Union Memorial School

Family Handbook

2026 – 2027 School Year

Welcome to UMS! Please use this resource to help answer any questions you may have about our policies and procedures.

INTRODUCTION

Welcome to Union Memorial School. We are a K-2 school with twelve classrooms (four at each grade level) that educate approximately 220 students on the "town" side of Colchester. Please take some time to familiarize yourself with the information in this handbook. We also have a social media presence:

Instagram: https://www.instagram.com/umschamps/

There is also a lot of great information on our website: https://www.csdvt.org/ums.

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ADULT CODE OF CONDUCT

The district has adopted a code of conduct for all adults (parents/guardians, vendors, teachers, etc.) while conducting school business. Click here to view the Colchester School District Adult Code of Conduct.

ARRIVAL

Bus Arrival

Students will disembark beginning at 8:20 AM and enter the building through the main entrance and go directly to their classrooms.

Vehicle Arrival

Students may enter the building through the middle doors at 8:15 AM. Families are welcome to enjoy the playground until 8:15 AM, but **there will be no adult supervision on the playground prior to the start of the school day**. Families may also wait in their vehicle until 8:15 AM. Families decide if they want to walk their child to the middle doors or let them walk by themselves. Only students will be allowed in the building during the arrival process.

Some other notes regarding students who arrive by personal vehicle:

- Parking is not allowed in the staff parking lot (along west side of the building) or on Main Street.
- If you choose to use the playground and/or walk your child to the middle doors, you must park in a designated parking spot.

ATTENDANCE PROCEDURES

Regular Attendance and Absences

Regular and prompt attendance is necessary for children to have a successful educational experience. Students should arrive no later than 8:30 AM so they may get to class by 8:40 AM.

If your child will be absent due to an illness or other reason, please call the school nurse (264-5848) or the main office (264-5959) and leave a message, including the student's name and reason for the absence. If a child is absent and we have not received a call, our building nurse will attempt to reach a parent/guardian or emergency contact.

Colchester School District policy requires principals to contact parents/guardians of any student who is absent for more than five (5) days. A letter will be sent for informational purposes. A letter will also be sent and contact made when a student has been absent more than ten (10) days. After fifteen (15) days of absence, a meeting will be held with the truancy officer to formally discuss the issue(s) and develop a plan to ensure attendance. Twenty-one (21) non-consecutive days of absence within one school year defines truancy according to Vermont state law and will be reported to the truancy officer and the student risks being retained.

Click here for Colchester School Board Policy F1: Student Attendance. Click here for F1a: Student Attendance Procedures.

Late Arrivals

Any student who is not in his or her classroom by 8:40 AM will be considered tardy. It is very important that all children be in school on time each day. If they are not, valuable learning time is lost. If a pattern of tardiness

develops, communication from the school will be made. If a child is late, please be sure he or she checks in at the main office upon arrival. Students are expected to walk to their classroom on their own. If there is a separation issue, the administrative assistant or school counselor are available to assist.

Extended Absences

If a student is going to be absent for any length of time, parents/guardians are encouraged to contact the child's classroom teacher for assignments and books. Keep in mind that while teachers have a general course of study it is not possible to anticipate the specifics of what will be covered and the student may be required to make up work when he or she returns from the absence. Parents are encouraged to make vacation plans at the same time as school vacations whenever possible.

BANNED and PROHIBITED ITEMS

Students must keep the following items in their backpacks and they are not allowed to be taken out "between the bells" (8:15 AM – 3:00 PM):

- cellular phones (including smartwatches),
- electronic devices and
- toys (including trading cards).

For the first offense, the teacher will remind the student to keep the item in their backpack. For the second offense, the teacher will take the item until the end of the day and send it home with the child. For the third offense, the teacher will take the item until a grownup can come to school and retrieve it. For the fourth offense, the principal will take the item until a grownup can come to school and retrieve it.

Click here for the Colchester School Board Policy F2: Cell Phones and Personal Electronic Devices

The use of tobacco or tobacco substitutes is prohibited on school grounds of school-sponsored functions.

Click here for Colchester School Board Policy F3: Tobacco Prohibition.

The use, possession, distribution and sale of alcohol, tobacco, other drugs or any substance portrayed as a drug or any devices associated with these substances, in school and in all buildings and grounds owned, operated or rented by the Colchester School District, or at any school-sponsored activities is prohibited.

Click here for Colchester School Board Policy F12: Alcohol, Tobacco and Other Drug Abuse Policy.

Any item that refers to, simulates, depicts or can be used as a weapon as defined by school board policy is banned from school. This includes ammunition, toy guns, water guns, swords, clubs, etc. Weapons will be confiscated immediately and have the potential of being turned over to the police.

Click here for Colchester School Board Policy F9: Weapons Policy.

BIRTHDAYS

Birthdays will be recognized by the classroom teacher and with a special announcement from the principal. Snacks and gifts for the class are not allowed and we ask that you keep the celebration for your child at home to help all students focus on learning. Also, please do not send in invitations. They will be returned. The school provides a Buddy List which includes contact information for your child's classmates. The intent is to help families organize parties outside of school.

BREAKFAST PROGRAM

The goal of the school breakfast program is to provide students with a nutritionally balanced meal at the start of their day. The school sponsors a free lunch program and eligible students are also entitled to have breakfast for free. Eligibility forms will be distributed to each student at the beginning of the school year and are also available in the school office.

Breakfast – student	~~$2.25~~ free for students
Breakfast – adult	$2.75

BUILDING USE

The community is invited to use the school facility for non-school groups and programs.

The Principal and Business Manager are responsible for the maintenance and care of the school. This includes acting on requests for the use of the facility. Request forms for the use of a school facility may be obtained at the main office, central office or by clicking here.

Please note: SCHOOL ACTIVITIES TAKE PRECEDENCE OVER ALL OTHER BUILDING USE.

Click here for Colchester School Board Policy H11: Facility Usage and Rental.

BUS INFORMATION

Mountain Transit Phone Number: 893-1334

Most bus inquiries (i.e. stop locations, times and lost items) should be made through Mountain Transit as they operate and oversee the routes and drivers.

