UNDERSTANDING SCHOOL REOPENING GUIDANCE FOR SPECIAL EDUCATION

Santa Clara County Office of Education
Santa Clara County Public Health
Office of the County Counsel, Santa Clara County
WELCOME
DISEASE PREVALENCE AND TRANSMISSION DYNAMICS
Disease transmission patterns between adults and children

- Adult to adult transmission
- Adult to child transmission
- Child to adult transmission
- Child to child transmission
Studies Suggest

- COVID-19 disease prevalence among children is lower than in adults, and children who contract COVID-19 are more likely than adults to be asymptomatic or to have very mild symptoms.

- Multisystem inflammatory syndrome in children, a severe condition associated with COVID-19, remains rare.

- In several studies, children were less likely to be the first case within a household, suggesting that child-to-adult transmission may be less common than adult-to-child transmission.

- In other countries, where schools remained open or have recently reopened, cases in schoolchildren have been associated with few secondary cases in the school, suggesting that child-to-child transmission may also not be as significant as with influenza.

- Analysis of data broken down further by age show that these trends are seen more in younger children compared to teenagers, whose disease patterns more closely parallel those of adults.
Disease transmission patterns between adults and children

- Adult to adult transmission
- Adult to child transmission
- Child to adult transmission
- Child to child transmission
Recommendations regarding in-person school reopening and closure should be based on the available evidence as well as state and local disease trends.

The [CA School Sector Specific Guidelines](https://example.com), and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention [CDC](https://www.cdc.gov) have published additional guidance on school reopening.
Schools and school districts may reopen for in-person instruction at any time IF they are located in a local health jurisdiction (LHJ) that has not been on the county monitoring list within the prior 14 days.
1. **Safe in-person school based on local health data**

   Schools located in counties that are on the Monitoring List must not physically open for in-person instruction in grades TK-12 until their county has come off the Monitoring List for 14 consecutive days. Schools in counties that have not been on the Monitoring List for the prior 14 days may begin in-person instruction, following public health guidelines.
There is a single exception. Local health officers may grant a waiver to allow elementary schools (TK-6) to reopen in-person instruction if the waiver is requested by the district superintendent, in consultation with labor, parents and community-based organizations. When considering a waiver request, the local health officer must consider local data and consult with the California Department of Public Health.
Governor’s Pandemic Plan for Learning & Safe Schools

2. Strong mask requirements for anyone in the school
3. Physical distancing requirements and other adaptations
4. Regular testing and dedicated contract tracing for clusters at schools
5. Rigorous distance learning
Color Coded Guidance

- Requirements
- Recommendations
- Considerations
SECTION 1: PREVENTION
Reduce Risk of Disease Transmission in Schools

- Minimize the number of people who come into contact with each other
- Maximize the physical distance between people
- Reduce the time that people spend in close proximity to others
- Minimize dispersion of droplets and aerosols (e.g., using face coverings and covering coughs and sneezes).
Preventing COVID-19 Transmission by Age Group

**Organizing Principle:**
Stable Cohorts

- Low feasibility to limit close contact and wear face coverings
- More feasible to maintain stable cohorts
- Greater need for in-person and group-based instruction with close contact to support social-emotional and academic development

**Organizing Principle:**
Physical Distancing and Face Coverings

- More feasible to limit close contact and wear face coverings
- Less feasible to maintain stable cohorts
- Lesser need for in-person or group-based instruction with close contact to support social-emotional and academic development
Guidance Section 1A

PHYSICAL DISTANCING
General – Requirements

- Communicate with all staff and families regarding physical distancing requirements and recommendations.
- Train staff and students on protocols for physical distancing for both indoor and outdoor spaces.
- Post signage reminding students and staff about physical distancing in prominent locations throughout each school campus.
General – Requirements

- Allow only necessary visitors and volunteers on the campus and limit the number of students and staff who come into contact with them.
- For outside organizations utilizing school facilities outside of school hours, ensure that they follow all required health and safety measures.
- Ensure staff maintain six feet or more of distance between one another while on the school campus.

Visiting During COVID-19

No visitors are allowed on site at this time

If you have been designated as an **Essential Visitor**, please contact the site administrator or charge nurse – your visit must be pre-arranged.

