Business/Non-Instructional Operations

Health and Safety Protocols Related to the COVID-19 Pandemic

The CREC Council (“Council”) recognizes the importance of developing health and safety protocols to protect the health and safety of students, staff, and the community during the COVID-19 pandemic. The Council thus directs the Administration to develop health and safety protocols consistent with applicable laws, rules, regulations, requirements, and current guidance.

Compliance with such health and safety protocols shall be mandatory for all individuals while on CREC property or participating in a CREC-sponsored activity, unless a legally recognized exemption or exception applies. Failure to comply with such health and safety protocols may lead to disciplinary action for students and staff, in accordance with applicable laws, rules, regulations, and/or CREC policies.

The Administration shall provide notice of such health and safety protocols, by way of electronic mail, regular mail, website posting, student handbooks, employee handbooks, and/or any other appropriate methods.

Legal Reference: Connecticut General Statutes
10-221 Boards of education to prescribe rules, policies and procedures

Other

Policy adopted: October 14, 2020
CAPITOL REGION EDUCATION COUNCIL
Hartford, Connecticut
Business/Non-Instructional Operations

Health and Safety Protocols Related to the COVID-19 Pandemic

The following health and safety protocols are issued consistent with applicable laws, rules, regulations, requirements, and current guidance, in order to protect the health and safety of students, staff, and the community during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Compliance with these health and safety protocols shall be mandatory for all individuals while on CREC property or participating in a CREC-sponsored activity, unless a legally recognized exemption or exception applies. Failure to comply with such health and safety protocols may lead to disciplinary action for students and staff, in accordance with applicable laws, rules, regulations, and/or CREC policies and regulations.

Applicable laws, rules, regulations, requirements and guidance may change rapidly in response to the pandemic. Any updates or changes to these health and safety protocols will be posted on the CREC website and will be available at each school/program.

COVID-19 Health and Safety Liaison

David Cusick, Managing Director of Health Services, will serve as the COVID-19 Health and Safety Compliance Liaison. He will be responsible for engaging with students, parents, faculty, staff, and administrators to answer questions or concerns about health and safety requirements regarding COVID-19 and to provide information on public health policies and protocols.

Vaccinations (effective September 27, 2021)

“Employee” refers to all employees, both full and part-time, contractors, providers, assistants, substitutes, and other individuals working in a CREC school or program, including individuals providing operational or custodial services or administrative support or any person whose job duties require them to make regular or frequent visits to any such schools or programs. “Employee” does not include a contractor or employee of an outside vendor who visits a school or program only to provide one-time or limited-duration repairs, services, or construction, or a volunteer.

“Fully vaccinated” means that at least 14 days have elapsed since a person has received the final dose of a vaccine approved for use against COVID-19 by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration, or as otherwise defined by the Centers for Disease Control.

Every school/program employee must:

(1) be fully vaccinated against COVID-19; or
(2) have received the first dose and either have received a second dose or have an appointment for the second dose in a two-dose series vaccination, such as Pfizer or Moderna vaccines, or have received a single-dose vaccine, such as Johnson & Johnson’s Janssen vaccine; or
(3) be exempt from this requirement because a) a physician, physician’s assistant, or advanced practice registered nurse determined that the administration of COVID-19 vaccine is likely to be
detrimental to the employee’s health, or b) the employee objects to vaccination on the basis of a sincerely held religious or spiritual belief; and the employee is able to perform their essential job functions with a reasonable accommodation that is not an undue burden on CREC. Any employee claiming such exemption shall apply for an exemption due to medical conditions or sincerely held religious or spiritual beliefs. Each request for an exemption will be considered on an individualized, case by case basis. Employees who have applied for an exemption must provide appropriate supporting documentation.

Prior to extending an offer of employment to, or entering into a contract for the in-person services of an individual CREC shall require that the individual:

(1) is fully vaccinated against COVID-19; or

(2) has received the first dose and has either received a second dose or has an appointment for the second dose in a two-dose series vaccination, such as Pfizer or Moderna vaccines, or has received a single-dose vaccine, such as Johnson & Johnson’s Janssen vaccine; or

(3) is exempt from this requirement because a) a physician, physician’s assistant, or advanced practice registered nurse determined that the administration of COVID-19 vaccine is likely to be detrimental to the individual’s health, or b) the individual objects to vaccination on the basis of a sincerely held religious or spiritual belief, and the individual is able to perform their essential job functions with a reasonable accommodation that is not an undue burden on CREC. An individual claiming such exemption shall apply for an exemption due to medical conditions or sincerely held religious or spiritual beliefs. Each request for an exemption will be considered on an individualized, case by case basis. Individuals who have applied for an exemption must provide appropriate supporting documentation upon request.