Kindergarten students will not be dropped off at their stop unless an adult is present and makes visual contact with the driver. If there is no adult at the location (or the adult does not make visual contact with the driver) the student will be returned to school. The school will phone a parent/guardian and it is then their responsibility to make transportation arrangements. If we cannot reach a parent/guardian, we will try the grownups listed as emergency contacts.

Please note, this does not apply to first and second grade students. So, please take the kindergarten year to work out the transportation process for your family. This should include what your first or second grader should do if he or she is dropped off and no one is home.

CONFERENCES

There are two official conferences that coincide with the end of the first and second trimesters:

November 23 (10:30 AM – 6:30 PM) and November 24 (8:00 AM – Noon)
March 1 (Noon – 4:00 PM) and March 2 (10:30 AM – 6:30 PM)

The timeframes allow for afternoon and evening conferences. We do this to accommodate those who work. It is important that you plan to schedule your conference on these dates as we will only schedule alternate dates in emergency situations. Also, we only have enough time for one timeslot per student. We ask parents who do not live together to please plan accordingly. The only exceptions we make to this are court orders that bar adults from being near one another.

CONTACTING TEACHERS

Parents are asked to call teachers before school begins (8:00 AM – 8:30 AM) or after the dismissal process has ended (3:20 PM). Messages for teachers may be left at any time through the main office (264-5959). Teachers' classrooms will not be interrupted during the school day unless there is an emergency. Please refrain from calling teachers at home or on his or her personal cell phone unless a teacher has approved of this. Early morning "drop ins" are discouraged as teachers have meetings and preparatory commitments. Dropping in unannounced during the school day is disruptive to instruction and is not allowed. You are also welcome to email a teacher, but please understand you may not receive an immediate response.

DIRECTORY INFORMATION

The following information may be released at the discretion of the principal without obtaining parental consent (see FERPA section): student's name, address, telephone number, date and place of birth, grade level, participation in officially recognized events (i.e. artistic performances, assemblies and award ceremonies), dates of attendance and most recent educational agency attended.

Periodically, the Colchester School District or Union Memorial School receives requests for pictures of students and/or the names and addresses of students enrolled in school. This information is provided when its intent is to showcase an activity or instruction, share a list of birthdays or highlight special happenings at school. If you wish to request that your child's picture, name or address be withheld, please make sure you indicate that on the *Release of Directory Information and Permission* section when you register your child(ren). You may contact Mrs. Josey (264-5959) if you need to make a change to your preferences.

Please note, we do provide class lists, called "Buddy Lists", for birthday parties and play dates. If you do not want your mailing address, phone number and/or email included on this list, please inform your child's classroom teacher or Mrs. Josey. We ask that you understand the following:

1. Any member of the class who is not listed has a parent/guardian who wishes to maintain his or her privacy. (If your child's name is listed erroneously, let us know immediately.)
2. We will not distribute invitations to parties. Invitations that are sent into school for distribution will be returned.
3. The information cannot be used for any purpose other than the coordination of play dates, the sending of invitation or the solicitation of items for a class party.

DISCIPLINE

Guiding Principles

Our school provides an orderly, consistent and predictable approach to discipline that nurtures empowerment and self-respect and the social skills of cooperation, assertion, responsibility, empathy and self-control.

When students make poor decisions, they are given logical consequences for their behavior. Logical consequences are respectful, relevant and realistic. Consequences are also connected to accountability and having the student understand the impact of their actions on others. In general, when students make mistakes, we use them as learning opportunities.

Core Concepts

1. Trust
2. Belonging
3. Respect
4. Sharing
5. Responsibility

School Rules

1. Be safe.
2. Be kind.
3. Do your best.

Bullying, Harassment and Hazing

Union Memorial School takes issues of bullying, harassment and hazing very seriously and will investigate any reports of bullying, harassment or hazing as required by Colchester School District policy and state and federal law.

Bullying means any overt act or combination of such acts, including an act conducted by electronic means, directed against a student by another student or group of students and which

a. is repeated over time;
b. is intended to ridicule, humiliate or intimidate the student; and
c. (i) occurs during the school day on school property, on a school bus, or at a school-sponsored activity, or before or after the school day on a school bus or at a school sponsored-activity; or (ii) does not occur during the school day on school property, on a school bus, or at a school-sponsored activity and can be shown to pose a clear and substantial interference with another student's right to access educational programs.

Acts or incidents of bullying can take numerous forms and the determination of whether a specific act or acts constitutes bullying is within the sole discretion of the administrator. The means of bullying include, but are not limited to, physical actions such as bodily contact, touching, gestures, restraint, aggression and abuse; verbal comments and remarks; written and visual expression regardless of medium; electronic, telephonic and digital communications including email, blogs, networking sites, instant messages; graphic displays and representations including internet, digital or web-based images; photographic or video recordings or any other form of technology, etc.

Upon notice, the school will investigate any report of bullying consistent with District Policy F10: Prevention of Harassment, Hazing, and Bullying of Students. We believe in being proactive and look to provide interventions and consequences that will underscore the severity of bullying and attempt to prevent it from recurring.

First Violation: The student will meet with the principal. The principal will give a verbal warning to the student and contact his or her parents/guardians. The student could receive a loss of privilege (e.g. riding the school bus or eating lunch in the cafeteria) because of the incident.

Second Violation: The student will meet with the principal. The principal will arrange a series of counseling sessions with the school counselor. The principal will contact the student's parents/guardians.

Third Violation: A conference will be scheduled with the student, principal, classroom teacher, school counselor and parents/guardians to develop a plan to prevent further incidents.

Fourth Violation: The student will be suspended from school and/or the bus for a duration of time to be determined by the principal.

It is the principal's discretion to administer appropriate consequences at any point during this process as necessary to ensure the safety of all students.

Harassment means an incident or incidents of verbal, written, visual or physical conduct, including any incident conducted by electronic means, based on or motivated by a student's or a student's family member's actual or perceived race, creed, color, national origin, marital status, disability, sex, sexual orientation or gender identity that has the purpose or effect of objectively and substantially undermining and detracting from or interfering with a student's educational performance or access to school resources creating an objectively intimidating, hostile or offensive environment.

