

COVID-19: Childcare and Out of School Time Spring and Summer 2021

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STEP 1

VACCINATION PROGRESS (FIRST DOSE):
Vulnerable population substantially complete;
35–45% of all Vermonters; 45–55% of Vermonters 16+

Business Operations

4/9 **Group A Sectors:**
Move to required
universal guidance

Cross State Travel

4/9 No quarantine required with
negative test within 3 days of
arrival in or return to the state

Masks and Physical Distancing



Required when in the presence
of those outside your household.

APRIL

STEP 2

VACCINATION PROGRESS (FIRST DOSE):
50–60% of all Vermonters;
60–70% of Vermonters 16+

Business Operations

5/1 **Group B Sectors:**
Move to required
universal guidance

Gatherings and Events

5/1 **Indoor:** 1 unvaccinated
person per 100 sq ft up to
150, plus any number of
vaccinated people
Outdoor: 300, plus any
number of vaccinated people

Masks and Physical Distancing



Required when in the presence
of those outside your household.

MAY

STEP 3

VACCINATION PROGRESS (FIRST DOSE):
60–70% of all Vermonters;
70–85% of Vermonters 16+

Cross State Travel

6/1 No quarantine or
testing requirements

Gatherings and Events

6/1 **Indoor:** 1 unvaccinated
person per 50 sq ft up to
300, plus any number of
vaccinated people
Outdoor: 900, plus any
number of vaccinated people

Masks and Physical Distancing



Required when in the presence
of those outside your household.

JUNE

JULY 4

Business Operations

Universal guidance
encouraged for all sectors

Gatherings and Events

No capacity
restrictions

Masks and Physical Distancing.

Encouraged

JULY

JULY 4

Business Operations

Universal guidance
encouraged for
all sectors

Gatherings and Events

No capacity
restrictions

Masks and Physical Distancing

Encouraged



Important context

- Unless otherwise notified, SU/SDs and independent schools should consider this guidance in force through the remainder of the 2020-21 school year. If significant changes to pandemic conditions occur, this guidance may be updated or amended.
- Programs who receive public pre-kindergarten dollars must follow [Vermont Forward](#).
- Private programs may adopt their own approach related to this guidance for any classroom that does not receive public education funding.
- Access and equity are critically important

Childcare and Out of School Time Revised Sections

- Health Screenings and Travel
- Return to Work/Care Post-Vaccine
- Transportation
- Drop off/Pick Up
- Hand Hygiene
- Masks
- Cleaning
- Physical Distancing and Pods
- Volunteers/Visitors



Health Screenings

- **Stay at home when sick**
- Staff and children and/or their families should complete an exposure and symptom screening before arriving at the care
- Temperature check performed at home
- Children arriving visibly sick to care should be screened and sent home if symptomatic
- Please note specific guidance for return to work after vaccine

Travel

- As part of Vermont's phased reopening plan, there is new travel guidance, effective April 9, 2021
- No quarantine after travel and test required within 72 hours of return
- Travel guidance may change over time
- Please note specific guidance for [international travel](#)



Bus, Van and Car Transportation

General Guidance

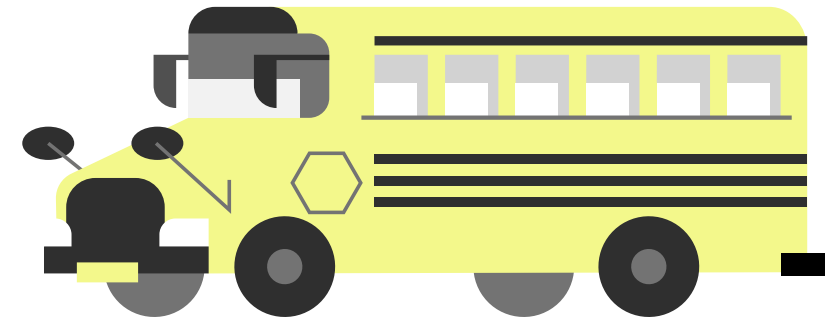
- Space out passengers for the available space in the vehicle
- Ill or symptomatic persons stay home
- Usual cleaning guidance
- The use of masks on buses, vans and private car must follow the Vermont Forward Plan

