instruction. Students should arrive between 7:45 and 8:00 a.m., and will be marked tardy after 8:00 (or the arrival time of their sending school). Please refer to our 2020-2021 RBCTC Remote Learning Plan for information on how attendance will be taken for students learning remotely.

For students who need to be absent because of chronic illness, disability, immunosuppression, or need for homebound services or hospitalization, parents must submit written notification to the Director. Parents should also notify the Director if they have determined that their student needs additional accommodations in order to safely return to school. Documentation from a physician will be required. A Medical 504 plan may be appropriate to consider for students with special health needs. It is a priority for RBCTC to ensure the physical, emotional and psychological safety of every student and the staff who support them. A team approach including families, instructors, sending school team members, RBCTC Leadership Team, Administration, and physician will design and implement the best plan possible for the student.

### **Late Arrival at School and Early Pick-Up**

Due to the additional safety guidelines for arrival and dismissal, we ask parents, care givers, and students to make every effort to adhere to the arrival and dismissal times, and schedule appointments and other needs outside the school day. However, if it is absolutely necessary to have a late arrival or schedule an early dismissal, please follow the guidelines listed below.

If there are circumstances when your student is late to school, please buzz the front office when you arrive to arrange for a late Daily Health Check. Please be patient, as staff may be occupied with other duties when you arrive. If a parent is dropping off a student we ask that you wait until the student passes the Daily Health Check before departing our campus.

If your student must leave school early, please notify the front office as soon as possible so that your student will be ready for pick-up at the appointed time.

## Stay Home If Sick

As we all know, as school opens this fall, it will look very different due to the COVID-19 pandemic. We have updated our “Sick Day Guidelines” to reflect the health and safety practices that are outlined by the Agency of Education and the Vermont Department of Health in a document titled: [A Strong and Healthy Start](#). Below are some specific instructions from the School Health Office that are intended to help you navigate these “Stay Home When Sick” requirements.

If your student answers YES to any of the Daily Health Check questions, has symptoms listed below, or a temperature of 100.4°F or greater, please keep them home and contact your student’s healthcare provider for further guidance. Please make sure you have a thermometer to use at home.

Please keep in mind that a temperature reading is only one piece of a COVID-19 health assessment. While a student’s temperature may be in the normal range, they may have other symptoms that warrant staying home and/or seeing a healthcare provider. A doctor’s note may be required for returning to school.

When you call the school to report your student’s absence, please specify what type of symptoms they have: fever, respiratory, gastrointestinal, or other. This will support our efforts to monitor the frequency and number of illnesses. We thank you in advance for your assistance with this important aspect of school health.

We all want to prevent the spread of COVID-19 and keep our students and staff from becoming infected. Keeping your student home when they are sick is one of the greatest prevention measures you can take. We appreciate your help to keep everyone in our school community well and our students ready to learn.

Stay At Home Symptoms	Return to School	
	If NOT COVID-19 as determined by Primary Healthcare Provider	If COVID-19 Positive as confirmed by the Vermont Department of Health
Temperature of 100.4°F or greater Chills	No fever for 24 hours without the use of fever reducing medicine (Tylenol, Advil, Motrin, etc).	Follow guidance given by the Vermont Department of Health and your health care provider. This guidance may change as more information about school-age student is released.
Sore throat	Healthcare provider’s guidance or 24 hours after starting antibiotics.	

