



August 9, 2021

Dear CTECS families,

I hope you are enjoying your summer and are looking forward to the beginning of a new school year. The staff at CTECS is certainly excited for your return.

I am writing to answer a few questions that have been asked recently about the reopening of schools. Please note that the below protocols are subject to change based on current public health data and new guidance issued by the State Department of Education and the Connecticut Department of Health.

Masks

CTECS wants our students to be in the least restrictive environment possible, preferably with no masks. We also want to make sure that all of our students and staff are as safe as possible.

We are still under an executive order from the Governor requiring masks for both vaccinated and unvaccinated individuals when they are inside a school building. As such, mandatory mask wearing will be in effect at all CTECS locations at the beginning of the school year, unless the order given to us changes. This could change before school begins or at some point during the school year, and we will update you as new guidance emerges. We anticipate updated guidelines from the State Department of Education and the Connecticut Department of Health before the end of the summer.

I understand that families have strong opinions about this mandate and some have been vocal about not letting their child wear a mask this year. Please know that mask wearing is not optional, and if your student does not wear a mask, they will be asked to leave school for the day. I wish a mask mandate was not our reality, but we must put the health and safety of the school community first.

The latest state [guidance on masks can be found online](#).

Remote Learning

The state has not approved school districts to offer a remote learning option for students this year. This means no CTECS location will have a full remote learning option or a hybrid model. In-person learning is too important for our students' well-being, and for acquisition of their trade-area skills. Over the last year and a half, we have learned so much about COVID, mitigation strategies, and how to safely operate our schools that we are confident in our abilities to keep students safe while they are in the building.



Vaccinations

We strongly recommend vaccinations for all of our students for their safety as well as for the safety of their classmates. However, vaccinations are not mandatory to attend school or participate in extracurriculars this fall. If students have not yet been vaccinated, families may consider doing so to reduce the need to quarantine if exposed, and allow students to continue their in-person classes and activities uninterrupted.

Again, these procedures may change as guidance is revised to reflect current public health data trends. In the coming weeks, we will release an updated Safe Return to In-Person Learning and Continuity of Services plan that details our protocols for reopening schools this fall.

I hope this will help your family prepare as we near the start of the school year.

Sincerely,
Jeff Wihbey, Superintendent of Schools