

## FAQ's

- How will classes that cross Core Groups work, with some students in the building and some learning at home? What about when a single Core Group has more than one class meeting during a single period?
  - *All classes with some students in the building and some at home will run in the Hy-flex model--there will be a webcam in the classroom so that students at home can see what's going on and participate through Zoom. If the teacher is present at school, the class would run primarily in person; whereas if the teacher is at home that day, the class would primarily run online and be supervised by another teacher or administrator.*
  - *When a single Core Group has more than one class meeting during a single period, if*
    - *the teacher of one of the classes is present, that teacher will teach their class to their students (in-person and simultaneously at home); students in the Core Group in a different class will move to a separate space, be supervised by another teacher or administrator, and attend class remotely via Zoom.*
    - *the teachers of the classes are not present, the students all remain in the room and, supervised by another teacher or administrator, attend their classes remotely via Zoom.*
  - *Students seating may be reconfigured to maximize hearing and participation in these scenarios.*
- You say you operate on thin margins for staffing. What about subs, parent volunteers, or hiring auxiliary staff or additional teachers?
  - *Due to health concerns as well as lack of availability, we are not planning on using substitute teachers. We are exploring teaching aides or other additional staffing.*
- How will contact tracing work, if a positive case of COVID happens within the building?
  - *We will follow the Department of Health guidelines. They may do contact tracing, but they have informed schools they also may ask us to help with it. We will follow their directives.*
- This school year, some schools have gone back to five days a week in-person learning. Why not Vermont Commons? Why not all students in the building all days of the week?
  - *We are taking a conservative approach. This plan balances the needs of our different constituencies, including students and faculty. Hopefully we will be able to open more, as conditions allow.*
- How will lunch work? Will the kitchen be open? Fridges and microwaves accessible?
  - *When the weather is inclement, students will each lunch at their desks. When good weather occurs, lunch will be outside. The kitchen, refrigerators, microwaves, sink, dishwashers, etc., will **not** be available.*
- Vermont Commons is small, so why isn't it easier for you to be in person more?
  - *In fact, being small makes reopening tougher because we don't have as many staff to serve as internal substitute teachers or student supervisors, when faculty*

*members or administrators become sick, need to quarantine, or must miss work for any other reason.*

- If a family or student doesn't agree to comply with COVID safety protocols (e.g., mask wearing, 6-foot social distancing), how will that be handled?
  - *We will require all community members to follow all COVID safety protocols. Students may not participate in in-person learning in the school building or at Encounter Experience days if they do not agree to comply with COVID safety protocols.*
- Some have reported that other schools are not enforcing social distancing, health screenings, or other protocols you are enforcing. Why aren't you doing what they're doing?
  - *We do not have accurate information that schools in Vermont are not complying with Agency of Education or Department of Health guidelines regarding COVID. The third tenet of our mission is Global Responsibility, and following the protocols the greatest extent to which we are capable is an important component of this.*
- Some schools are doing a health screening via an app or Google Form. Will Vermont Commons move to doing that?
  - *We are considering options for this.*
- If I don't want my child to attend school in the building in person, will they be penalized? Can I change my mind about wanting them to be in person over the course of the semester?
  - *There will be no penalty for continuing to learn from home. You can change your mind at any time.*
- I understand there are very limited spaces in most Core Groups at Vermont Commons. Will my child be prioritized or penalized for re-enrollment at the school if they do or do not attend in-person?
  - *There will be no penalty or prioritization for re-enrollment based on remote attendance or attendance in-person.*
- My child is in 6th or 7th grade, and they need more in-person time with each other, but more social than formal class time. Could they do their in-person day on Fridays and spend the afternoon together at school in social-emotional learning with their faculty/administrator pod?
  - *We are working with our scheduler to attempt to achieve this goal. We will know more later in January.*
- The 8th grade is really big. Will they be in a single pod?
  - *There will be two pods of eighth graders.*
- I'm confused. Will some Core Groups have their on-campus day on the same day as Encounter Experiences and so only get one day/week of in-person learning?
  - *On-campus days will be Mon, Tue, Thu, and Fri. All students will still have Encounter Experiences on Wednesdays.*
- It sounds like the teachers and administrators will be spending more time supervising students directly than they are now. Will they be able to complete their other work?

