



MAPLE STREET SCHOOL
ACADEMIC EXCELLENCE. JOYFUL LEARNING.

Dear Maple Street families,

I hope that you are doing well and beginning to look forward to the start of the 2021-2022 school year! Maple Street staff eagerly anticipate the return of students to the building.

As you know, Vermont's high rates of vaccination have enabled us to enjoy a summer that feels almost like the pandemic is winding down, even as the spread of the delta variant demonstrates the uncomfortable reality that cases and clusters are likely to continue. Scientific research has established that vaccines are very effective at preventing COVID-19, and in breakthrough cases, they are very effective at preventing hospitalization or worse. I strongly encourage anyone with questions about a vaccine to consider what steps they might take this week to get their questions answered by trustworthy sources.

The big question for many of us has been: what will school look like this year? Secretary of Education French and Dr. Levine have released their guidance for schools this week. Based on their expertise and in continued consultation with our medical advisor, Dr. Trey Dobson, Maple Street has developed a back-to-school policy that follows this guidance.

Our core values of Respect, Responsibility, and Community inform all aspects of our school, including our decision-making around our COVID-19 plans. Here are some facts that we took into consideration as we developed our approach to COVID-19 precautions:

- Most of our students are not yet eligible to be vaccinated.
- Some members of our community are immunocompromised.
- Masks are effective at preventing colds and flus, as well as COVID-19, and the goal is to keep everyone as healthy as possible so they can be in school as often as possible.

Masks

- Masks will be required for everyone in school at least until we have determined our building-level vaccination rate for those 12 years old and up (aka: those who are eligible for vaccination). We are waiting for further guidance to determine our next steps.
- Masks will be required indoors for students younger than 12.

- Everyone should bring a mask to school every day, and be ready to put it on when asked to do so by a teacher.
- Masks must be worn by anyone moving through the building in consideration for those who are ineligible to be vaccinated.
- Masks are required on all buses, regardless of the rider's vaccination status.
- Masks are not required outdoors, but may be worn.

Testing

- Regular testing through the state of Vermont will be offered at school for students with parental consent. More details on this service will be available by the start of the school year.

The School Building

- Students will enter their classrooms and be dismissed through the outside door to avoid crowded hallways.
- Students will wear masks to travel through the building to specialist classrooms.
- All classrooms have windows that open for fresh air as well as MERV-13 air filtration systems.
- A nurse from SVMC will be on campus whenever there are students in the building. This nurse will be available to care for the health of students and staff, and to facilitate testing for students who need assistance.
- For the start of the school year, grades will remain in cohorts inside the school building. Grades may intermingle when outside. All-school recess is planned for this year.

Stay Home When Sick

All students and staff should stay home if they:

- Show symptoms of COVID-19.
- Have a temperature greater than 100.4F.
- Are currently in quarantine due to close contact with an individual with COVID-19 or are in isolation due to testing positive for COVID-19.
- Have travelled and guidance from the CDC or the Vermont Department of Health to test and/or quarantine pertains.

As we did last year, we will use the COVID-19 in Pediatric Patients decision tree for triage, evaluation, testing, and return to school.

When students are sick, they should stay home and rest. As they recover, teachers will send home work and arrange brief check-ins so that students can stay connected to classmates and have the opportunity to consult with teachers about assignments. Our SchoolPass daily wellness screener will be sent to all families and staffuly to help determine if there is a need to stay home.

In-Person Learning

Maple Street will open for in-person learning; distance learning via Zoom will not be available this year. There are several reasons for this decision:

- Evidence from national studies suggests that remote learning is not as effective as in-person learning for students.
- Teaching simultaneously in-person and online is difficult for teachers and not the most effective use of their energy.
- Human connection thrives when we are together, supporting our mission of joyful learning

Guidance from our experts, vaccination rates, and other variables will certainly change over the course of the coming school year. The Maple Street community has proven its capacity to be nimble and resilient when circumstances shift. Please know that the health and safety of our students, staffuly, and community are of the utmost importance, and that policies may be adapted to reflect our evolving situation; I will communicate any changes promptly.

Thank you for collaborating with Maple Street to give our students a wonderful year of responsible, in-person joyful learning. I'm looking forward to seeing you on September 1!

All the best,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Cam MWS". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Cricket