Alberta Health Services
Classroom Settings – Requirements

- **Elementary schools**
  - Ensure students and staff remain in stable classroom cohorts by keeping the same students and teacher or staff together for the entire school day.* Students should not mix with other stable classroom cohorts.

- **Middle schools/junior high schools and high schools**
  - Reduce disease transmission risk by maximizing the space between student desks.

- **All schools**
  - Distance teacher and staff desks at least six feet away from students to minimize adult-to-child disease transmission.
  - Assign stable seating arrangements for students to ensure that close contacts within classrooms are minimized and easily identifiable.
Stable Cohorts

The following students and/or staff can rotate into a classroom that otherwise maintains a stable cohort:

1) students with disabilities and staff providing special education and related services can rotate into general education classrooms for a portion of the day,

2) students with disabilities may spend a portion of the day in a separate classroom cohort for the provision of special education services,

3) specialty teachers may rotate into classrooms for specialized instruction (e.g., art or music) but must maintain at least 6 feet of distance from everyone in the cohort,

4) substitute teachers can provide coverage for teachers who are absent. If possible, schools should limit the number of stable cohorts that substitute teachers interact with by assigning certain substitutes to specific schools.
Classroom Settings – Recommendations

● Elementary schools
  ○ Prioritize stability of stable classroom cohorts over physical distancing or face covering use. Given the social and educational needs of this age group, physical distancing and face coverings may be difficult to enforce for this age group. Therefore, strict maintenance of a stable classroom cohort, which minimizes the total number of contacts, is the primary mechanism of risk reduction.

● Middle schools/junior high schools and high schools
  ○ Establish stable classroom cohorts for the entire school day, if feasible.
Classroom Settings – Recommendations

- In all settings
  - Class sizes should be as small as practicable.
  - Move as much instruction and as many activities as possible to outdoor spaces and other non-classroom spaces to allow for greater distancing between students and greater dispersion of viral particles.
  - Train staff and students to maintain at least six feet of distance from each other as much as possible during educational instruction (e.g., during whole-class instruction, presentation, or lecture).
  - Seat students at least six feet apart, if possible, in existing facilities. If that is not possible, consider use of outdoor spaces or non-classroom space to accommodate physical distancing. If use of outdoor space is not feasible, consider placing barriers between student desks.
  - Increase ventilation by increasing outdoor air circulation (e.g., by opening windows) or using high-efficiency air filters and increasing ventilation rates.*
Classroom Settings – Recommendations

● In all settings
  ○ Reduce the amount of furniture and equipment in the classroom to facilitate distancing and reduce high-touch surfaces.
  ○ Student desks should be faced in the same direction (and not facing each other) to minimize risk of disease transmission, if feasible.
  ○ Ensure adequate supplies to minimize sharing of high-touch materials (art supplies, equipment, electronic devices, etc.) to the extent practicable, or limit use of supplies and equipment to one group of students at a time and clean and disinfect between uses.
  ○ Keep students’ belongings separate so that students do not come in contact with other students’ belongings.
  ○ For schools organizing students into stable cohorts, assign students to stable cohorts based on known associations outside of school, to the extent feasible. For example, if certain students attend the same after-school program, assign them to the same stable cohort at school.
Classroom Settings – Considerations

- Place markings on classroom floors to facilitate physical distancing.
- For middle schools/junior high schools and high schools, stable classroom cohorts can be facilitated by having different teachers rotate into the classroom to teach different subjects.
- Limit the number of teachers physically present with each student cohort, such as by having specialty or subject-specific teachers provide instruction remotely.
Non-Classroom Settings - Requirement

- **Staff Break Rooms**: Do not allow staff to eat in break rooms.
Non-Classroom Settings - Recommendations

- **Restrooms**: Stagger restroom use by groups of students to the extent practicable, and/or assign certain groups of students to use certain restrooms.
- **Libraries**: Stagger group use of libraries.
- **Cafeterias**: Serve meals in classrooms or outdoors, instead of cafeterias or group dining rooms, wherever practicable.
- **School Offices**:
  - Space staff at least six feet apart.
  - Consider reorganizing workspaces to prevent risk of transmission (e.g., orienting staff away from each other in shared workspaces).
  - Place markings on the ground to remind students/staff to maintain physical distancing.
  - Increase ventilation by increasing outdoor air circulation (e.g., by opening windows) or using high-efficiency air filters and increasing ventilation rates.*
Non-Classroom Settings - Recommendations