Cough	Follow healthcare provider's guidance. Cough must be non-productive.	<p>Presently: If your student has not had a follow-up test to determine if they are still contagious, they may return to school after:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• No fever for 24 hours without the use of fever reducing medicine AND</li> <li>• Symptoms have improved AND</li> <li>• At least 10 days have passed since symptoms first appeared.</li> </ul>
Swollen, sore glands	Follow healthcare provider's guidance.	
Difficulty breathing	Follow healthcare provider's guidance. Breathing is normal and the use of a nebulizer is not needed during the school day.	
Fatigue	When fatigue is minimal to none and student is able to participate in all school day activities, including physical activities.	
Headache	Follow healthcare provider's guidance or when headache is minimal to none without the use of medicine (Tylenol, Motrin, Advil, etc).	
Body aches	Follow healthcare provider's guidance or when aches are minimal to none without the use of medicine (Tylenol, Motrin, Advil, etc).	
Nasal congestion/drainage <i>without</i> diagnosis of environmental allergies	Follow healthcare provider guidance. Minimal to no nasal congestion or runny nose without the use of medicine.	
Nausea/Vomiting	No nausea or vomiting for 24 hours.	
Diarrhea	No diarrhea for 24 hours.	
Ear ache	Resolved or infection treated.	
Eye drainage	Resolved or infection treated.	

Significant, unexplained new rash	Follow health care provider's guidance. Minimal to no rash.	
student has been in close contact with someone with COVID-19 in the last 14 days	Follow <a href="#">Vermont Department of Health's guidance</a> for what it means to be in close contact, as well as for instructions for isolating, quarantine, and self-observation. Follow health care provider's guidance and guidance from the VT Department of Health.	

### **Sick at School Procedure**

The school nurse on site and the RBCTC Administration are committed to coordinating decision-making around a student's care with the family and student's healthcare provider if there are specific health concerns that need to be considered.

We have three designated healthcare areas per AOE requirements in our building: the school Health Office (located at Oxbow High School) and isolation rooms (one located at OHS and one at RBCTC), to serve the health needs of our students. The purpose of an established isolation room is to decrease transmission of COVID-19 by accommodating symptomatic students and staff.

The school health office will serve as the school's clean office space to accommodate medication administration, triage, health screenings, injuries, skilled nursing care, and other nursing duties that do not involve potential or suspected infectious disease.

If a student needs to see the nurse for any reason during the school day, the nurse will be called to the classroom. If signs and symptoms of illness begin while at school, the student must be sent home as soon as possible. The nurse will coordinate keeping sick students separate from well students and limit staff contact as much as reasonably possible, while ensuring the safety and supervision of the sick student. Sick students will be asked to wear a surgical mask, remain in the isolation room, and be supervised by a staff member until their parent or designated person picks them up.



In addition, the classroom will be vacated while it is cleaned, supplies are sanitized, and surfaces are disinfected.

**The following situations during the school day indicate that your student must leave school**

Symptoms of COVID-19:

- Cough
- Shortness of breath
- Difficulty or painful breathing
- Chills or repeated shaking with chills
- Muscle Pain
- Headache
- Sore throat
- Loss of taste or smell that is NEW

Close contact with someone with COVID-19 in the last 14 days.

Fever (temperature 100.4°F or greater)

Significant new rash, particularly when other symptoms are present.

Large amounts of nasal discharge in the absence of allergy diagnosis.

Travel to an area designated as having more than 400 active COVID-19 cases per million residents as outlined on the Vermont Cross State Travel site. Please refer to updated guidance before traveling out of state at <https://accd.vermont.gov/covid-19/restart/cross-state-travel> .

**Healthy students with the following symptoms/conditions may stay in school**

- Allergy symptoms (with no fever) that cause coughing and *clear runny nose* if they have medically-diagnosed allergies with a written doctor's note on file in the sending school Health Office.
- Well-controlled asthma with a current Asthma Action Plan on file in the sending school Health Office.

**Cases of Confirmed COVID-19 in School**

The following information provides a brief overview of the steps that the school will be taking in the event that a student tests positive for COVID-19. The guidance from the Vermont Department of Health is updated frequently, so these guidelines may change.

- Areas used by the student such as offices, bathrooms, and common areas will be aired out for 24 hours and then thoroughly cleaned and disinfected. This includes shared materials and electronics.
- School personnel will participate in contact tracing as requested by the VT Dept. of Health

- A decision about school closure will be made based on the guidance set forth by the VT Agency of Education.
- RBCTC will maintain confidentiality of the individual(s) who tested positive, as required by the Americans with Disabilities Act.
- Communication - If there is a confirmed case within the school, the superintendent, school administration and school nurse will work closely with the Vermont Department of Public Health for contact tracing. Only the superintendent will send a message to families in the event of a positive case. This message will be consistent with HIPAA and FERPA guidelines to maintain confidentiality.

