
FAQ: Guidance for Schools Related to Limits on Multi-Household Social Gatherings

Purpose

This document provides additional detail in response to frequently asked questions about [Guidance for Schools Related to Limits on Multi-Household Social Gatherings](#).

Q1. Why can't we gather socially right now?

Vermont is seeing a surge in new COVID-19 cases. Recent data have shown that social gatherings, both inside and outside, at homes, bars and social clubs, and among sports teams are currently driving outbreaks in Vermont. This is why there are restrictions on social gatherings at this time. We must all do our part to slow the spread, ensure hospitals are not overwhelmed, help schools continue to offer in-person instruction, and keep as many Vermonters working as possible. We know this is difficult, but hope that as Vermonters follow this guidance, we can return to the low case numbers we had and ease restrictions once again. Read more on the [Vermont Department of Health website](#).

Q2. What gatherings outside of school are allowed for the education and care of children?

Gathering in pre-established "pods" related to education and/or child care remains allowable. Pods related to social activity or informal play groups are prohibited at this time. New pods of any kind are discouraged.

Q3. What is a child care pod?

A child care pod consists of a specific group of caregivers and children who gather regularly and exclusively so that the caregiver(s) can provide child care while their parents/guardians engage in work or other necessary activities.

Q4. What is an education pod?

An education pod consists of a specific group of instructors/facilitators and students who gather regularly and exclusively for the purpose of providing education or tutoring for the students in the pod.

Q5. May my relative who lives alone gather with my family without triggering the need to quarantine/stay home from school?

The allowances in the Governor's [Executive Order](#) also apply to the Agency of Education's guidance to schools. Since the Executive Order states that individuals who live alone may gather with no more than one other household, that type of gathering would be allowable under AOE guidance as well.

Q6. My child moves between the households of their parents due to a shared custody agreement. Does this movement between households constitute a gathering or require quarantine?

Shared parental custody where a child or children move between their parents' households does not necessitate quarantine, so long as all other health and safety guidance is followed.

Q7. If the child generally is with Parent A, but is with Parent B for the weekend or a holiday, what should Parent A do for an attestation on a screening question about gatherings?

The screening question should ask if the student has participated in multi-household gatherings. Regardless of if Parent A was involved, if the student attended a multi-household gathering with Parent B, they need to note that on any screening questionnaire and stay home from school/quarantine as directed.

Q8. Is carpooling to school allowed?

Yes. Providing rides to school or appointments is not a violation of the guidance and does not require quarantine. Everyone in the car should wear a mask and the windows should be open or cracked, whenever possible. No one should get in the car if they don't feel well.

Q9. If parents have an allowable child care arrangement with a family member, can they have social gatherings with that family member?

While pods may be allowed for childcare or education, individuals, even those in educational or care pods, are prohibited from social gatherings outside their household as defined in the executive order and guidance.

Q10. What kind of afterschool activities are allowable?

School-sanctioned afterschool programs, hubs for the care/supervision of children, licensed child care programs and child care pods following applicable health and safety guidance are allowable. The Governor has suspended school and rec sports leagues until future notice. Non-sport, school-sanctioned extracurricular activities are allowable so long as they comply with the [Strong and Healthy Start: Safety and Health Guidance for Vermont Schools](#), including participants wearing masks and maintaining physical distancing requirements.

Q11. Why does the AOE guidance say that school districts “may” include the participation in multihousehold social gatherings as a condition in the required daily Health Screenings for students and staff instead of “should” or “must”?

School leaders retain discretion on how best to ensure the safety of their schools from an operational standpoint, particularly to address the concern where they hear some students and staff are being less than truthful about their travel or gathering plans. The [Guidance for Schools Related to Limits on Multi-Household Social Gatherings](#) equips them with new tools which they may use to do so.