



UNION COUNTY VOCATIONAL - TECHNICAL SCHOOLS

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Mrs. Gwendolyn S. Ryan
Superintendent of Schools

September 29, 2020

Dear UCVTS Community,

With three weeks of school behind us, I hope that all students and their families are settling into a start to the school year which is filled with learning, productivity and fun, despite the challenges associated with the pandemic. Thank you to our students and our parents/guardians for their flexibility in facing the many changes associated with the start to the 20/21 school year. Thank you also to our entire faculty and staff for their hard work in adapting their teaching practices and work environments to meet the needs of learning in a pandemic. I continue to be proud of our community for their response to these unprecedented challenges.

We are still preparing for the return of in-person instruction for our full-time students on Monday, October 5th. While we do not expect this plan to change, we are still working through a number of staffing challenges and throughout the week will continue to communicate district plans for the return of full-time in person instruction for our career academy students. Students will return to in-person instruction in the Phase 2 cohort model outlined in the [UCVTS District Pandemic Restart and Recovery Plan](#) (pgs. 47-48). Additional information will be emailed home to families via building principals later in the week.

There are many things which students and families can do to prepare for a return to in-person instruction:

- Purchase several, well-fitting face coverings. Students will be required to wear face-coverings, as are staff. The CDC does NOT recommend the use of gaiters or face shields (by themselves), nor do they recommend the use of any mask that has a valve. As such gaiters, stand-alone face shields or masks with valves will not be permitted on campus.
- Speak with your UCVTS student about and consider the importance of social distancing. Specifically, on the UCVTS campus, students are expected to maintain a 6-foot distance from all individuals, at all times. All buildings are marked with one-way foot traffic flow and students will be expected to follow the marked foot traffic patterns.
- If you have not done so already, please purchase a reliable thermometer. All students will be required to complete a daily health questionnaire. Completion of this screening will be required in order to gain access to the buildings. Students will also have their temperature checked prior to entering UCVTS buildings. Students who are not feeling well should stay home.
 - Any individual who is experiencing two or more of the following symptoms should stay home, contact the school nurse, and follow-up with a physician: fever or chills, muscle or body aches, headache, sore throat, congestion or runny nose, nausea or vomiting.
 - Any individuals who is experiencing one or more of the following symptoms should stay home, contact the school nurse, and follow-up with a physician: cough, shortness of breath or difficulty breathing, new loss of taste or smell
 - Any student returning from a State listed on New Jersey's travel advisory or from outside the United States is not permitted to attend school and must self-quarantine for 14 days. [New Jersey Travel Restrictions](#)
- Hand washing with soap and water is the best way to prevent the spread of COVID-19 and other bacteria/viruses. Hand sanitizer and disinfectant wipes will be available at school. However, it may be helpful for families to purchase additional supplies as a precautionary measure.

- Parents may want to consider having their children tested for COVID-19 as a precautionary measure. Please speak to your child's physician regarding the potential advantages of being tested. There are several free walk-up testing sites available throughout the County, including a location at the Southside Firehouse in Scotch Plains (1920 Raritan Road, Scotch Plains – right down the street from the UCVTS campus). More information can be found here: <https://ucnj.org/covid19/testing/walk-up-locations/>
- Students and families are required to watch the following videos in preparation for returning to in-person instruction:
 - Facial Coverings: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ML3n1c0FHDI>
 - Handwashing: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=d914EnpU4Fo>
 - Limiting the Spread of COVID-19 and Other Respiratory Illness: <https://youtu.be/kEhNyxKopsg>
 - Opening Schools: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=umE4Ab9nQ8M>

Shared-time programs at the Union County Career and Technical Institute (UCCTI), part of the Union County Vocational-Technical Schools returned to in-person instruction as originally planned on September 8, as did our Adult Post-secondary and alternative programs. Safety procedures and in-person instruction has gone well in these programs and we are confident a return to in-person instruction will go well for our full-time students. We have made and will continue to make adjustments, where necessary, and as we ease into the start of this new school year.

District restart and recovery planning continues to ensure a safe and meaningful return to school, despite the changing circumstances. It has been very nice to see the return of our staff and some of our students to campus these past three weeks. We look forward to the return of many of our full-time career academy students to in-person instruction also! Be well.

Sincerely,



Gwendolyn S. Ryan
Superintendent of Schools