Bus Guidance

- Bus hatches open
- Windows open
- Space out children on bus
- If possible leave seat or two behind the bus driver empty
- [Inclement weather considerations](#)

Transport Considerations for private car and vans

- Operate the ventilation blowers at full power and 100% outside air
- Keep windows open to maximize fresh air



Drop off and Pick up

- Programs shall structure arrival and departure in a manner that ensures the health and safety of children, staff and families.
- Signs must be posted at all entrances clearly indicating that no one may enter if they have symptoms of respiratory illness or fever.
- Staggered drop off is an optional strategy.
- Individuals who show symptoms of COVID-19, are quarantining or are in isolation should not do drop-off or pick-up.

Hygiene, Masks and Cleaning

Hand hygiene

- Basic infection control practices

Masks- follow Vermont Forward

- Required in Step 1, 2 and 3:

Except as described in guidance for children under age 5

No Change to current mask strong recommendation after Step 3

- Encouraged after Step 3

Cleaning and disinfecting

- Basic infection control practices
- Less attention to surfaces

All employees must wash hands after using the toilet and before handling food.

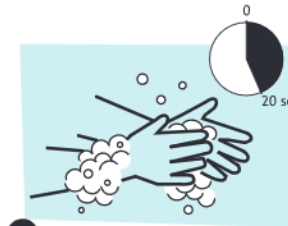
Proper handwashing:



1 Use warm water.



2 Moisten hands/apply soap.



3 Rub hands together for 20 seconds.



4 Rinse thoroughly.



5 Dry hands.

 VERMONT
DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH
Food and Lodging Program
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Cleaning and Disinfecting

- New CDC research shows that surface transmission is not the main route by which SARS-CoV-2 spreads → **risk from surfaces is considered low**
- The **principal mode** by which people are infected with SARS-CoV-2 is through **exposure to respiratory droplets** carrying infectious virus
- **Cleaning surfaces**, including high touch surfaces, **using soap or detergent**, and not disinfecting, is enough to reduce risk in most situations

Distancing

Physical distancing guidance should follow the [Vermont Forward](#) plan.

While physical distancing is still in effect, programs should follow the following guidance:

- **Staff and adult visitors or volunteers:**
6 feet of distance from other adults and children
- **Children and youth:**
3 feet of distance from other children, as much as possible

Best practice guidance:

- Be outside as much as possible.
- Plan activities that do not require close physical contact between multiple children.
- When eating, work to maintain as much distance as possible.
- Space out children when waiting in line.
- Avoid opportunities where staff or children are likely to congregate.
- Ensure distance between children when participating in singing and music that involves woodwind or brass instruments.
- Rearrange furniture to avoid clustering in common areas.

Volunteers and Visitors

CATEGORY	GUIDANCE
Visitors	Discouraged during Step 1 and 2 of Vermont Forward Plan with exceptions
Volunteers	Allowed if they are considered protected against COVID-19 according to CDC criteria (vaccination or natural infection)
Student teachers, interns & other learners	Allowed
Field trips	Allowed if the program can maintain all health guidance in this document

Overnight Camps

- **Preadvival Protocols**
 - Lists of low risk activities to minimize exposure (not quarantine)
- **Arrival and travel to camp**
 - **Evidence of negative test 72 hours before arrival**
- **Start of season precautions**
 - **Masks required until end of Step 3 Vermont Forward, then encouraged**
- **Limited Off-Campus Activity**
- **Additional considerations**
 - Health Screening/Surveillance for Campers
 - Illness Management
 - High Risk Populations
 - Communication with State and Local Public Health Authorities

Talking Points

- Vermonters **do not need to quarantine after domestic travel** because case counts are down around the country and travel is no longer a high risk activity from an epidemiologic perspective. Only 5 percent of our cases since the beginning have been travel associated.
- Each step in Vermont Forward is based on increasing percentages of eligible Vermonters being vaccinated which will lead to fewer cases in communities. **By summer**, if percentage of eligible Vermonters who are vaccinated reaches 70-85 %, **masks and distancing will be personal choices** assessed by individuals, not state government so the mandate will be lifted.
- We **removed health screenings** from responsibility of childcare or school because the need to do this is shifting back to individuals and families. In addition, fever is a low percentage symptom for pediatric COVID so not necessary to screen for temperature at school/childcare.
- At this point, we do not plan to change anything in the Vermont overnight or day camp guidance. The CDC guidance needs to address the U.S. as a whole. Vermont case rates are lower and vaccination rates are higher than many areas of the U.S.