- **Lockers**: Minimize use of lockers to avoid unnecessary mixing and congregation of students in hallways.
- **Hallways**: Minimize congregate movement through hallways as much as practicable. For example, establish more ways to enter and exit a campus, stagger passing times when necessary or when students cannot stay in one room, and establish designated one-way walking/passage areas.
- **Staff Break Rooms**:
  - Consider closing break rooms, and prohibit staff from drinking or eating together indoors. If break rooms remain open to staff for purpose other than eating, limit the number of staff who can be in the break room at a given time (particularly rooms that are small) to allow for physical distancing.
  - Encourage or require staff to eat meals outdoors or in large, well ventilated spaces.
● Require families to screen students for COVID-19 symptoms before they board the school bus.
● Ensure at least six feet of distance between the bus driver and students when seated. These may include use of physical partitions or visual cues (e.g., floor decals, colored tape, or signs to indicate to students where they should not sit or stand near the bus operator).
● Ensure bus drivers and students wear face coverings at all times while awaiting and riding on buses.
● Maximize physical distancing between students on the bus by limiting available seats to the extent practicable (e.g., every other row available for seating).
● Students from the same family and/or the same classroom should be instructed to sit together whenever possible to minimize exposure to new contacts.
● Buses should be thoroughly cleaned and disinfected daily and after transporting an individual who is exhibiting COVID-19 symptoms.
Bus Transportation to and from School - Recommendations

- Increase ventilation on buses by opening windows, to the greatest extent possible.
- Provide bus drivers with extra face coverings for students who lose or forget to bring their face coverings.
- Provide bus drivers with disinfectant wipes and disposable gloves to support disinfection of frequently touched surfaces during the day.
Bus Transportation to and from School – Consideration

- Maximize physical distancing between students at bus stops by placing ground markings at bus stops.
Teachers & Staff Face Coverings – Requirements

- All adults must wear a face covering at all times while on campus, except while eating or drinking.
- Staff excluded from this requirement are those that require respiratory protection according to Cal/OSHA standards.
- Staff who are unable to wear a face covering for medical reasons shall not be assigned duties that require close contact with students.
Student Face Coverings - Requirements

- **All students** (transitional kindergarten through 12th grade) are required to wear face coverings:
  - while arriving and departing from school campus;
  - in any area outside of the classroom (except when eating, drinking, or engaging in physical activity)*;
  - while waiting for or riding on a school bus.
- **Students in 2nd grade and below** should be encouraged, but are not required, to wear a face covering within their stable classroom cohort.
- **Students in 3rd grade and above** must use face coverings when in the classroom even if they are in a stable classroom cohort.
- **Students excluded from face covering requirements** include: (1) anyone who has trouble breathing or is unconscious, incapacitated, or otherwise unable to remove the covering without assistance and (2) students with special needs who are unable to tolerate a face covering.
Face Coverings – Requirements

• Post signage in high visibility areas to remind students and staff of (1) when and where face coverings are required and (2) appropriate use of face coverings.

• Communicate with all staff and families regarding expectations for use of face coverings at school and how to wash face coverings.

• Educate students, particularly younger elementary school students, on the rationale and proper use of face coverings.
Face Coverings – Recommendations

- If a student or staff experiences difficulty wearing his/her face covering, allow the individual to remove his/her face covering for a short period of time. For younger children in 2nd grade and below, consider scheduling times throughout the day when face coverings are not required, as long as students are outside and will only interact with members of their stable classroom cohort.

- Provide face coverings for students and staff who lose their face coverings or forget to bring them to school.
Face Coverings – Recommendations

- Except as specifically provided in this document, students and staff should use cloth face coverings whenever face coverings are required. Medical masks, such as N95 and surgical masks, are strongly discouraged for general use due to the global shortage of medical masks needed for healthcare professionals. However, schools may use existing inventories of disposable masks, including N95 and surgical masks, for students and staff if reusable cloth face coverings are not available.
Personal protective equipment (PPE) for special education instructors and aides and healthcare personnel:

- A surgical mask and face shield is recommended when providing services to students which requires repeated close contact interactions (e.g., assistance with activities of daily living) or conducting health assessments (including vision and hearing screening).
- Gloves should be worn as recommended for procedures which require universal precautions (e.g., toileting assistance, catheterization, and insulin administration).
- PPE for potential aerosol generating procedures (e.g., suctioning of tracheostomy sites and nebulizer treatments) should follow CDC guidance.
Teach and reinforce proper handwashing technique, avoiding contact with one’s eyes, nose, and mouth, and covering coughs and sneezes.