The most important things you can do:

- Make sure your student has at least 2 cloth face masks and wears one when not with people who live in your household.
- Make sure your student is washing their hands with soap and water for 20 seconds when appropriate, including before and after meal times, before and after school, and after going out in public.
- Keep your student home if they are sick or displaying symptoms of COVID-19.
- Call your primary care provider if you or your student has symptoms of COVID-19.

## **Hand Hygiene**

We have been directed to put the following procedures into place to decrease the transmission of COVID-19 in the school setting. Students will be asked to wash their hands at the following times:

- Upon arrival to the building
- Upon leaving the building
- Before and after eating
- After using the toilet
- After blowing their nose
- Before and after handling facial coverings/face shields
- Before and after participation in outdoor skills or activities
- Before and after handling items for sensory play
- After handling garbage
- Before and after cleaning their space
- Prior to switching rooms or locations

Students will be asked to wash hands with soap and water for at least 20 seconds. If hands are not visibly dirty, and a sink with soap and water are not available, alcohol-based hand sanitizers with at least 60% alcohol will be provided. Steps for proper hand washing will be taught to

students at the beginning of the school year, and posters on proper handwashing will be posted in each room.

### **Facial Coverings**

All people in the building are required to wear facial coverings. As well as outside where physical distancing cannot be maintained. During the first six weeks of school, and ongoing as needed, teachers will teach why face coverings are important, and how to properly wear them. Mask “breaks” will be provided throughout the day.

- Students should provide their own face masks; wearing one and bringing one extra in a ziplock bag to school every day. RBCTC will be giving each student two cloth face coverings. It is likely that masks will get damp with condensation during the day and need to be changed. If you need assistance in obtaining masks for your student, please let us know; we are happy to help. Thank you for doing your part to keep your student and the school community safe.
- Cloth masks are ideally 100% cotton to allow for breathability and increased efficacy, they should include a nose piece that can be fitted to the face, and they should attach with comfortable ear loops. Facial coverings with ties are not recommended for young students as they pose a risk of choking or strangulation.
- It is extremely important that cloth masks be washed with soap and water every night and thoroughly dried before wearing again.
- Extra cloth masks will be available at school if a special situation arises where a student needs one.
- If a student has a medical or behavioral reason that would make them exempt from the facial covering mandate, we will use a team approach to develop a plan that is tailored to the student’s individual situation and needs. Please refer to the following section titled: *Students with Health Care Needs*.
- Students may remove facial coverings for eating or drinking. Strict 6-foot distancing should be maintained during this time.
- Bandanas, neck gaiters, and buffs are not considered as adequate face coverings and will not be allowed.

Face shields may be worn in addition to a mask as long as they meet the health guidance for fit and coverage from the Vermont Department of Health. Face shields should extend below the chin and to the ears laterally, and there should be no exposed gap between the forehead and the shield’s headpiece. The school will not be able to provide face shields for students, but parents may provide them for their own student.

Face shields may be an acceptable alternative to a mask in certain situations and as determined on an individual student basis.

### **Students with Health Care Needs**

A team-based approach to care is always important, but in light of the added risks that come with potential COVID-19 exposure, it is imperative that we work together to address concerns and challenges. Teams include parents/caregivers, the school nurse, RBCTC Covid Coordinator, the student's healthcare provider, IEP team members, and teachers. These teams will come together to develop shared student-centered goals within and across settings to achieve care that is safe, effective, timely, efficient and equitable. Sending school nurses' will ensure that students and their families connect with needed healthcare providers and provide ongoing coordination of care with regard to COVID-19 issues related to school attendance.