Hazing means any act committed by a person, whether individually or in concert with others, against a student in connection with pledging, being initiated into, affiliating with, holding office in or maintaining membership in an organization which is affiliated with the District; and which is intended to have the effect of, or should reasonably be expected to have the effect of, humiliating, intimidating or demeaning the student or endangering the mental or physical health of the student. "Hazing" also includes soliciting, directing, aiding or otherwise participating actively or passively in the above acts. Hazing may occur on or off school property.

If you believe you have been the target of bullying, harassment and/or hazing, or if you have witnessed a Union Memorial School student being subjected to such behaviors, you may report this to or file a complaint with the following individuals who have been designated to receive such complaints:

Colleen Birner, Principal
802-264-5959
colleen.birner@colchestersd.org

Carol McCleary, School Counselor
802-264-5951
carol.mccleary@colchestersd.org

Bus – Rules

Be Safe:

- Cross in front of the bus
- Stay sitting in the seat the bus driver gives you

Be Kind:

- Be polite; use kind words
- Be respectful to the driver and the bus

Do Your Best:

- No food (allergies and choking risk)
- No drinks
- No animals

Bus – Logical Consequences

First Violation: When the student receives an initial written Bus Conduct Report from the driver or support staff, he or she will meet with the school counselor or principal to review the bus rules and develop a plan for success.

Second Violation: When the student receives a second written Bus Conduct Report from the driver or support staff, he or she will meet with the principal, review and/or relearn the rule(s). The principal will give a verbal warning to the student. The parent/guardian will be notified either by a phone call or the report will be sent home for a signature.

Third Violation: Upon receiving a third Bus Conduct Report within the same trimester, the principal will meet with the student, review and/or reteach the rule(s) and call the parent/guardian with the student. The notification will also include the warning of a 1-3 day bus suspension on the next violation.

Fourth Violation: A fourth violation within the same trimester may result in a 1-3 day bus suspension. The parent/guardian will be contacted.

Further Violations: All further violations within the same trimester may result in a 3-5 day bus suspension and possible permanent loss of the privilege of riding the bus. The parent/guardian will be contacted.

Playground – Rules

Be Safe:

- Play within the boundaries; stay in sight
- Tag – yes; Chase – no
- Play tag on the grass and not on the equipment
- No throwing ice, sand, sticks, rocks, woodchips, etc.
- Throw snow in the designated area only

Be Kind:

- Be polite; use kind words
- Share all playground equipment and return it when finished

Do Your Best:

- Come right in when the bell rings
- Follow the directions the first time

Playground – Logical Consequences

First Violation: The student will be given a friendly reminder.

Second Violation: The student will be given time away/out for 2-5 minutes and a loss of equipment privilege.

Third Violation: The student will lose recess for either the remainder of the recess and/or the next day.

Fourth Violation: The student will be referred to the principal.

A student may be suspended immediately for aggressive, harmful behavior.

It is the principal's discretion to administer appropriate consequences as necessary to ensure safety.

Cafeteria – Rules

Be Safe:

- Walk

- Keep hands and feet to self in line

Be Kind:

- Raise your hand
- Sit on your bottom

Do Your Best:

- Clean up

Cafeteria – Logical Consequence

The adult on duty may change a child's seat.

The student may have a delayed dismissal from lunch.

The student may be removed from the cafeteria.

Hallway – Rules

Be Safe:

- Walk in a straight line while travelling as a class
- Keep your eyes in front
- Walk on the right side of the hallway
- Keep hallways tidy of belongings

Be Kind:

- Use hallway hands and feet
- Give silent wave to friends

Do Your Best:

- Honor other's work by looking and not touching
- Level 0-1 voice

Physical and Verbal Aggression

Acts of physical and verbal aggression are not uncommon at this age. Children who are five to eight years old are still learning to solve conflict in a healthy, non-aggressive way. Through formal lessons in Guidance, our Responsive Classroom program and addressing day to day issues, we teach students constructive problem-solving skills and conflict resolution. Acts of overt, prolonged physical aggression (i.e. fist fights) or sustained, offensive verbal aggression will not be tolerated and result in more serious consequences up to and including suspension from school.

Suspension

Suspension from school is used judiciously. Our mission is to "guide students towards academic excellence and social responsibility." That cannot happen if a student is not in attendance. There are, however, certain behaviors, actions and situations that will cause a student not to be allowed to attend Union Memorial School for a finite period.

For example, a student who

- poses a severe safety hazard to his or herself or others,
- is unable to regulate for a sustained period and/or
- violates the Colchester School District policies that govern drugs, alcohol and weapons

may be suspended from school. This is not an exhaustive list and the use of suspension is not limited to these examples. Though the decision to suspend is solely at the discretion of the principal, it will be made in consultation with the school counselor, classroom teacher, behavior specialist and, when appropriate, the case manager and/or social worker.

Before the student is allowed to return to the classroom after a suspension from school,

- a meeting will be held with the principal, parents and relevant faculty members,
- the student will do repair work with the classroom and/or school community as determined by the school-based team and
- a debriefing with the affected peers will occur (if needed).

DISMISSAL

Active. Creative. Enrichment. After School Program (ACE)

ACE students will be dismissed at 3:00 PM.

Bus

Buses will be called one at a time. Students will line up in the hallway near the main office and then go directly to their assigned seat on the bus.

Pick-ups

Parents/Guardians who plan to pick their child up every day need to indicate this during registration (for new students) or verification (for returning students). The administrative assistant will have a list of students (PICK UPS), by grade level, who will be picked up each day.

Pick-ups will be dismissed at 3:00 PM out the middle doors.

For non-routine pickups (i.e. a student needs to be picked up for a medical appointment), please send in a note indicating this. Those students will be added to the PICK UP list.

Please DO NOT CALL at dismissal time to make last minute changes. It is unlikely you will reach someone after 2:30 PM given how busy it is and our limited personnel. If you must reach us, please leave a voicemail message.