Post signage in high visibility areas to remind students and staff of proper techniques for handwashing and covering of coughs and sneezes and other prevention measures.

Ensure adequate supplies to support healthy hygiene behaviors, including soap, tissues, no-touch trash cans, face coverings and hand sanitizers (with at least 60 percent ethyl alcohol) for staff and students who can safely use hand sanitizer.

Minimize the sharing of supplies and equipment among staff and students to the extent feasible. When items must be shared, clean and disinfect items between uses.

Minimize staff and student contact with high-touch surfaces (e.g., propping open building or room doors, particularly at arrival and departure times).
CLEANING AND MAINTENANCE

Guidance Section 1C
At least daily, and more frequently if feasible, clean and disinfect frequently touched hard surfaces (e.g., tables, desks, chairs, door handles, light switches, phones, copy/fax machines, bathroom surfaces (toilets, countertops, faucets), drinking fountains, and playground equipment) and shared objects (toys, games, art supplies, books) pursuant to CDC guidance. See:

- [Cleaning and Disinfecting Your Facility](#)
- [Reopening Guidance for Cleaning and Disinfecting Public Spaces, Workplaces, Businesses, Schools, and Homes](#)
ADDITIONAL SAFETY MEASURES FOR TEACHERS & OTHER STAFF
• Limit visitors to campus, maximize social distancing between staff and students, do not allow staff to eat together in break rooms, as described in further detail elsewhere in Section 1 of the re-opening guidance.
• All students and staff must be screened for symptoms daily, as described in Section 2 of the re-opening guidance.
• Conduct all staff meetings, professional development training and education, and other activities involving staff via video or phone conference. If in-person attendance is necessary, conduct such activities outdoors, if feasible, and with appropriate physical distancing.
• Ensure staff maintain six feet or more of distance between one another while on the school campus.
● Adopt procedures to ensure staff can maintain six feet or more of distance from any necessary visitors and volunteers.
● Provide adequate training and personal protective equipment to protect custodial staff who will be cleaning and disinfecting areas used by any sick person. To reduce risk of exposure, wait 24 hours before you clean and disinfect. If it is not possible to wait 24 hours, wait as long as practicable.
● Require students and staff to get tested as soon as possible after they develop one or more COVID-19 symptoms or if one of their household members or non-household close contacts tested positive for COVID-19, as described in Section 2 of the re-opening guidance.
Staff break rooms/meals:
- Consider closing break rooms or limiting the number of staff who can be in the break room at a given time (particularly rooms that are small) to allow for physical distancing.
- Encourage or require staff to eat meals outdoors or in large, well ventilated spaces.

School offices:
- Space staff at least six feet apart.
- Consider reorganizing workspaces to prevent risk of transmission (e.g., orienting staff away from each other in shared workspaces).
- Place markings on the ground to remind students/staff to maintain physical distancing.
- Increase ventilation by increasing outdoor air circulation (e.g., by opening windows) or using high-efficiency air filters and increasing ventilation rates.*
Equipment for bus drivers:
- Provide bus drivers with extra face coverings for students who lose or forget to bring their face coverings.
- Provide bus drivers with disinfectant wipes and disposable gloves to support disinfection of frequently touched surfaces during the day.

Equipment for front office staff:
- Install physical barriers, such as a glass window or clear plastic barrier, in the school’s front office to separate staff from visitors and volunteers.
- Teachers and other staff with close contact with students may consider wearing face shields in addition to wearing face coverings, as described in Section 1.
Additional Safety Measures for Teachers & Other Staff - Considerations

- Hold regular all-staff meetings or send regular communications regarding implementation of the school’s COVID-19 prevention plan and strategies.
- Arrange classroom furniture and equipment to maximize physical distance between teachers and students when a teacher is providing whole group instruction to the class and close contact is not necessary to deliver instruction.
- Develop policies that encourage staff and students to stay home when they are sick.
- Minimize the number of teachers physically present with each cohort, for example by having specialty or subject-specific teachers provide remote instruction.
SECTION 2: HEALTH SCREENINGS
Health Screenings – Requirements

- Post signs at all entrances instructing students, staff, and visitors not to enter campus if they have any COVID-19 symptoms. COVID-19 symptoms include fever, chills, cough, shortness of breath, difficulty breathing, fatigue, muscle or body aches, headache, recent loss of taste or smell, sore throat, congestion or runny nose, nausea, vomiting, or diarrhea.

