

November 26, 2020

Dear Lamoille North Families and Staff,

The Agency of Education (AOE) announced on Friday that beginning Monday, November 30, 2020, school screening questionnaires should include the following question: "In the past 14 days, have you or any member of your household attended a multi-household social gathering?" New guidelines state that anyone who answers yes, along with all members of their household, could be excluded from school and may be required to quarantine for 14 days, or after 7 days and a negative result on a PCR test. Some people have expressed that this added screening question feels intrusive. We hope you realize that schools have been asked to and are implementing the Governor's Executive Order, which has the force of law, and are doing so to help keep all of our community members safe. That being said, only you and you alone, can determine what your "household bubble" is and we are not trying to tell you what that is or to define it for you. The Governor has the job of spelling out the directives. Please click [HERE](#) for the full Governor's Order.

**Per the Governor's Order, people who live alone may gather with people who live in one other household. People can take in and shelter those from another household who are living in a dangerous, unhealthy or otherwise unsafe situation. Gathering in pre-established "pods" related to education and/or childcare remains allowable. Pods related to social activity or informal play groups are prohibited at this time.**

**Also for the purpose of clarity, incidental contact of less than 15 minutes, occurring with masks and physical distance (such as to check on a neighbor, friend or family member not in your household) is not considered a social gathering. Coming in contact with members of other households in settings that continue to operate – such as schools, workplaces, retail stores, close contact businesses, etc. – is not in violation of the Order, provided all required health protocols are followed.**

Per the Vermont Department of Health (VTDOH), Vermont is seeing a surge in new COVID-19 cases. Recent data have shown that social gatherings, both inside and outside, at homes, bars and social clubs, and among sports teams, are driving outbreaks in Vermont. Because of this, the VTDOH and the Governor have put safety measures into place stating that Vermonters are not allowed to gather with people they don't live with. This includes all inside and outside social, recreational, and entertainment gatherings, and in public and private spaces. This also means that visitors to Vermont can only socialize with the people they are traveling with. They cannot gather with Vermonters or with people from another traveling group. People can, however, participate in outdoor fitness activities with one other person from another

household. They must stay at least 6 feet away from each other and wear a mask at all times.

We must all do our part to slow the spread, ensure hospitals are not overwhelmed, help schools continue to offer in-person instruction, and keep as many Vermonters working as possible. As we stated in our reopening guidelines at the beginning of the school year, if we have concurrent cases in a majority of our schools, an uptick in cases in our communities, or if we do not have staff available to operate our schools, we will need to pivot to remote learning for a period of time. We know that in-person instruction is best for our students and our hope is that all people will adhere to the safety guidelines so that we can remain open for in-person instruction.

We know this is difficult, but hope that as Vermonters follow this guidance, we can return to low case numbers and can assume that restrictions will be eased once again.

The Governor also announced yesterday that the start of school winter season athletics will be postponed pending further review. We know this must be very disappointing for our student-athletes who were expecting to start practice right after the Thanksgiving break. It is a sad reminder that we are all in this together, and everyone plays a part in ensuring schools are able to offer in-person activities and instruction. Please look for additional information and guidance from your Athletic Directors and principals in the coming days and weeks about expectations and timelines.

Please be safe this week. Again, the VTDOH is advising against any multi-household gatherings as well as nonessential travel and the Governor has issued an Executive Order stating conditions that require quarantine. **If you have questions about whether quarantine is something you need to do, please direct those questions to the VTDOH at 863-7240.**

My hope is that you have a peaceful and safe Holiday.

My best to you,

Catherine Gallagher, M.Ed.  
Superintendent of Schools  
Lamoille North Supervisory Union