

# **Colchester Public Schools**

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**Jeffrey E. Burt**  
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November 13, 2020

Dear Colchester Families,

Now is the time for members of the Colchester community to collectively care for each other and stay vigilant as we see COVID-19 cases pushing us towards the red zone. While COVID-19 transmissions within our District have been minimal, we have had to isolate students, staff, and classes as a result of a transmission from activities that take place outside of school. Carefully tracked data, analyzed with Chatham Public Health, indicate that our cohort model IS working to keep transmission to a minimum within schools. Keeping our schools open is everyone's responsibility; we need the community's support for our efforts to ensure that our students reap the academic, social, and emotional benefits from in-person instruction.

We do not know what the future holds for COVID-19 transmission, but it stands to reason that we will only be as healthy as the choices we make with regard to travel and social activities. Transmission rates between individuals attending school is very low. The decision to return to full, in-person learning at the elementary level was based largely on what we know to be true: students learn best when present with instructors and peers. Remote learning has been a tremendous struggle for our youngest learners and their families. CSDE data have shown that there is little difference in COVID-19 transmission between schools that are hybrid models vs. schools that are fully in-person. As such, if it becomes necessary to close any school for two or more weeks, we will return to the existing model for that level once we are permitted to reopen.

## **Notification from the Nurse and Medical Advisor**

Please keep students home from school, consult a physician, and consider testing for COVID-19 if experiencing:

- Fever
- Cough
- Shortness of breath or trouble breathing
- Other early symptoms: loss of taste or smell, chills, body aches (e.g., tired achy legs), sore throat, headache, diarrhea, nausea/vomiting, nasal congestion, and runny nose.

While some of these symptoms are present with the common cold, it is critically important that parents/caregivers let schools know if your child is experiencing symptoms that are also consistent with COVID-19.

## Travel Over the Holidays

As the holidays approach, we encourage you to avoid traveling to other states and countries, if possible. Consider substituting virtual meetings and virtual gatherings with families and friends to ensure everyone's health and safety. On a side note, rumors are circulating that schools will close down for two weeks after holidays as a general precaution. **Colchester will not preemptively close or go remote after holidays.** Please see the attached document for the CSDE's stand on this issue: [Prolonged Remote Learning For Holidays/School Vacations](#).

## COVID-19 Testing Requirements

Colchester Public Schools would like to remind our school community of a few important COVID-19 testing requirements:

- The school district can only accept negative COVID-19 results from a PCR (Polymerase Chain Reaction) test for travel to states on the travel advisory list.
- If you choose to travel, please remember to review the **State's Travel Advisory**
- If an individual is a close contact to someone who has COVID-19 then they will need to quarantine for 14 days regardless of whether or not there is a negative test. [Home Quarantine Guidance](#)
- Please inform the school nurses or administration if traveling to a state on the advisory list. Students can participate in at-home online learning until tests results are received and reported to the school by parents.

## Busing Safety

As of today, we have worked with M&J to ensure that all bus drivers have reviewed our standing bus safety protocols and will continue to implement them with fidelity. Please contact the district directly if you have any concerns by using the email addresses below.

## Adjusted Calendars

- On November 10th, the BOE approved this revised 2020-21 School Year Calendar: [2020-2021 School Year Calendar - Adjusted 11/10/2020](#)

## Colchester Elementary School and Jack Jackter Intermediate School

- [CES AND JJIS](#) Calendar
  - Monday, November 16th: Full in-person learning
  - Tuesday, November 17th: Full in-person learning
  - Wednesday, November 18th: Shortened Day
  - Thursday, November 19th: Full in-person learning
  - Friday, November 20th: Full in-person learning

## William J. Johnston Middle School and Bacon Academy

- [WJJMS AND BACON](#) Calendar
  - Monday, November 16th: Cohort A in-person; Cohort B remote
  - Tuesday, November 17th: Cohort A in-person; Cohort B remote
  - Wednesday, November 18th: Distance Learning Day; shortened
  - Thursday, November 19th: Cohort B in-person; Cohort A remote
  - Friday, November 20th: Cohort B in-person; Cohort A remote

**Have a question or concern?**

● **EMAILS**

General questions: [covid19@colchesterct.org](mailto:covid19@colchesterct.org)

Tech questions: [techhelp@colchesterct.org](mailto:techhelp@colchesterct.org)

BOE questions: [boardquestions@colchesterct.org](mailto:boardquestions@colchesterct.org)

Frequently asked questions: [CPS Parent FAQ](#). For the most current update on COVID-19, please visit [ct.gov/coronavirus](http://ct.gov/coronavirus). Information on the impact of COVID-19 in our community can be found here: [CT COVID-19-Data-Tracker](#).

Best Regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Jeffrey Burt", with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Jeffrey Burt, Superintendent