Early Pick-ups

Send in a note when your child needs to be picked up early (e.g. for an appointment). The adult picking up will inform the main office by calling or using the entry system. The student will be called up to the front of the building. In the case of inclement weather, the adult may wait in the area right outside the office. Otherwise, they will have to wait outside the building.

DRESS CODE

School is a special place for learning and must reflect codes of decency, which allow all students and teachers to work in a non-harassing environment. Students should dress up for school out of respect for the strong sense of community and pride we have for learning.

Students should dress in a way that is safe, clean and non-disruptive. Students who wear clothing which contains symbols or references to sex, race, alcohol, drugs, explicit language or insulting statements will be asked to change into appropriate clothing. In addition, students are not allowed to wear any clothing which show undergarments, exposes the midriff or a significant amount of skin. Hats and headwear (apart from religious headwear) are not allowed.

Students need to come to school dressed appropriately in the winter. Our general rule is “if your parent/guardian sends it in, you wear it outside.” This includes clothing such as snow pants, boots, hats and gloves. Please note, we feel recess is an important part of the school day and students will be sent outside unless it is raining or the temperature is below zero degrees Fahrenheit. If a student does not have snow pants and/or boots and gets wet during recess, he or she will have to wear the

wet clothes for the remainder of the day. We have a limited supply of extra clothes which is reserved for students who have accidents.

EDUCATIONAL SUPPORT TEAM (EST)

Union Memorial School has an Educational Support Team (EST) consisting of the principal, school counselor, classroom teacher, special educator and, when appropriate, Title I teacher, reading teacher, English Language teacher, nurse and/or social worker. The purpose of EST is to review and act on referrals of students at risk for failure. This may result from any number of concerns including academic, social-emotional or behavioral difficulties.

EMERGENCY EARLY DISMISSAL

Should road conditions become dangerous during the day due to inclement weather, the ParentSquare automated phone calling, texting and emailing system will be used to inform parents that school will be closing early and at what time. Students will be sent to their normal after school destination unless parents inform us of a change.

The following is the district's procedure for an early dismissal:

- The decision will be made by the superintendent when weather conditions have severely deteriorated after students have arrived at school.
- Generally, early dismissal will take place after lunch. However, some storm systems may require us to dismiss earlier.
- Secondary students will be dismissed before elementary students so that older siblings will be home first.
- Announcements will be made as soon as possible.

EMERGENCY INFORMATION

The school keeps the following information on file:

- telephone numbers (home, work and cell),
- email address,
- street address and
- emergency contacts*.

This information is used when an emergency occurs (i.e. illness, accident). Please be sure to notify the school whenever there is a change in any of the above information.

*NOTE: At least one of these people should have access to a car in case the student needs to leave school and we are unable to contact the parent/guardian. Also, we do allow a student to leave with an emergency contact should he or she be left at school and we are unable to contact a parent/guardian.

EMERGENCY SCHOOL CLOSING ANNOUNCEMENTS

The ParentSquare automated system will be used to inform parents/guardians in the event of a delayed opening or cancelation. In addition, local media sources (radio and television stations) will also announce the cancelation or delayed opening.

The following is the district's procedure for a delayed opening:

- The decision will be made by the superintendent as soon as possible.
- Delayed openings will be for two hours.
- Buses will run their normal schedule but delayed by two hours. So, for example, if the typical pick-up time is 7:50 AM, the pick-up time on a delayed opening will be 9:50 AM.

The following is the district's procedure for canceling school:

- The decision will be made by the superintendent as soon as possible.
- Announcements in the morning will be made as soon as possible and, on rare occasions, the night before

EMERGENCY PROCEDURES

Bus Evacuations

Mountain Transit, our bus contractor, conducts a drill annually to prepare the students in the event a bus needs to be evacuated.

Evacuation and Lockdown Drills

The Vermont Fire and Building Safety Code mandates that six (6) evacuation and five (5) lockdown drills be conducted during the school year. Records of all such drills are kept and are available upon request for review.

Safety Plan

According to Section 15.7.1 (Exiting Educational Occupancies) of the National Fire Protection Association Life Safety Code, all schools must have an emergency plan in place. Union Memorial School has such a plan with all requirements outlined in Section 4.8 of the Code.

FEDERAL EDUCATIONAL RIGHTS AND PRIVACY ACT (FERPA) POLICIES

The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) affords parents/guardians and students over 18 years of age ("eligible students") certain rights with respect to the student's education records. These rights are:

1. The right to inspect and review the student's education records within 45 days of the day the school receives a written request for access. The files will be reviewed on school grounds under the supervision of the principal and/or his designee and during school days and school hours. Union Memorial School will assume that either parent has the right to inspect, review and release the student's records unless evidence is provided demonstrating there is a legally binding instrument or court order providing the basis for specifically excluding a parent from such access. If a parent

cannot make it during school hours, the school can arrange for a copy of the records at a cost of $0.15 per page.

2. The right to request the amendment of the student's educational records the parent or eligible student believes is inaccurate or misleading. Such requests need to be made in writing and addressed to the building principal.
3. The right to consent to disclosures or personally identifiable information contained in the student's educational records, except to the extent that FERPA authorizes disclosure without consent. One exception permitting disclosure without consent is disclosure to school officials with legitimate educational interests. A school official is a person employed by the school as an administrator, supervisor, instructor or support staff member (including health or medical staff and law enforcement unit personnel); a person serving on the school board; a person or company with whom the school has contacted to perform a special task (such as an attorney, auditor, medical consultant or therapist). Upon request, the school discloses educational records without consent to officials of another school district in which a student seeks or intends to enroll.

   The school will also release student records without prior consent or authorization under certain other exceptions including: government officials and authorities as required by law, in health and safety emergencies, in connection with the application and receipt or financial aid; if required by state law, to accrediting organizations carrying out their official functions and to comply with a judicial order or lawfully issued subpoena after having made a reasonable effort to notify the parent or eligible student of the order or subpoena. Student information is provided to the State of Vermont concerning certain incidents of discipline and student behavior including bullying, harassment, physical restraint, suspension and long-term suspension.
4. The right to file a complaint with the U.S. Department of Education concerning alleged failures by the school to comply with the requirements of FERPA.