- *There will certainly be a decrease in how much the teachers and administrators will be able to do. We are looking at what can be let go, while still operating the school as close to normal as possible, in order to enact this new model.*
- The Hy-flex teaching model sounds challenging, in terms of the teachers trying to make sure students at home and in the classroom are able to progress at the same pace together and learn as much as they would if the school continued with the current hybrid program. I've read in the news that teachers nationally are struggling to make this model work. Is it possible that because of this, the classes won't get as far in their skills and content in exchange for my child being able to be with their classmates in the building? Does this also mean the Faculty will have less time to put on social events and other extracurricular activities?
  - *Yes. In response to student and parent request, we are making the choice to prioritize time together in person. This will mean a small decrease in content/skills covered and other events offered.*
- I've been really pleased with how my child so far has been learning as much as in other years at Vermont Commons. Does this shift in what you're planning to do mean they're going to learn less this year or should I expect things to stay pretty much the same?
  - *As stated above, there will likely be a small decrease, but we are focused on maintaining the strong academic program and doing everything possible to maintain uncompromised academics.*
- I understand that the HVAC and tech upgrades are going to be very expensive. Will I be billed for additional tuition for the 2020-21 school year to cover these expenses?
  - *While we need support from our broad community to meet these expenses (in the range of \$200,000), you will not be billed for additional tuition this year to cover these costs.*
- Will graduation be in-person in June?
  - *We will again follow the guidance from the Agency of Education and Department of Health regarding graduation. We hope and are tentatively planning for an in-person ceremony similar to last year's.*
- Will Prom still happen in June?
  - *We have reserved the Spirit of Ethan Allen for Prom on June 5th. Our ability to hold an in-person event is dependent on state guidelines. We are moving forward with planning the event in the hope that we can be together.*
- I understand overnight Eweeks are not likely this year, but will Eweeks happen in some way during this school year besides the Encounter Experience days?
  - *We will not have a February Encounter Week. The May Encounter Week will depend on guidance from the Agency of Education and Department of Health. If we are able to offer Encounter Week in May, we will be ready to do so.*
- Will other clubs, student organizations, advisory, or other activities meet in the building during or after school on on-campus (or other) days?
  - *At this point we are focusing on maintaining the grade level pods for activities inside the building rather than other activities in the building. This may shift as conditions allow.*
- What about winter sports? Spring sports?

- *Basketball is currently being examined. Spring sports (including the relocation of Basketball to Spring for 2021) will depend upon guidance from the Agency of Education and Vermont Principals Association.*
- What about handouts and worksheets? Will worksheets be distributed in class? Will students have to print them the night before?
  - *We are working on all of these details right now, with equal ease of access to all materials--whether a student is in school or at home--a top priority.*
- What is the threshold for cases/positivity rate?
  - *We have not selected numerical thresholds for COVID cases or positivity rates in Vermont or Chittenden County that would determine whether we proceed with the one-day-a-week model, return to more online, or proceed to more in-person days. We may at a future time select numerical thresholds or modify or change them.*
- What is our daily schedule going to look like?
  - *We will follow the same schedule that we did throughout the fall semester in terms of days, with possible modifications of exact timing within school days, based on feedback from students and faculty. The course schedule will shift (once for the beginning of the second semester on January 19th, and again when we roll out the new model).*
- On Tuesdays, will classes start at 8:30 or 10:00 a.m.?
  - *As with the first semester, classes will start at 10 a.m. in the second semester.*
- Will the teachers assigned to a particular Core Groups be their core group advisor or their academic teacher?
  - *Teachers assigned to Core Groups for the semester will be first and foremost those students' academic teachers.*
- What will Morning Meeting look like? Monday/Friday? What will happen with some people in the building and some people at home?
  - *We are currently surveying students and faculty about the needs around community events such as Morning Meeting (MM) and may adjust based on our experience in the first semester. That will affect the times of MM. Having some people together opens up some possibilities for how it will run, and including everyone will be a primary goal!*
- What if I have a sibling who goes to a different school and that sibling's school shuts down? Will my pod shut down?
  - *We will follow the Department of Health's recommendations for contact tracing, reverting a pod to remote learning, or other directives they give us.*