Proof of vaccination must be demonstrated by providing one of the following: (1) CDC COVID-19 Vaccination Record Card or photo of the Vaccination Record Card; (2) Documentation from a health care provider or electronic health care records; or (3) State Immunization Information record. Personal attestation will not be accepted as an acceptable form of proof of a COVID-19 vaccination.

CREC shall authenticate the vaccination status of employees, and require contractors providing the services of employees to authenticate their vaccination status; shall maintain documentation of vaccination or exemption of such employees; and report compliance in a form and manner directed by the Connecticut Department of Public Health.

Employees who have not demonstrated proof of full vaccination must submit to COVID-19 testing one time per week on an ongoing basis until fully vaccinated and must provide adequate proof of the test results on a weekly basis to CREC.

**Face masks/coverings**

All students in grades Pre-K through 12 and all staff are required to wear face masks or face coverings that completely cover the nose and mouth at all times that they are inside school/program buildings or grounds, and while riding in school/program transportation vehicles, even when
physical distancing is maintained. The wearing of face masks or face coverings does not replace other preventative practices recommended by the appropriate authorities, such as physical distancing and frequent washing of hands.

A supply of face masks or face coverings will be maintained for use in the event that a staff member or student does not have one.

A student or staff member will be excused from wearing a face mask or face covering, if the student or staff member: has trouble breathing; is unconscious; is incapacitated; cannot remove the mask or face covering without assistance; or has a medical reason making it unsafe to wear a face mask or face covering, provided written documentation is submitted that states the medical reason for the requested exemption. Parents/guardians may not excuse their child from the face mask or face covering requirement.

Individuals who are excused from wearing a face mask or face covering shall wear a face shield. Face shields are not as effective for controlling virus spread, and thus their use must be with the understanding of their limitations and a heightened need for strict adherence to physical distancing.

When other and appropriate mitigating practices are in place, such as physical distancing, students will not be required to wear face masks or face coverings while eating or drinking, during physical education classes, or when they are outside.

Breaks from wearing face masks or face coverings may be scheduled throughout the school day by the teacher, provided that strict physical distancing requirements are maintained and limitations are enforced regarding student and staff mobility.

Violations of the face mask or face covering requirement, whether by students or staff, shall be handled in the same manner as other violations of applicable CREC policies and regulations.

Physical distancing
All efforts will be made to maximize physical distancing between student workstations, achieving 3 feet when feasible, when determining the classroom layout. Where necessary, other spaces may be repurposed for instruction in the school/program. The space between the teacher and students will be maximized, due to the risk of increased droplets from teachers during instruction.

All efforts will be made to maximize physical distancing in school/program hallways.

CDC, state and local guidelines for physical distancing for physical education and physical activity, including recess, will be followed.

Facilities
All school/program facilities; areas and equipment used for physical education, physical activity, including recess; will be cleaned, disinfected and maintained in accordance with DPH guidance,
including Guidance for Cleaning and Disinfecting of Schools; Return to Service Guidelines; and Guidance for School Systems for the Operation of Central and non-Central Ventilation Systems.

**Staying at home**

Students and staff must inform the school/program if they are sick with COVID-19 related symptoms, particularly if they had a known contact with someone diagnosed with COVID-19 and have also had contact with the school population. They must stay home when they are sick, especially if they have COVID-19 symptoms, such as: fever or chills; cough; shortness of breath or difficulty breathing; fatigue; muscle or body aches; headache; new loss of taste or smell; sore throat; congestion or runny nose; nausea or vomiting; diarrhea.

**Self-quarantine /Regional travel advisory**

Students and staff who are traveling or who have traveled to an area outside Connecticut must follow travel-related guidance from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and the Connecticut Department of Public Health.

**Containment**

If an individual in the school/program community has signs or symptoms of COVID-19; known exposure; or has a confirmed diagnosis of COVID-19, the school/program must:

- immediately coordinate with the local health department, school/program nurse and district medical advisor, and be ready to comply with requests for information from the DPH to assist with contact tracing.
- place students who exhibit symptoms consistent with COVID-19 in an isolation room until a parent or guardian arrives. Students must remain supervised in the isolation room, and a log of all persons who entered the room must be kept for purposes of contact tracing. The individual supervising the isolation room must be equipped with proper Personal Protective Equipment (PPE).
- initiate recommended CDC cleaning procedures following a confirmed COVID-19 case.
- review CDC guidance to ensure compliance with most up to date information regarding containment.