FIELD TRIPS

The school recognizes the importance of field trips as a means of helping students learn as much as possible about the world they live in and the community to which they belong. The school also recognizes the added responsibility of ensuring the safety of students outside the school environment.

We collect a $10 transportation fee for each student to help offset the cost of busses (support is available to families for whom this is a hardship) and permission slips will be sent home to parents/guardians before a trip. Parents/Guardians are asked to read the information about the trip and to sign and return the slip promptly. All students need to have permission slips signed and at school before they can go on a trip. Chaperones may be solicited to provide adequate supervision. Students are required to follow school rules during trips. Field trips requiring transportation will be accomplished by our bus company.

FOOD ALLERGIES

Our goal as a school district is to provide a safe and caring environment for all students. We are mindful of students with food allergies and sensitivities and make classroom and school accommodations to keep those students safe from exposure to their allergens. Preventing exposure is the most important way to prevent life-threatening anaphylaxis.

Parents/Guardians of children with food allergies will be asked to complete a questionnaire upon entry to school which will determine the level of accommodations needed. (The school nurse will provide a copy.) Each child with a food allergy will have an Individualized Health Care Plan (IHCP) which will be written by the school nurse and updated yearly or as information changes.

An allergy-aware classroom will follow these guidelines:

1. Notification will be provided to all families of students in the classroom about the life-threatening food allergy in the classroom.
2. IHCP will be shared with teachers and instructional assistants, as well as with substitute staff.
3. Teachers and students will be encouraged to wash their hands with soap and water when they arrive at school and after eating.
4. Snacks in the classroom will not be shared between students.
5. Table will be wiped down regularly.
6. There will be a consistent allergen-free table in the classroom where snacks will be checked.
7. Birthdays will be recognized by the classroom teacher and with a special announcement from the principal. Special snacks and gifts for the class are not allowed.

The cafeteria will follow these guidelines:

1. Food will not be shared between students.
2. The school nurse will provide the cafeteria staff with information about known food allergies.
3. Tables will be wiped down regularly.
4. An allergy-safe table will be available.
5. Students will be encouraged to wash their hands with soap and water after eating.

GUIDANCE

Guidance Office Phone Number: 264-5951

Click here for the Guidance website

Union Memorial School has a full-time school counselor. The primary intent of the guidance program is prevention and education. This means teaching students about themselves and others. The counselor goes into classrooms to provide ongoing programs and lessons throughout the year. A preventative guidance program also works closely with parents/guardians and teachers to help children remain emotionally healthy.

The school counselor does not include therapy for children but can provide a list of providers for problems requiring outside services.

The school counselor runs small groups for children of divorce, those in need of social skills and problem solving. In addition, the counselor meets individually with children referred to by the teacher, parent/guardian or other school staff. Guidance sessions (small group and individual) are a function of the school program. Therefore, special permission is not required.

The counselor is available to meet/consult with parents/guardians. A small library is available. Books on parenting, temperament, open communication and Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD) are available.

If you would like to make a referral or gain more information about the program, call/email your child's teacher or the school counselor directly.

HEALTH OFFICE

Health Office Phone Number: 264-5948

Click here for the Health Office website

Students who become ill should report to the nurse (or the main office if the nurse is unavailable).

The nurse and school personnel can provide emergency first aid. For serious injuries, such as fractures and cuts requiring sutures, parents/guardians will be notified and students will be referred to his or her pediatrician. When it is not possible to locate a parent/guardian, emergency medical services will be called.

Children who are ill may be dismissed from school and it shall be the responsibility of the parent to come for them promptly. Should it become necessary for a child to go home, he or she will only be released in the custody of a parent or another adult who has parental permission.

Physical Education (PE) and recess are important components of a student's school day. If a parent requests his or her child miss more than two (2) consecutive PE classes, a doctor's note will be required. If your physician excuses your child from PE class and/or recess, we will keep the student inside for a quiet recess to protect his or her physical safety. We believe a daily recess period is very important for elementary school students. Unless we have written documentation from a physician indicating a student should be excused from recess, all students participate in outdoor recess when weather permits.

Parents are asked to keep their child home if he or she displays any of the following conditions:

- A fever above 100° in the last 24 hours[1]
- Vomiting or diarrhea in the last 24 hours[2]
- An unexpected rash
- A cough that does not stop
- A contagious infection that has not been treated[3]

[1]Your child may return to school when they are fever-free without medicine (e.g. acetaminophen or ibuprofen) for 24 hours.
[2]Your child may return to school 24 hours after they stop vomiting or having diarrhea.
[3]If your child has an infection, for example strep throat or conjunctivitis (pink eye), he or she can return to school 24 hours after they begin antibiotics. Please contact the nurse if your child is being treated for an infection.

Children sent to school with these or similar conditions may be dismissed from school.

HEARING AND VISION SCREENING

Vermont state law 16 V.S.A. §1422 requires schools to annually test the vision and hearing of students in grades 1, 2, 3, 5, 7 and 9. The school screening serves to identify problems that may occur between visits to your child's doctor. If a potential problem is identified, you will be notified and encouraged to contact your child's doctor for further evaluation. Parents are permitted to opt their child out of such tests by informing the school in writing of their desire.

HOLIDAY GUIDELINES

The celebration of holidays in public schools is an issue of equity and inclusion. On the one hand, you have fun, community-building activities that are usually educationally based. On the other hand, because of our diverse population of students, the celebration of religious holidays is not inclusive. The distinction lies between the ***teaching*** about multicultural holidays, which is permissible, and ***celebrating*** religious holidays, which is not.

All acknowledgments in our school are culturally diverse, literature and/or curriculum-based or look at the cultural and/or historical importance of the holiday. Students also learn about the important holidays and traditions in their classroom and how they are celebrated.

Religious Holidays

Since we do not celebrate holidays, things like egg hunts and gift exchanges with the students are not allowed.

