

Vermont Chapter

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American Academy of Pediatrics

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VERMONT ACADEMY OF
FAMILY PHYSICIANS



Vermont Medical Organizations Urge Continued Masking in Schools

August 31, 2021 - The American Academy of Pediatrics Vermont Chapter, Vermont Medical Society, Vermont Academy of Family Physicians, and the University of Vermont Children's Hospital urge continued universal masking in schools to prevent the spread of COVID-19 and promote a healthy, safe, and productive school year.

While we fully support the administration's recommendation that schools require universal masking of all students and staff regardless of vaccination status to begin the school year – **we urge continued universal masking regardless of vaccination status or school vaccination rate** for students and staff until those under 12 years of age have had the opportunity to be vaccinated and when epidemiologic data tells us it is safe to remove masks.

Masking is an important mitigation strategy to prevent spread of COVID-19 in the school setting. Masking will also help prevent the spread of other common respiratory viruses that can mimic the signs and symptoms of COVID-19. With COVID-19 cases on the rise in Vermont, we are already seeing the effects on schools and classrooms only a few short days into the school year. Minimizing disruption to the school year is important for schools, families, and students.

We also continue to stress the importance of the stay home when sick guidance as outlined in the Agency of Education/Department of Health memo. Students and staff who are experiencing symptoms should stay home. The Vermont Child Health Improvement Program in collaboration with the University of Vermont Children's Hospital and the American Academy of Pediatrics Vermont Chapter released [updated guidance](#) for triage, evaluation, testing and return to school to assist clinicians in decision-making.

Finally, thank you to all school personnel for supporting students' academic, social, developmental, mental health and nutritional needs. These are monumental tasks even in non-pandemic times. The COVID-19 pandemic has presented enormous challenges to educators, education leaders, and school nurses and we appreciate your extraordinary efforts. We as medical professionals see all that you have been doing to make schools a safe and welcoming place and are so very grateful for your work.

Resources:

- <https://www.uvmhealth.org/coronavirus/staying-healthy/kids-and-delta-everything-you-need-know>
- <https://rebeccabell-md.medium.com/going-back-to-school-during-delta-a262a9812b7f>
- [COVID-19 Guidance for Safe Schools \(aap.org\)](#)