Framing Statements

- At this point, we do not plan to change anything in the Vermont overnight or day camp guidance. The CDC guidance needs to address the U.S. as a whole. Vermont case rates are lower and vaccination rates are higher than many areas of the U.S.
- Vermonters should follow the [Vermont Forward Plan](#). Currently, that requires masks when in public outside your household until July 4. Any changes will be reflected in the Vermont Forward Plan.



Vermont Afterschool provider questions

Your questions/concerns

- Some directors are hearing from staff that the guidance may be too lax for them. I wonder if we can address how to lean on the science and how to acknowledge fears with staff as we discuss the guidance.
- Many are still thinking small and very local in terms of their summer field trips because they are hearing or having their own messages of "too complicated" regarding field trips.
- Lots of questions about youth needing to face one direction at one time when inside. Is this only when youth are eating or anytime they are inside?

Your questions/concerns

- Which set of guidance should school-based programs follow this summer and what are the differences?
- What are the differences between the old and new guidance? (distancing, masks, public places, size of groups, health checks, transportation, field trips -- et.al)
- How do we balance between having more virus in the community, unvaccinated kids in programming and keeping everyone safe?
- How do we remain informed and adapt as changes continue to take place with Vermont Forward Plan and address contradictions within? For example: VT Dept of Health guidance for summer programs says to follow Vermont Forward guidance on masks & distancing, but Vermont Forward says to not follow universal guidance but follow guidance specific to summer programs.
- What are programs doing if there is a COVID positive person that had their infectious period while attending the program. Who is performing the contact tracing?

Your questions/concerns

Masks & Distancing:

- Do youth need to face one direction at one time when inside, or is this only when youth are eating?
- Do we need to wear masks outside? Is there any difference based on age groups and settings? Do youth and staff (vaccinated and unvaccinated) have to wear masks after July 4th?
- Do children and adults (vaccinated and unvaccinated) need to be distanced outdoors after July?
- Do children need to be physically distancing during swimming activities?

Your questions/concerns

Field Trips & Transportation:

- What are the transportation guidelines?
- Are field trips safe? (Many are still thinking small and very local in terms of their summer field trips because they are hearing or having their own messages of "too complicated" regarding field trips.)
- We are also wondering about spacing on the bus and if we ought to have bus monitors.

Staff:

- My staff are worried that the guidance will be “too lax”. How can I support their concerns and reassure them that it is safe to follow the science behind the guidance?
- Can we require that staff be vaccinated?

Other:

- Can youth share toys & supplies?
- Are parents considered "visitors" to our programs?

Childcare Providers Questions

Your questions/concerns

- Is it really the intention that private programs which receive act 166 funding will be required to have preschoolers masked until after act 166 school year ends? Many have not been having children mask, but the AOE guidance requires it? **Strongly recommended through Step 3 , encouraged following this--school age children required until end of school year.**
- What about private programs who have multiple ages and/or home providers- will they be put in a position where a family with multiple children might fall under 2 sets of rules about who can attend? **From state perspective, we would like all programs to follow the guidance. Yes, there is a potential for 2 sets of rules if a private program sets up more restrictive policies. Please let the health department know what information you would need to understand the safety of the guidance. Also, as always, think about decisions through an equity lens**
- Can we get clarification on who made this decision to line up private UPK with AOE given that as of 4/23 this information has only come from CDD and not through AOE communications? **AOE communicated directly and clearly about this and CDD did as well.**