Non-Religious Holidays

Halloween: Students are not allowed to wear costumes to school or bring/exchange candy and will not participate in Halloween-themed activities.

Thanksgiving: We do not celebrate Thanksgiving. We celebrate the spirit of thankfulness and helping and acknowledge that this holiday has different significance to students with different cultural backgrounds.

Valentine's Day: Valentines are not allowed to be sent in from home. If they are sent in from home, they will be returned. We emphasize the importance of kindness all year.

Mother's Day and Father's Day: We recognize that our students come from a variety of different family structures. In keeping with our trauma informed practice, we do not celebrate (e.g. create crafts) for Mother's Day or Father's Day.

HOMEWORK POLICY AND PROCEDURES

Philosophy

Colchester School District believes that the goal of homework is to increase student learning. Homework is an assignment that is intended to be completed outside of the classroom. Meaningful homework assignments are flexible and based on students' needs. Well-designed homework increases students' understanding, skills and

confidence. Parents/Guardians can benefit from homework by gaining knowledge of the learning done at school. Successful homework programs link the learner, home and school.

Homework may be assigned to:

- review and reinforce content,
- apply, extend or reflect on learning,
- introduce new content and/or
- provide independent practice.

Frequency and Duration of Assignments

While it is understood that the time it takes to complete homework assignments may vary with each child, the times below are the general guidelines for each grade range. Teachers will be aware of any grade specific or school-wide evening commitments for students and adjust homework accordingly. Long-term assignments should be given well in advance of the due date and should include incremental checkpoints or benchmarks to help students complete them successfully.

If a student does not have homework or finishes early, it is always a good idea to spend time reading and, in the elementary grades, reviewing math facts. The benefits of independent reading are immeasurable and help a student develop a lifelong habit of reading.

Grade Range	Average Time Per Night*
Kindergarten	0 – 10 minutes
Grades 1 – 2	10 – 20 minutes
Grades 3 – 5	30 – 50 minutes
Grades 6 – 8	60 – 80 minutes
Grades 9 – 12	90 – 120 minutes

Homework will not be assigned over vacation for grades K-8. Grades 9-12 may have homework over vacation.

*These time ranges assume the student is focused and on-task. If a child is having difficulty on a consistent basis completing assignments within the time frames established, parents should contact their child's teacher(s) for assistance. Project work shall be included in determining total homework time.

Differentiation

We are responsible for meeting the varied academic needs of all students in our schools. This responsibility requires us to carefully consider the modification and extension of homework assignments based on our knowledge of student learning styles, readiness, and interest. When making modifications, it is important to preserve the integrity of the assignment while adjusting by reducing the quantity, varying the type and/or altering the level of difficulty of homework assignments.

Students needing adjustments in homework expectations may include:

- highly motivated and independent learners,
- students with learning needs (e.g. Educational Support Team plans, Individualized Education Plans or plans under Section 504) and/or
- students struggling with homework completion due to personal or family circumstances.

Grading of Assignments

Student performance should be measured and reported on the basis of clear curriculum content and student performance standards. Therefore, academic grades should be directly based on student performance in mastering targeted Grade Level Expectations and District curriculum standards. In other words, homework should not be given

simply for the purpose of giving or receiving a grade or to demonstrate a student's level of responsibility. It is an instructional strategy that affords students the opportunity to practice and apply their knowledge. When applied in this way, homework is a tool for improving student success.

- Completed homework assignments should always be given some form of feedback (e.g. checkmark, grade or narrative/verbal comments).
- At the K-5 level, homework will only be graded for completion.
- At the 6-12 level, homework can be graded for completion and/or with a number or letter grade.
- At most, homework will count for 10% of a student's final grade in grades K-8 and 20% in grades 9-12.

The guidelines for grading homework apply only to homework itself, not the grading of projects. Projects are often worked on during class time and are, therefore, considered class work. Project work shall be included in determining total homework time but will not be included in homework grading.

Missed Assignments

Homework should be completed because it is an important part of a student's responsibility as a learner. Therefore, incentives and rewards should be used on a limited basis. Homework should never be used as punishment. Failure to complete an assignment will result in loss of credit. Homework is of value to learning, and therefore, students will be allowed to complete an assignment within one week of the original due date with a maximum loss of credit of 25%. After one week, a teacher may elect to give the student no credit for the missed assignment.

Loss of recess, staying after school or detention will not be used as a consequence. If homework completion is a chronic problem, schools may provide interventions such as Homework Club or individualized support.

Communication

The philosophy and procedures should be communicated through:

- handbooks,
- web pages (district and school),
- student orientations,
- family conferences,
- transition events,
- open houses,
- faculty meetings and
- staff orientations.

Each school will follow a clear system for reporting homework to students and parents/guardians (ex. student planners, weekly assignment sheets, team assignment sheets, web pages, posted in classrooms). The system will be established and reviewed.

Responsibilities

<u>Student</u>

- Set up and follow a homework routine.
- Follow the school's homework reporting system (ex. daily planner, home folder).
- Bring all necessary materials to and from school.
- Understand the directions, ask clarifying questions.
- Complete homework assignments to the best of his or her ability.
- Return homework as assigned.
- When questions or concerns arise speak with the teacher.

- If there is no homework or it is finished early, it is always a good idea to spend time reading and, in the elementary grades, reviewing math facts. The benefits of independent reading are immeasurable and help a student develop a lifelong habit of reading.

Teacher

- Explain to students the importance of homework and its connection to learning.
- Teach skills and strategies necessary for successful homework completion.
- Provide clear instructions and answer clarifying questions.
- Provide homework that is clear, meaningful and purposeful.
- Provide feedback on homework in a timely manner.
- Communicate with student and parents as needed.
- Work collaboratively with other teachers to assign reasonable amounts of homework (see guidelines).

Parents/Guardians

- Set up and follow a homework routine (time, location, materials and storage of materials).
- Be encouraging and supportive.
- Monitor student's homework (daily assignments, completion).
- When issues, questions or concerns arise, please speak with the teacher in a timely manner.
- Encourage the student to work on her or his own; be available to help.
- Follow the school's system for reporting homework (ex. daily planner, home folder).

