



# Somerville Public Schools

Education • Inspiration • Excellence

Mary E. Skipper, *Superintendent*

8 Bonair Street · Somerville, MA 02145-3246

[mskipper@k12.somerville.ma.us](mailto:mskipper@k12.somerville.ma.us) · [www.somerville.k12.ma.us](http://www.somerville.k12.ma.us)

T 617-629-5200, x6005 · F 617-629-5611



May 21, 2021

Dear Families:

Today marks the last day of high school for our Somerville High School seniors. As we enter the final weeks of the 2020-21 school year, I want to take a moment to acknowledge this very special graduating class. To the SHS Class of 2021: You have inspired us with your resilience and your tremendous leadership over the last four years, navigating not only through the challenges of a massive school building project, but also a global pandemic that disrupted two of the most momentous years of your young lives. You approached it all with dignity and grace. We apologize for such a disruptive end of junior year and senior year. We look forward to celebrating you and all that you have accomplished in your time at Somerville High School, and to honoring you for the amazing young adults you have become.

Over the next few weeks, we also look forward to celebrating our Full Circle and SCALE graduates, as well as the outstanding work of all our students and staff as we wrap up an unprecedented year and prepare for a summer of transition in anticipation of a renewed fall. In the meantime, we will continue to keep you updated as we bring this school year to a close.

## Updated State Guidelines

We know there are many questions about current rules regarding outdoor mask-wearing in Somerville Public Schools. To align with the updated state guidelines announced by Governor Baker earlier this week, the City of Somerville, Somerville Health and Human Services, and SPS will make the following changes to our mask policies **effective Monday, May 24**.

- **Masks Optional for Students When Outdoors:** Students are not required to wear masks outdoors, including during recess, lunch, physical education, outdoor learning, and sports even if distance can not be maintained. Students can continue to wear masks outside if they prefer to do so. Adults must continue to wear masks outdoors if they cannot maintain 3 feet distance.
- **Masks Required Inside Schools and on School Buses:** All adults and students must continue to wear masks inside school buildings and when riding school buses. We also expect our adults and students to continue to keep the current physical distance recommendations of 3 ft between students and 6 ft wherever possible of staff to students and staff to staff.

While this decision is informed by science and data that outdoor transmission is extremely rare, we recognize the emotional significance of this shift. We will work to minimize the disruption of this change for students and staff after a year of wearing masks indoor and outdoor.

The Governor also announced that given the low likelihood of surface transmission of COVID-19, schools no longer have to ensure students avoid sharing objects, and shared objects no longer have to be cleaned or disinfected between use. Given there is less than a month left of school and our schools have protocols for limiting and cleaning shared objects, SPS will continue to maintain our current practices. DPW will also continue its practice of disinfecting high-touch surfaces throughout all schools.

HHS and SPS will continue to monitor implementation and policy guidance, making adjustments as needed to keep our community healthy and safe. For more information, please see [Frequently Asked Questions from the Massachusetts Department of Elementary & Secondary Education](#).

## COVID-19 Testing Protocol and Reminders

Our COVID-19 testing continues to go well. Our district [percent positivity rate remains between 0.1 and 0.2%](#). Again, we want to remind everyone **how important it is to continue to follow COVID safety protocols outside of school to minimize the risk of students or staff having to quarantine as a close contact of someone who may test positive**. Close contacts can be from a positive that resulted outside of school. **It is critically important that students and staff continue to check daily for any symptoms of COVID-19, including doing a temperature check each morning. If your child or someone in your household is showing symptoms, is in quarantine, or has COVID-19, it is important that you keep your child home and notify the school nurse, to avoid the risk of transmission.** We appreciate everyone's continued efforts and cooperation.

### **Summer Programming**

Visit [www.somerville.k12.ma.us/summer](http://www.somerville.k12.ma.us/summer) for Summer 2021 programming information. The site will continue to be updated as additional programs and details are finalized.

### **COVID-19 Vaccination Walk-in Sites and Pop-up Clinics**

As of May 13, 2021, COVID-19 vaccines are available for anyone 12 years or older. Cambridge Health Alliance (CHA) offers walk-in vaccinations at three of their sites including their Somerville location at 176 Somerville Ave. as well as Encore Boston Harbor in Everett, and Tufts University. Visit the [CHA COVID-19 website](#) to learn more. The City will be offering pop-up vaccination clinics at several sites across the city. Please look for additional details in the next few days.

Respectfully,

Mary Skipper, Superintendent of Schools