As we begin a challenging academic year in a COVID 19 environment, we recognize there is a high level of anxiety around how education will be delivered to Vermont students and the many challenges we are now facing. We would like to offer recommendations on topics related to school safety and security that we’d like you to consider discussing with your staff prior to the start of the academic year.

**Access Control/Visitor Management**

* In a COVID environment, we recognize multiple access/exit points may be used to ensure social distancing and to meet state health requirements. Please ensure all staff are aware of these entry/exit points and aware of their individual roles and responsibilities when managing traffic flow into/out of the building.
* Once drop off has been completed, consider using a single access point of access to the school.
* Ensure each access point is adequately staffed resourced to screen those entering the school.
* Train all staff on your policy that identifies the process for vetting and documenting any visitors entering the school.
* Consider using exterior signage that clearly identifies the intended traffic flow into your school.
* Ensure staff is trained on how to manage someone who is not authorized to enter the building.
* Consider establishing a communications plan with all access points and the main office.

**Outdoor Classrooms**

* Consider the risk/benefit of having outdoor classrooms and ensure there are policies and procedures in place for conducting classes outside the building
* Consider developing a communication with all outdoor classrooms to notify them in case of an emergency at the school.
* Develop outdoor classroom emergency procedures that cover evacuation procedures, accountability processes and rally points/evacuation locations.
* Consider students with mobility challenges when planning for evacuation and other emergency procedures in an outdoor classroom environment.
* Consider emergency weather procedures.
* Consider coordinating with local emergency service providers to ensure they are aware of your outdoor classroom planning.

**Crisis Communications**

* Tests and evaluate all emergency notification systems.
* Train and educate staff on all “crisis commands
* If classes are being held in non-traditional classroom settings such as a gymnasium or cafeteria, ensure that methods of communication are sufficient in those areas.
* Educate and inform staff on the schools crisis communication plan.

**Behavioral Threat Assessment**

* Recognizing the stress and anxiety of operating on a COVID environment, ensure all faculty and staff are informed of how to report concerning behaviors that may have a negative impact on your school.
* The [Vermont School Safety Website](https://schoolsafety.vermont.gov/planning/vermont-school-crisis-guide) offers Behavioral Threat Assessment Guidance.
* Review the (If Your See Something/Say Something) methodology of reporting suspicious or concerning behaviors. It takes a community to keep our schools safe!