Administration

- Communicate and monitor consistent implementation of the homework policy and procedures.
- Communicate homework expectations to parents.
- Establish, communicate and review the school's reporting system to parents.

Click here for Colchester School Board Policy G1: Curriculum, Instruction, and Assessment.

LIBRARY

Our library program helps students to explore wonders and share in a literature-rich community. The library in an environment in which students can fall in love with reading and literary characters.

One important piece of the library experience is borrowing books from the collection. Weekly the students can borrow new materials to assist them in reading growth, knowledge and enjoyment. To set students on a successful path, please encourage your child to return their books on library day so they may borrow new books.

We have a library blog that houses links to the digital resources which are accessed during their library program. Those resources may also be reached from home or in the classroom setting.

Lessons taught in library class include reading, writing, making connections, social studies, science, math author craft, problem solving, crafting questions, exploring wonders and a wide variety of ideas for sharing knowledge, reviews and opinions.

LUNCH PROGRAM

The goal of the school lunch program is to provide students with a nutritionally balanced meal during regularly scheduled periods. The school sponsors a free lunch program so that every student may have the opportunity to have a meal. Eligibility forms are available when you register or verify enrollment of your child. These forms are also available from the main office upon request. Students who prefer to bring their lunch from home may buy milk or juice.

Hot Lunch – student	~~$3.50~~ free for students	Juice	$0.65
Hot Lunch – adult	$5.00	Soy Milk	$1.10
Milk	$0.75		

MEDICATION DURING THE SCHOOL DAY

During the school day, the nurse shall assist any student required to take medication prescribed by a physician. The following are required for safe medication administration:

1. Prescribed medications:
    - written orders from the physician stating the name, dosage, route, frequency, diagnosis and reason for giving,
    - written permission from the parent/guardian and
    - the medication in a container labeled by a pharmacy.
2. Non-prescribed medications:
    - written permission from the parent/guardian and
    - the original container with the child's name.

All medications must be brought to school by the parent/guardian or trusted adult. Children are not allowed to carry or deliver medications to school.

OPEN HOUSE

Our Open House will be held on TBD. Parking is limited. You are allowed to park at Claussen's and there will be a shuttle bus that runs continuously between Creek Farm Plaza and Union Memorial School beginning at 6:15 PM and ending at 7:45 PM. Use of the shuttle is strongly encouraged.

PHOTOCOPY MACHINE

The photocopy machine is for school business only. Non-school copies can be made with the permission of the principal for $0.25 per copy.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

All students are required to participate in Physical Education (PE) classes. Students may be excused for medical reasons. Long term medical excuses must be written by a physician. All students are responsible for wearing appropriate clothing, including sneakers, on days they have PE class.

PHYSICAL RESTRAINT AND/OR SECLUSION

The Colchester School District is committed to creating and maintaining a positive, orderly, civil and safe learning environment in all its schools. The Colchester School Board has adopted a comprehensive plan, according to 16 V.S.A. § 1161a, for responding to student misbehavior, including the promotion of positive behavioral interventions and supports in school. The district's approach to the use of physical restraint and seclusion is intended as one component of that plan. Use of appropriate physical restraint and seclusion methods only occur when less restrictive interventions have failed or should be ineffective in stopping the imminent danger of physical injury or property damage.

Click here for Colchester School Board Policy F13: Use of Restraint and Seclusion.

Click here to learn about Union Memorial School's use of positive behavioral interventions and supports.

PICTURES

Each student is photographed early in the school year. Several packages are available to families. Our picture date has been set for Wednesday, September 17. Specifics will be sent home in the first few weeks of school.

PLACEMENT PROCESS

Our primary goal for placement is to achieve the best balance possible in terms of having classrooms with a wide range of abilities which meet the needs, special or otherwise, of all students. Numerous findings have shown this is best for all children. Consideration of all educational factors (academic, social and emotional) is the primary determinant in placement decisions. We strive to make the placement process uncomplicated, fair and unbiased. The procedures we use are described below.

Kindergarten Placement

The principal, designated kindergarten teacher and special educator place students based on registration, screening and the information we receive from the district's preschool program. **Parents are not allowed to request a teacher**. **Such requests will not be honored**. Placement is made in late June and letters are sent home the first week of July indicating the child's teacher.

Your child will not be placed unless we have the following information on file:

- Proof of Residency
- Immunization Records
- Birth Certificate

First and Second Grade Placement

The process is as follows:

- The placement process starts with the special educators. They provide the principal with a list of students who should be placed together to coordinate services and/or have positive peers for role models. All other special education students are placed the same as regular education students.
- The English Language teacher groups his or her students to accommodate services.
- During the March conferences, teachers solicit information from parents/guardians concerning students with whom their child will not be successful**. Parents/Guardians are not allowed to request a teacher**. **Such requests will not be honored**. If a parent/guardian has a concern about a teacher, he or she is to speak with the principal.
- Classroom teachers meet as a grade level team and make class lists. The objective is to create balanced (based on gender, IEP, Title I, §504, age and behavior), teachable classes. At the end of the process, every teacher should be willing to teach any one of the classes.
- The class lists are shared with the unified arts, Title I and reading teachers for feedback.
- Once the lists are finalized, the principal makes teacher assignments.

Twins, Triplets and other Multiples

For kindergarten, parents/guardians are given the opportunity to decide whether to have multiples placed together or separately. For first and second grade, if the children were placed together in kindergarten, the classroom teacher will consult with the parent about placement, but the final decision will be made by the principal based on the recommendation of the teacher.

Mid-Year Placement

Kindergarten through second grade students who move into the Colchester School District after school has started will be assigned a school (Union Memorial School or Porters Point School) based on location and enrollment. If the student is assigned to Union Memorial School, he or she will be allowed to attend once the following have occurred:

- All registration forms have been completed and submitted through our online registration, including proof of residency, immunization records and birth certificate.
- A few of the required documents (i.e. birth certificate) are usually on file with the school from which the student is transferring. Those records will be sent from the sending school once a "Request for Student Records" form has been signed and sent.
- We have been in contact with the sending school and/or have received the most recent report card or progress report.

