



# GREATER NEW BEDFORD REGIONAL VOCATIONAL TECHNICAL HIGH SCHOOL

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August 2, 2021

Good Afternoon,

On Friday, Greater New Bedford Voc-Tech (and all schools) received updated guidance for the return to school this fall from the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE) and MA Department of Public Health (DPH).

It is important that all students, parents, guardians, staff, and school stakeholders are kept apprised of the ongoing Covid-19 pandemic and advisories impacting schools. **As first noted in the May 27, 2021 guidance to schools, all districts and schools are required to be in-person, full time, five days a week for school this fall.**

The faculty/staff at GNBVT will continue to plan for the safe reopening of school during the month of August consistent with the guidance and expectations from both DESE and DPH. Below are excerpts from that guidance (current as of August 2nd) that are guiding our planning for reopening school later in August.

**The following guidelines are in effect at this time:**

*Masking*

**DESE and DPH strongly recommend that unvaccinated staff in all grades, unvaccinated students in grades 7 and above, and unvaccinated visitors wear masks indoors**, in alignment with the statewide [advisory](#) on masking.

**DESE and DPH recommend that schools allow vaccinated students to remain unmasked.** Any individual at higher risk for severe disease from COVID or with a household member who is at high risk is encouraged to mask regardless of vaccination status consistent with the updated [DPH Advisory on Face Coverings and Masks](#). Any child or family who prefers to mask at school should be supported in this choice.

By federal public health order, all students and staff are required to wear masks on school buses at this time. All staff and students must wear masks while in school health offices. Additional guidance for school health professionals is forthcoming from DPH.

**Please note: DESE and DPH will continue to consult with medical advisors and may update the masking requirements above as we learn more about COVID-19's effects on hospitalizations in Massachusetts and on children.**

*Contact tracing and quarantine protocols*

Vaccinated staff and students are exempt from quarantine. Additional information will soon be released to districts on contact tracing and quarantine protocols. Covid-19 testing guidance is also expected to be forthcoming, including new versions of the "Protocols for Responding to COVID-19 Scenarios" document which will include information on statewide testing programs and other approved diagnostic tests to address asymptomatic close contacts.

*Local vaccination sites*

More than 900 vaccination sites are available across the state and most accept walk-in appointments, including CVS and Walgreens pharmacies, pediatric primary care offices, and community health centers. As a reminder, the COVID vaccine is free for all, and no ID or insurance is needed to obtain the vaccine.

More information on these sites, as well as safety information, and helpful Q&As are all available at [www.mass.gov/covidvaccine](http://www.mass.gov/covidvaccine).

As additional information is made available, or as the circumstances require additional changes, we will continue to communicate with all members of our school community. My best wishes for a safe, restful month of August to all of you!

Sincerely,



Michael P. Watson  
Superintendent-Director

Greater New Bedford Regional Vocational Technical High School is committed to ensuring equal opportunities for all students. The school does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, genetics, ancestry, limited English proficiency, sex, disability, religion, sexual orientation, gender identity, age, homelessness, immigration status, military status or veteran status in its education programs and activities, including admission to or employment in such programs or activities.

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**Michael P. Watson**  
*Superintendent-Director*

**Robert J. Watt**  
*Executive Director of Operations  
and Compliance*

**Warley J. Williams, III**  
*Principal*

**Pamela Stuart**  
*School Business Administrator*

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