



October 22, 2021

Dear Lamoille North Families and Staff,

Vermont has seen an increase in cases of COVID-19 in the last several weeks and our schools, although having had minimal disruption to operations, have not been immune to the virus. It is more important than ever to encourage safe and healthy practices in our entire school community. We know that many students, staff and families have felt the challenges and disruptions of being asked to quarantine or participate in short-term remote learning in response to positive cases in our school community. We are committed to take the steps necessary to help us stay safe in school and maintain in-person learning; that goal remains unchanged.

We are continuing to working with the Vermont Department of Health (VTDOH) and the Vermont Agency of Education (VTAOE) to offer more ways to respond to positive or potential cases in our school community. You should hear in the next few weeks from our COVID-19 coordinator, Flo Kelley, R.N., about implementation of new processes. Guidelines for revised contact tracing were distributed yesterday from Secretary French and Health Commissioner, Mark Levine, M.D., and can be found at <https://education.vermont.gov/covid19/recommendations-for-contact-tracing-updated>.

The goals of this revision are to: keep students in school as much as possible; reduce transmission of COVID-19 in school settings; and streamline contact tracing processes, making them less burdensome to implement while maintaining student and staff safety. Because of the low-risk nature of outdoor environments, we are advised that schools should not contact trace close contacts of cases that occurred outdoors. With regards to transportation, we are further advised that schools should only contact trace the seatmate of a case, if known, and continue to enforce assigned seating in order to make identifying the seatmate of close contacts easier.

In other news, our Driver Education classes welcomed our Hyde Park Road Foreperson expert and community member, Mark French, who talked to our students about safety in the midst of winter driving conditions. We commend our Driver Education instructor, Jerry Cassels, for having the creativity and foresight to bring our road experts to our classrooms to share their perspectives with new drivers about driving in snow, ice, freezing rain, etc. Mark and I speak daily in the winter about how weather may impact busses and drivers on the road and he and the other road crew experts make all decisions with me to ensure optimal safety for all.

We also have more updates from our community partner, Healthy Lamoille Valley. I was asked recently about the mission and vision of Healthy Lamoille Valley and share the following:

Our Vision: Lamoille Valley is a safe, supportive and healthy community.
Mission: Healthy Lamoille Valley is a coalition of individuals and community organizations working collaboratively to reduce youth substance misuse and encourage youth to make substance free healthy choices.

Please see [HERE](#) for Healthy Lamoille Valley's list of programs and resources for Lamoille Valley families.

On another note, we are thrilled to announce that our Sustainable Agriculture program team at the Robtoy Farm through GMTCC, led by instructor, Sam Rowley, won Third Place in the "Land Judging" competition. Land judging includes evaluating a parcel of land and its soil for the potential of agriculture, forestry and development. Please join me in congratulating them on their success!

And lastly, we will host our second Public Forum (also referenced in the Healthy Lamoille Valley newsletter) on Tuesday, November 2, 2021, from 5:30-7:30 p.m. at GMTCC and streaming online to have conversations with our partners at Healthy Lamoille Valley and to receive public input and hear from our Curriculum Director, Wendy Savery, and Business Manager, Deb Clark, about ESSER funds for our Recovery Plan and the School and Parent/Caregiver Compact for our schools under Title I.

I hope you have a wonderful weekend!

My best to you,

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