Your questions/concerns

1. Are parents able to bring children into building and bring to classrooms? Masks? No masks? **Masks are strongly recommend for children under 5 until Step 3 of Vermont Forward and then encouraged. Masks are required for all adults until Step 3 of Vermont Forward and then encouraged**
2. Will child care staff be required to continue wearing masks **after 7/1?** **See above**
3. Will all children over 2 be required to wear masks from **05/01-07/01?** **See above**
4. Can we get rid of individual play dough and sand for sensory play and other individual supplies as long as proper hand washing protocols are followed? **Yes- materials may be shared**
5. Are we able to bring back soft materials? **Yes. General cleaning and infectious disease practices should be in place**
6. Could you please address if Playgrounds will still need to be cleaned between pods. **No more cleaning of playgrounds**
7. "Staff and children and/or their families should complete an exposure and symptom screening before arriving at the program" - **Do programs need to collect these screening forms?** **No screening forms. Parental/Caregiver honor system**

Your questions/concerns

- Is it allowed/legal to continue doing health checks?
- Can you define "encouraged" in terms of mask wearing? Does this mean it is not required, but is up a program to determine?
- With that said, will masks be strongly encouraged after 7/4 for vaccinated teachers since the children in our care will remain unvaccinated?
- Should continue to ask "Are you unwell with any COVID-19 symptoms?" or "Have you been in close contact with anyone who has COVID-19?"
- Truth or Myth: Can a vaccinated adult contract COVID and give it to an unvaccinated person?
- Anything omitted from the current guidance is no longer in effect? ie. separate sensory bins, soft toys, dress up clothes, divided play spaces
- Can we consider the new guidance be considered the baseline and we add more stringent protocols?

Your questions/concerns

- Can we take those dress up clothes, stuffies, soft surfaces back out?
- Can we return to allowing common play with sensory tables or playdough?
- Water tables outside this summer?
- Do vaccinated teachers have to wear masks outside this summer? Kids who obviously are not vaccinated? What is most of the staff is vaccinated bur one or two are not getting the vaccination due to personal concerns?
- Also curious if the guidance is any different in regards to mixing classrooms or group sizes. We have a small program with a maximum of 24 children ages 6 weeks to 6 years. We have a max of 8 teachers.

Your questions/concerns

- Can programs choose to screen children at time of arrival at program? We often have children delivered without completed screening forms. If child is delivered by someone who doesn't live with them – grandparent, aunt, friend – can we accept their answers to the screening questions? I know this is a slippery slope because all that person sometimes knows is what happened in the 10 minutes it took to drive to our program.
- Our families often do not have thermometers and often do not have the organizational skills to keep track of the thermometers they are given. Still OK to check temps on arrival?
- We have kids who travel out of state for non-essential reasons. If parents decide to NOT test, should they remain out of the program for any period for quarantine?
- Regarding goggles/face shields/gloves/coverings for staff around a sick/ potentially sick child. Nor do I see any TID disinfecting, nor anything about playground disinfection, happily. It would just be nice to have someone say “you can quit doing these things”.
- When meal service information will be coming out. Until then we continue with pre-plating meals, I assume?

Your questions/concerns

“Well-controlled asthma” – if we have an asthma action plan is the “yellow” zone still considered “well controlled”? Or only the “green” zone?

Page 5: If child has a new diagnosis of ***allergies*** are we requiring written confirmation? Alternatively, is a verbal confirmation of new asthma Dx acceptable?

If staff have been vaccinated and have symptoms other than “*fever, chills, fatigue, and muscle aches*” (for instance: headache) would they also be excluded under “Employees experiencing these symptoms”? So the symptoms specifically listed in that sentence are not the exclusive list of exclusion criteria?

if an employee chooses to NOT confer with their doctor when not feeling well post-vaccination, should they be required to be tested? Excluded until better?

“Cases of COVID-19 In Care” states “If COVID-19 is confirmed”... then below parenthetically “(It will likely not be known whether this individual has a diagnosis of COVID-19 at this time)” These seem to be mutually exclusive statements. Should we assume that this bullet-point refers to a child who has NOT had a confirmed case of COVID-19 (because they are present in the childcare)??



Thank you!

Let's stay in touch.

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