



Franklin West Supervisory Union

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# REOPENING GUIDANCE

## 2021-2022 SCHOOL YEAR

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*Home of the Falcons*

Fletcher School



Updated March 15, 2022

## INTRODUCTION

The 2021-2022 school year has seen many changes in guidance for protocols that concern the health and safety of our students, staff, and community related to Covid-19. This document reflects FWSU's updated guidance (March 2022) based on the most current recommendations from the Vermont Agency of Education and Center for Disease Control. .

## Most Recent Mask Guidance

*February 28, 2022*

*In my February 16th letter, I advised our school communities that FWSU schools would continue to require masks when we returned from February break and that I would provide additional updates shortly thereafter. On Friday, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) updated their guidance around masking, particularly in schools and on school buses. This new guidance has sped up my timeline for providing an updated procedure, but has not changed its ultimate trajectory.*

*According to the CDC's [COVID-19 Community Level](#) guidance, Franklin County is currently categorized as a Medium Risk region. This assessment correlates with data and projections that I have analyzed regularly throughout the year. As we have followed the guidance from the CDC (in the form of Vermont's AOE guidance), we will adjust our masking expectations to align with this guidance. Beginning on March 2, 2022 in all FWSU schools:*

- *Masks will be optional in our schools. Students, families, and staff will make the best decision for themselves and their families.*
- *Students who attend high school (or technical centers) outside FWSU will need to follow the mask expectations at their school.*
- *We will continue to provide high quality masks and have test kits available in our schools.*
- *If the Community Level increases to High Risk, we will update our expectations around masking according to the CDC guidance.*



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- *At all levels, people can wear a mask based on personal preference, informed by personal level of risk. People with symptoms, a positive test, or exposure to someone with COVID-19 should stay home.*

*With this change, there may be some anxiety, which is understandable. With continued hygiene and cleaning practices, the availability of testing, and most importantly, staying home when sick, we are confident that our schools are and will remain safe for all students and staff. We will work with our students to help them understand that their decision around masking is their personal choice. They should not feel pressured or apply pressure to others who make a different choice. Their decision may change from day to day or week to week and that is okay. All students should continue to feel safe and supported in our schools.*

*I am excited to be able to share this information with you as it means that we will be moving into spring under a more typical environment for our students. This change indicates a shift from pandemic thinking to endemic thinking regarding COVID. COVID's health impact is not over, but current conditions allow us to shift our practices away from systemic mitigation strategies and toward personal responsibility for our health and safety. This transition may be challenging, but I am confident that we will be able to move forward by working together. Thank you for your continued support and understanding.*

*Sincerely,*

**JOHN T. TAGUE**

John T. Tague

Superintendent

Franklin West Supervisory Union

## Protocols for In-Person Learning

All of our schools will be operating 5 days a week for in person learning. In order to do so safely, the following procedures will be in place.

### Transportation and Entering School Buildings

As of February 25, 2022, wearing a mask on a school bus is no longer required. [CDC Transportation Guidance](#)

Before sending your child to school we ask that you check your child to determine if they have a fever or any symptoms consistent with COVID-19. We also ask that you not send your child to school if they have been exposed to COVID-19 and showing symptoms. For everyone's well-being, it is important that children and staff who have been exposed or are showing signs of illness, stay home.

Transportation on school buses should look the same as in previous years. Some families who can transport their children to school may still want to do so, particularly if their child is not vaccinated.

Students riding the bus will still have assigned seating for the purpose of contact tracing. As always, it will be important that any changes to your child's pickup or drop off be communicated well in advance.

To protect students' safety and reduce the ability of students to congregate students will enter and exit each building through assigned entry points.

Arrival and dismissal times and routines for students may still be adjusted to reduce students congregating together and support contact tracing.





## Facial Coverings and Distancing

All students, staff and visitors will be no longer required to wear facial coverings (masks) when indoors.

Beginning on March 2, 2022 in all FWSU schools:

- Masks will be optional in our schools. Students, families, and staff will make the best decision for themselves and their families.
- Students who attend high school (or technical centers) outside FWSU will need to follow the mask expectations at their school.
- We will continue to provide high quality masks and have test kits available in our schools.
- If the Community Level increases to High Risk, we will update our expectations around masking according to the CDC guidance.

## Hygiene and Cleaning

Students and staff will be frequently reminded about the importance of proper handwashing. We will place hand sanitizer throughout the building and ensure all our bathrooms are properly stocked with soap and towels. Signs will be placed throughout the building to reinforce good hygiene practices. Masks will be available for anyone who chooses to wear one..Our schools will continue to be cleaned daily.

Should an outbreak occur in the future, our FWSU Facility team will review and implement appropriate strategies from our facility re-occupancy plan.

## **Outdoor Recess and Athletics**



Face masks will not be required for any outdoor activities including recess and athletics.

All playground equipment and regular outdoor activities will be accessible to students without physical distancing requirements.

Students will be prompted to wash their hands before and after recess.

The Vermont Principals Association and Vermont Agency of Education will provide recommendations for any indoor athletic activities.

## **Visitors and Public Use of Facilities**

Visitors and volunteers will be allowed in school in accordance with the school administration's procedures..

Volunteers will need to follow the FWSU volunteer process.