The process usually takes a couple of days. So, the sooner the forms are submitted, especially the "Request for Student Records" form, the sooner your child may attend Union Memorial School.

PRESCHOOL

IMPORTANT NOTE: All Colchester School District preschool offerings are held at Malletts Bay School which is located at 609 Blakely Road. There are no preschool offerings at Union Memorial School.

Developmental Screenings

Our Early Childhood program holds free developmental screenings throughout the school year for three and four year olds. If your child has a younger sibling with any type of suspected disability or delay, please consider taking part in a screening.

Preschool Classes

The Colchester Early Education Program is a state licensed childcare program funded through Act 166. The half day program is taught by state licensed teachers. Enrollment is determined through a lottery system drawn each spring. Children of all ability levels are encouraged to enter the lottery provided they will be at least three years old on or before August 31.

Playgroup

Due to the pandemic, playgroups are suspended until further notice.

REPORT CARDS

Students receive report cards three times a year in November, March and June.

RETENTION – TIMELINE AND PROCEDURES

1. Any student being considered for retention should be on an Educational Support Team (EST) plan, §504 plan or Individualized Education Program (IEP).
2. Prior to the spring conferences, teachers will complete the Light's Retention Scale and call a preliminary meeting to discuss the appropriateness of retention. The meeting will include the classroom teacher, principal, school counselor, Title I/Reading teacher, special educator (if relevant) and social worker (if relevant).
3. During the spring conferences, the classroom teacher will inform the child's parents/guardians retention is a possibility.
4. After the spring conferences, the school will formally notify the parent/guardians with a letter from the principal that retention is being considered.
5. Prior to May 1, the retention team members listed in step 2 will reconvene to make a final recommendation to the principal.

6. The final retention decision will be made by the principal on or before May 15. All students will be placed unless we have a request for transfer. Please bear in mind that placement/promotion/retention are the school's obligation. Input from parents/guardians is important but the final decision is that of the school.
7. The final student retention list will be given to the school counselor so a support group can be formed and run in the spring and provisions can be made for step-up day.

SCHOOL BOARD MEETINGS

The Colchester Board of School Directors meets regularly on the first and third Tuesdays of each month. Meetings are held in the library at Colchester High School and begin at 7:00 PM. Residents of Colchester are cordially invited to attend these meetings. Agendas for these meetings are posted at each of the schools, as well as online. If you are unable to attend, channel 17 cable access films and broadcasts the meetings.

Click here to visit their webpage.

SNACK

Students may bring a nutritional snack (please, no candy or soda). Students may purchase milk or juice from the district food services program. **Important note: receiving free meals does not entitle a student to a free snack drink.** Lunch accounts will be charged for these purchases. Classroom teachers schedule a brief snack period at an appropriate time each day.

SPECIAL EDUCATION

The Colchester School District supports Public Law 94-142, the Education for All Handicapped Children Act, in ensuring that all students have a right to Free and Appropriate Public Education (FAPE).

Referrals for special education may be made by teachers, parents or other persons directly related to a child's educational welfare.

Click here for information about your rights regarding special education in Vermont.

SUSPECTED CHILD ABUSE OR NEGLECT

Vermont law 33 V.S.A. §4913(a) requires that all school personnel who have "a reasonable cause to believe that any child has been abused or neglected" shall report or cause a report to be made to the Family Services office within 24 hours. The purpose of this law is so allegations can be brought to the attention of objective, trained and experienced investigators.

Although school personnel have an individual responsibility for making a report, our practice as a school is to have employees consult the school's Child Protection Team (nurse, guidance counselor, social worker, principal and the child's classroom teacher) prior to making the report. This team does not sit in judgment of the suspected abuse but provides the employee with information (including family history, potential extenuating circumstances, issues the student may currently have and a general perspective on what is reportable and what is not) to help in determining whether to continue with the report. It is the responsibility of Family Services to determine if a report is to become an open case and/or investigated. As stated above, all mandatory reporters have an obligation to cause a report of suspected abuse or neglect to be made.

The Child Protection Team, in consultation with Family Services, will decide on a case by case basis whether to inform the child's parents/guardians of the report. The team will not inform the child's parents/guardians if they believe doing so would place the child in harm's way.

TITLE I

Every fall, each child in kindergarten through grade five is screened for eligibility in a program called Title I. Title I is a program of academic support in the areas of reading and math. To receive services, a child must have a need in reading or math, determined by assessment results. Each year, the students who receive Title I services change. A student must meet the eligibility requirements for a specific grade. So, a child who received Title I services one year may not be eligible the next. Our Title I staff will be contacting you if your child is eligible for services. A parent/guardian permission form will be sent home if your child is found eligible. Services will begin in late September or early October. Please contact Gwen Carmolli at 264-5987 or Lynn Mazza at 264-5959 if you have any questions.

TUITION RATE

The tuition rate for the 2025-26 school year is $17,200.

VISITORS AND VOLUNTEERS

There are many opportunities to visit and volunteer at Union Memorial School. All volunteers are expected to complete a Volunteer Registration form (click here to complete the online form) and a Volunteer Confidentiality and Expected Code of Conduct form (click here to download a copy). Background checks are conducted before a volunteer is added to the Approved Volunteer list and all visitors and volunteers are expected to check in at the main office upon arrival.

An adult must be on the Approved Volunteer list to:

- chaperone a field trip,
- ride the school bus on a school-sponsored trip and/or

- work with students (e.g. the reading program).

An adult does not need to be on the Approved Volunteer list to:

- make a one-time presentation to a classroom or large group of students,
- attend a class party and/or
- attend open house or conferences.

YEARBOOK

Each year, a group of parents work with our photographer to produce a yearbook. Orders for these must be done in advance as only a certain number are produced. We encourage you to order early to avoid disappointment. This is a PTA endeavor. If you'd like to help with this, please contact and join the PTA.