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DATE: May 19, 2021
TO: Parents, Legal Guardians, and Staff
FROM: Everett V. Olsen Jr., Superintendent of Schools
RE: New DESE COVID Guidance

The Department of Elementary and Secondary Education has just issued new COVID guidance pertaining to certain school activities conducted inside or outside. This document outlines the new DESE guidelines, and also contains some information specific to Westford Public Schools. Below are some of the changes that will be implemented in Westford Public Schools over the next several days.

Masks/Face Coverings:

Students are no longer required to wear masks when outdoors, even if distance cannot be maintained. This guidance update applies to recess, physical education, youth sports, and outdoor learning environments. Adults must continue to wear masks outdoors if distancing cannot be maintained. Masks will continue to be worn by adults and students at all times while inside (except for when eating), which includes students transitioning to and from outdoor spaces for recess, etc. Please note that some students may want to continue to wear a mask outside and this is certainly permissible.

During recess in grades K-5, more than one cohort will be permitted to use the same space on the playground at a time.

Shared Equipment/Supplies:

The Governor announced that given the low likelihood of surface transmission of COVID-19, schools no longer have to avoid sharing objects. This includes classroom materials, items for physical education, or art supplies. Shared objects no longer have to be cleaned or disinfected

between use but should be cleaned once per day. Westford Public Schools will continue existing cleaning protocols for surfaces, such as cafeteria tables and desktops, between student use.

Air Conditioning and Fans:

Schools should continue to maximize ventilation and air exchanges in schools and classrooms during the warmer weather.

In some instances where air conditioners are required, they will be used in combination with open classroom windows to bring in the fresh air and increase cross-ventilation. Additionally, fans may also be used in windows as long as they are not positioned to blow directly on or toward individuals.