Visitors and volunteers should not come to school if they are unwell.

The public use of facilities will continually be evaluated based on availability of custodial staff to set up and clean as well as current covid-19 numbers. Currently, our focus is on school-age youth in our community.

## **Student Services**

Students who have chronic medical conditions will have their individual situation assessed by the school nurse. Individual Health Care Plans (IHPs), Individual Education Plans (IEPs), 504 Plans, and any other relevant



documentation will be reviewed. Schools will contact the student's parents/guardians as well as the student's physician if needed.

For students with IEPs or 504 plans, the child's team will meet to determine the nature, extent, and service delivery model. Any unique needs for children with disabilities relating to the recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic will be addressed in that student's plan.

More detailed information about the provision of special education or other needed student supports will be provided to families at your request.

## **Food Services**

Schools will still be offering Universal Meals to all students through the end of June 2022. Breakfast and lunch are both available at no charge.

Each school will have a specific and unique lunch plan to maximize safety for all students and staff. These plans have been communicated in the welcome back letters. Some age levels will return to the cafeteria to lunch.

## **When Someone is Sick**

Any individual who shows any signs or symptoms of illness should stay home. Parents and guardians are encouraged to contact their school nurse if their child is home ill with any symptoms suggestive of COVID-19. Individuals should not return to school unless they are cleared through the school nurse.

Students and employees with any of the following symptoms of COVID-19 should consider remaining home.

- Cough, Fatigue, Fever or chills, Headache,
- Known close contact with a person who has been diagnosed with COVID-19,
- Measured temperature of 100.4 degrees Fahrenheit or greater,
- Nausea or vomiting,
- New loss of taste or smell,
- Shortness of breath or difficulty breathing, or sore throat.

Any student or employee who begins to exhibit COVID-19 like symptoms must report to the school nurse immediately.

The school nurse will assess the student and call a family member when it is appropriate to request that the child be picked up immediately.



If an unvaccinated student or employee has symptoms of COVID-19 and has had a test, they should rest at home and not come to school until they receive their results.

**If your child is considered a presumptive contact** (classmates/staff of a person that tested positive for COVID-19), regardless of vaccination status, please follow the NEW guidance below:

- FULLY VACCINATED PRESUMPTIVE CONTACTS
  - Antigen tests should be used AT HOME on the fourth and fifth days after learning of their exposure.
  - May continue to attend school and does not need to quarantine
  
- UNVACCINATED PRESUMPTIVE CONTACTS
  - Antigen tests should be used AT HOME for 5 consecutive days after learning of their exposure.
  - May continue to attend school and does not need to quarantine

If your child had a confirmed case of COVID-19 within the last 90 days and is now a presumptive contact, they should wear a mask around other people for the next 10 days.

## [WHAT TO DO IF YOU ARE A CLOSE CONTACT](#)

### **Availability and access to Covid-19 test kits**

In February of 2022, FWSU sent at-home test kits to all FWSU families prior to the school break..

*Dear Families, Staff and Board:*

*Please check your child's backpack for a COVID-19 antigen test kit, supplied by the Agency of Education.*

- *Each kit includes 2 tests.*



- *The intent is for students to be tested twice (24 hours apart and as close to the start of school as possible) before returning from the upcoming winter break.*
- *Please consider testing Monday 2/28 and 24 hours later on Tuesday 3/1.*
- *This testing is VOLUNTARY and NOT REQUIRED before returning to school.*

**Additional test kits are available upon request. Please contact your school nurse.**

## **Vaccination Clinics**

*“The best way to keep students safe and healthy – and to ensure a smooth return to full, in person learning is to make sure they are vaccinated if they are age 12 or older. The vaccines are safe and highly effective at preventing the most serious effects of COVID-19, including against the Delta variant. The sooner your students get a first dose, the sooner they will be closer to full vaccine protection.”*

*-Agency of Education COVID-19 Response team*

***At this time we do not have any additional vaccination clinics scheduled in FWSU. We will update this notification if there is a change.***

A full list of clinics, clinic hours and registration information can be found at [healthvermont.gov/MyVaccine](https://healthvermont.gov/MyVaccine)

## **Resources:**

Superintendent John Tague’s communications:

- [SUPERINTENDENT UPDATE \(Video\)](#)
- [HEALTH AND SAFETY UPDATE \(Letter\)](#)

## **Additional Resources:**

[Advisory Memo: COVID-19 Contact Tracing for Fall 2021](#)

[School District Authority to Require Masks Memo](#)

[Memo from Dr. Levine and Dan French](#)



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[Memo: COVID-19 Prevention Measures for Fall 2021](#)

[\*A Strong and Healthy Year\*](#)

[\*CDC Requirements for Public Transportation\*](#)

[\*Getting the COVID-19 Vaccine\*](#)

[\*Instructional Reopening for Fall 2021\*](#)

[\*Vermont Department of Health guidance for PK-12 Schools\*](#)

[\*Child Care and Out of School Programs\*](#)

[CDC recommendations for reopening schools](#)

[American Academy of Pediatrics](#)

[How to Reopen Schools: A 10-Point Plan Putting Equity at the Center](#)

[VSBIT Considerations for Facility Directors](#)

[Proper Handwashing Video & Proper way to wear Cloth Facial Covering Video](#)