



Dartmouth Public Schools

Office of the Superintendent

8 Bush Street
Dartmouth, Massachusetts 02748

Telephone: 508-997-3391

Fax: 508-991-4184

Website: www.dartmouth.school

Bonny L. Gifford, Ed.D.
Superintendent

Michelle T. Roy, C.A.G.S.
Assistant Superintendent

James A. Kiely, M.B.A.
Assistant Superintendent of
Finance and Operations

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Dear Families,

I am happy to report that the year has gotten off to a great start. Teachers have put in a vast amount of time and energy to learn new technologies so they can bring creativity and excitement to their remote lessons. The students who have returned to in person learning are thriving and those learning remotely are attending classes, participating and completing assignments.

We want to remind everyone that on October 1 the district will begin its transition into a hybrid model of education. A hybrid model means student cohorts will attend in person school on an every other day schedule. On the days they are not attending in person they will be completing projects and assignments at home. You should have received information regarding your child's cohort assignment already. If you did not please contact your child's school. As a reminder our [Return to School Plan](#) can be found on the district website. It contains detailed information about the hybrid plan and expectations for staff and students.

Students who have chosen a virtual option (Elementary Virtual Academy, TECCA or Edgenuity) will not return to in person learning. These students will remain in their virtual platform.

As communicated previously, the transition into the hybrid model will proceed over a three week period. Once the grade level has transitioned into the hybrid model, students continue on an every other day schedule. Please refer to the color [coded calendar](#) on the district website for detailed information.

October 1: In Person School

Cohort A: PK peer partners, Kindergarten and grades 1, 2 and 6

October 2: In Person School

Cohort B: PK peer partners, Kindergarten and grades 1, 2 and 6

October 5, 7, 9: In Person School

Cohort A: PK peer partners, Kindergarten and grades 1, 2 and 6

October 6 and 8: In Person School

Cohort B: PK peer partners, Kindergarten and grades 1, 2 and 6

October 12: Columbus Day - No School

October 13 and 15: In Person School

Cohort A: Grades 3, 4, 5 and 7

October 14 and 16: In Person School

Cohort B: Grades 3, 4, 5 and 7

October 19, 21 and 23: In Person School

Cohort A: Grades 8 and High School students

October 20 and 22: In Person School

Cohort B: Grades 8 and High School students

Once the hybrid model begins, students will continue to attend in person school on the days their cohorts are scheduled to attend. On the remote day students will independently complete assignments from the previous day lessons and prepare for their next in person day. On occasion, students may have the opportunity to remotely join the in person class for culture building or questions; however students are expected to work independently to complete assignments on the remote day. It is imperative that students complete remote day work so learning may progress as normal.

Relative to classrooms and building protocols, DESE guidance recommends that districts aim for 6 feet of distance between desks where feasible, although 3 feet is an acceptable minimum as long as masks are worn. We have adhered to the 6 foot distance while setting up our classrooms. Additionally, all staff and students will be required to wear face coverings. Gators and bandanas will not be allowed. Students and staff will be expected to take 5 minute silent mask breaks in their seats during the day while in the classrooms. Mask breaks may also be taken outside while adhering to social distancing requirements. Bagged lunches (that include two breakfast items) will be delivered to classrooms or other designated areas. Students may also opt to bring their own lunch. Students will be expected to eat their breakfast item at home before coming to school. Upon entering school, students will proceed to their classrooms.

We are all working hard to keep everyone safe and healthy so we can remain in school. As we have learned from health experts, staying home when you are sick, wearing masks, washing hands and using sanitizer increase the chances that everyone remains healthy. Please reinforce these guidelines with your child.

Assigning specific buses, routes and seats to students will help keep people healthy and make contact tracing easier to conduct. Our transportation plan is being finalized and bus routes will be posted as soon as they are completed. DESE guidelines require us to limit the number of students on the bus so physical distancing is maintained. Riders must wear masks and remain in their assigned seats. Families are allowed one pick up and one drop off location this year. Please emphasize the importance of following all guidelines with your child.

The Department of Public Health and DESE have issued joint guidance with a focus on protocols for responding to COVID-19 scenarios in school, on the bus or in community settings. This guidance provides information and protocols that prepare districts to respond to various situations. They include:

- Protocols for individual exposure or individual positive test
- Student or staff tests positive for COVID -19
- Close contact of student or staff tests positive for COVID – 19

- Staff or student is symptomatic at school or at home
- Student is symptomatic on the bus

In support of a culture of health and safety, we will be prepared to make important decisions, advise parents and students as to procedures and communicate with families and staff so that all remain informed throughout the year.

It is important to note that testing, combined with contact tracing and isolation, helps control the spread of COVID – 19 in Massachusetts. All test results, both positive and negative, are reported to the Massachusetts Department of Public Health. When a person has a positive test, the local board of health or the Massachusetts Community Tracing Collaborative will reach out to provide support so that these people can remain safely in isolation. The school department will assist in contact tracing and make appropriate decisions in accordance with DESE guidance.

We recognize it is possible that districts will be faced with situations where classrooms, schools or entire districts may have to suspend in-person learning. There is no one threshold or metric that indicates a school or district should revert to remote learning; however we will work closely with our local health agents and DESE's COVID Reporting Unit when there is a positive case in the district to determine appropriate next steps.

Please see [DESE's guidance documents](#) for more information and weekly *Frequently Asked Questions*.

We are so proud of the work our faculty and staff have done to get our school year off to a great start. Despite the challenges, rigorous teaching and learning is taking place. We look forward to welcoming more and more students to our classrooms beginning next week. I'm sure our students are anxious to get back as well.

If you have questions please contact your child's building administration. They will be happy to help you get ready for a successful year.

Dr. Bonny Gifford
Superintendent of Schools

"Quality Education for All Learners"

The Dartmouth Public Schools, in partnership with parents and the community, will deliver challenging, standards-based instruction for all students that fosters academic, physical, social and emotional development. Utilizing data analysis to drive instruction, we will implement specific strategies to support every student to think critically, solve problems and become a responsible, contributing citizen.

Our high school graduates will possess the required skills and knowledge necessary to thrive in their academic and vocational ambitions.