Arrangements will be made for special education, 504 and other students needing extra assistance to receive consultation and short term direct services per their educational plans on an individual basis in collaboration with case managers and educational teams. Please contact Elizabeth Towle, Special Needs Coordinator at 802-222-5212 x 175 or [Elizabeth.Towle@oesu.org](mailto:Elizabeth.Towle@oesu.org) with questions.

### **Cleaning and Disinfecting**

The custodial staff will ensure that the building is frequently and thoroughly cleaned each day. Teachers and students will assist by performing a mid-day cleaning of common spaces in their classroom, frequently touched surfaces, and doors. Gloves will be provided and only approved cleaning products for schools will be used.

### **Group Size and Physical Distancing**

Students will be kept in classroom groups of 25 or fewer, including staff members.

Teachers can rotate to the students, but will follow a strict schedule to minimize exposure and facilitate contact tracing if needed. Based on guidance from the Vermont Agency of Education, there may be exceptions to this when developmentally-appropriate and based on students' individual needs. During outdoor instruction classrooms will be permitted to occupy the same outdoor space, as long as physical distancing requirements are met.

Students will be physically distanced, six feet apart (as much as possible), in the classroom, while standing or walking in line, and in the out of doors. Students, in the rare cases they may be in the hall, will walk to the right.

Safety drills will occur as they normally do; students will be properly spaced in lines during drills, so teachers will walk their lines further from the building to allow more space. When seated in class, students will be properly spaced and facing the same direction at all times.

Individual student belongings will be kept separate from other students, using cubbies and containers. Teachers will work towards students having personal supplies, to help eliminate sharing.

Students should not share personal electronics, toys, books, instruments, games, or learning manipulatives. In order to provide students with the materials they will need and eliminate sharing, we will be asking families to provide supplies for their own student, such as markers, water bottles, and headphones. Please contact us if you need assistance in providing any or all of these supplies, and we will work with you to meet your needs.

### **Outdoor Spaces**

Our classes will be outdoors whenever possible. Outdoor activities will be spaces so they do not mix with students in other classes. Please be mindful that your student will need to be appropriately dressed for the weather because a good part of their day will be spent outside, including the walk to and from the classroom at arrival and dismissal. If your student needs clothing or footwear, please let RBCTC know and we will help you!

Masks must be worn outside, unless physical distancing can be ensured. Staff and students must wash their hands immediately upon reentering the classroom. These guidelines will be reviewed often.

### **Visitors, Volunteers, and Field Trips**

RBCTC is limiting the number of visitors in the building. This includes parents, family members, and caregivers before the school day, during the school day, or after school for any reason.

While our school is in Step 2, there will be no field trips. If we move to Step 3, field trips will only be approved if the sponsoring staff can insure that they and the organization have proper safety protocols in place, and this has been approved by the building administrator.

Parent meetings must also be held virtually, unless permission is granted by the Director and his designee. If approved, these meetings will only take place in the Director's office with everyone wearing a mask and maintaining a 6-foot distance from each other.

### **Whole School Events**

Whole school events are not permitted at this time, unless they take place virtually.

### **Instruction**

Students will be supported on why school looks different and how the changes are linked to their own, their family, and their community's safety. The School Counselor, Administration, and RBCTC Covid Coordinator are available to assist staff and families with these lessons and conversations, as well as to identify community resources available to staff and families.

Teachers are planning to include instruction on technology and virtual platforms into their daily routines, so that students are familiar with these tools in case of future school building closure.

Teachers will be using district approved learning platforms. Any video conferencing will be done through district approved applications. Students who are in school will still do work offline, and using paper, but will upload evidence of their learning to these platforms, sometimes perform tasks on them, or receive assignments through them. This will enable us all to remain versatile and ready to learn no matter whether we are in school or at home as the year progresses.

### **Conclusion**

We know that this process and changes that may seem overwhelming to families and students. Your River Bend Family is here to connect with your students, to help them learn and grow and become awesome adults, to keep them safe, and to support you and your families. While there are numerous challenges ahead, there are also great opportunities to teach our students how to be resilient, flexible, and caring for themselves, their peers, their families, school, and community.