

Town of Middlebury
Emergency Management Bulletin
August 11, 2020

Re-Starting Schools

Schools are working on re-start plans following the general guidance from the Agency of Education. Individual plans are based on the uniqueness of each school. The plans are quite complex and must remain flexible subject to the status of the disease. Those general plans can be followed here: <https://education.vermont.gov/covid19#shs> Vermont's low incidence of COVID separates us from many other states (see notes below) where re-start of schools has been impacted by numbers of students and staff infected in the opening days of school, most likely due to infections contracted prior to the start of school in a 'thicker' COVID environment.

Fall Scholastic Sports Preview

Gov. Scott also said on Friday that his administration is working with the Vermont Principals Association (VPA), the Superintendents Association, school athletic directors and coaches in planning for the start of fall sports "in some fashion." Sports, including cross-country running, soccer, field hockey, football, cheerleading, volleyball, bass fishing and golf will begin as part of the school year.

The VPA will be providing details over the coming weeks, but, Gov. Scott cautioned, students coaches and parents should prepare themselves for a very different year "Things will look different... especially when it comes to high contact sports, the Governor said. "This won't be a normal season, but our goal is to offer a path forward for each of these sports. To give our kids some sense of normalcy in abnormal times." Football may be changed to 7 on 7 "touch football"; all sports except cross-country skiing will require the wearing of masks. Spectator numbers will be limited to 150 at this time.

Conditioning, practices, skill development, and intra-squad scrimmages can start September 8. Interscholastic sports are anticipated to commence two weeks later under restrictions and mask requirements. Details and guidance are still being worked out.

Keeping an Eye on COVID Outside Vermont

Maryland announced the seven-day average of the statewide COVID-19 positivity rate reached a new all-time low of 3.75 percent.

New York state's COVID-19 testing positivity rate has also reached a record low, falling to its lowest level so far during the pandemic on Saturday, with 0.78 percent. The governor's office said Friday that the state would allow children statewide to return to classrooms for the start of the new school year, citing the state's success in battling the coronavirus pandemic.

Ohio has become the latest state to record over 100,000 COVID-19 cases, as of Sunday, there were 100,848 confirmed cases in the state and 3,669 deaths.

Florida recorded 6,229 new COVID-19 cases in the last 24 hours, bringing the statewide total to 532,806, media reported on Sunday. The state recorded 77 new deaths during that time frame, bringing the total number of coronavirus related fatalities to 8,315.

Georgia reported at least 260 students and eight teachers from the Cherokee County School District near Atlanta, were quarantined after testing positive for the coronavirus during the first week of school. The district returned to in-person learning on Monday, August 3.

Mississippi, at least 116 people in a school district in Corinth have been instructed to self-quarantine for 14 days after six students and one staff member tested positive for the coronavirus less than 2 weeks after the start of school.

Massachusetts, The governor's office announced Friday that the state is pausing the reopening of the state's economy and *creating a new COVID-19 enforcement team* in response to a recent uptick in coronavirus cases. The second step of Phase 3 of the state's reopening plan will be put on hold and the outdoor gathering limit will decrease from 100 to 50, effective Tuesday. The gathering limit on indoor gatherings will remain at 25. Massachusetts reported 32 new COVID-19 deaths on Thursday, bringing the total number of confirmed and probable deaths to 8,691.

Hawaiian officials are tightening restrictions after a surge in COVID-19 cases and hospitalizations statewide, with the majority of the cases on the island of Oahu. About 200 new cases and two new deaths were reported Thursday.

Kentucky, has extended the state's mask mandate for another 30 days, and reported 516 new COVID-19 cases Thursday, which is 247 less cases compared to Monday through Thursday of last week. This decline is attributed to the assumption that more people are wearing face coverings due to the statewide mandate.

Financial Assistance for Child Care Providers

Saying that good quality child care is critical for Vermont, giving kids a strong foundation for their future, and supporting working families, Governor Phil Scott on Friday announced the launch of a new grant program to help mitigate operational expenses and losses for child care providers impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic . The Operational Relief Grant (ORG) program includes \$12 million in federal Coronavirus Relief Funding to help child care programs offset pandemic-related expenses and losses. Grant applications are open now through August 26.

For more information about the grant program, visit www.dcf.vermont.gov/covid19-relief-grants.

Locally

Vermont has now completed in excess of 103,000 COVID tests with aggregate numbers of positive results being 1,462. 73 of those cases have been in Addison County. Numbers in our county remain stable and low which bodes well for school opening but does not indicate a reason to toss the mask away. Perseverance is the key. For those who went through the great depression and then persevered through the trauma and privations of WWII- 16 years of economic stress, rationing, almost ½ million deaths of servicemen, untold numbers of disabled, the broken homes and orphaned children etc., I think we can get through this by following basic precautions.