- All students and staff should be screened for symptoms each day. Staff and students’ parents or guardians can conduct symptom screening at-home, prior to arrival. Alternatively, symptom screening can occur on-site via self-reporting, visual inspection, or a symptom screening questionnaire. Symptom screenings do not need to be performed by a nurse or other health professional.

- Temperature screening of students and staff is not required. If temperature screening is performed, contact-less thermometers should be used.

- Contact thermometers should only be used when a fever is suspected and if appropriate PPE can be used (facemask, eye protection, and disposable gloves). Contact thermometers must be properly cleaned and disinfected after each use.

- Students or staff with any identified COVID-19 symptoms and/or a temperature of 100.0 or higher must be sent home immediately until testing and/or medical evaluation has been conducted.

- Communicate screening requirements to all staff and families. Provide periodic reminders throughout the school year.
1. Within the last 14 days have you been diagnosed with COVID-19 or had a test confirming you have the virus?

   Yes – STAY HOME and seek medical care.

2. Do you live in the same household with, or have you had close contact with, someone who in the past 14 days has been in isolation for COVID-19 or had a test confirming they have the virus? Close contact is less than 6 feet for 15 minutes or more.

   Yes – STAY HOME and seek medical care and testing.
### Recommended Health Screening for Students & Staff

#### 3. a. Have you had any one or more of these symptoms today or within the past 3 days?

- Fever or chills
- Cough
- Loss of taste or smell
- Shortness of breath or difficulty breathing

Yes – STAY HOME and seek medical care and testing.

#### 3. b. Have you had any one or more of these symptoms today or within the past 3 days and that are new or not explained by another reason?

- Fatigue
- Muscle or body aches
- Headache
- Sore throat
- Nausea, vomiting, or diarrhea

Yes – STAY HOME and seek medical care and testing.
SECTION 3: RESPONSE TO SUSPECTED OR CONFIRMED CASES & CLOSE CONTACTS
Suspected COVID-19 Case(s) Response:
- Work with school administrators, nurses, and other healthcare providers to identify an isolation room or area to separate anyone who exhibits COVID-19 symptoms.
- Any students or staff exhibiting symptoms should immediately be required to wear a face covering and wait in an isolation area until they can be transported home or to a healthcare facility, as soon as practicable. For serious illness, call 9-1-1 without delay.
Response to Suspected or Confirmed Cases and Close Contacts - Requirements

**Confirmed COVID-19 Case(s) Response:**
- School administrators should notify the County of Santa Clara Public Health Department immediately of any positive COVID-19 case by emailing coronavirus@phd.sccgov.org and calling (408) 885-4214. Notify all staff and families in the school community of any positive COVID-19 case while maintaining confidentiality as required by state and federal laws. (Information concerning confidentiality can be found here.)
- Close off areas used by any sick person and do not use before cleaning and disinfection. To reduce risk of exposure, wait 24 hours before you clean and disinfect. If it is not possible to wait 24 hours, wait as long as practicable. Ensure a safe and correct application of disinfectants using personal protective equipment and ventilation as recommended in Section 1.C.
- For elementary schools and other settings in which **stable classroom cohorts have been maintained**: All students and staff within the same classroom cohort as the confirmed COVID-19 case should be instructed to get COVID-19 testing around 7 days after the last exposure to the case and remain quarantined at home for 14 days.

- For middle schools/junior high schools, high schools, and any settings in which **stable classroom cohorts have NOT been maintained**: Utilize class seating rosters and consultation with teachers/staff to identify close contacts to the confirmed COVID-19 case in all classrooms and on-campus activities. A close contact is someone who has been within six feet of the case for a prolonged period of time (at least 15 minutes) regardless of face covering use. Close contacts should be instructed to get COVID-19 testing around 7 days after the last exposure to the case and should remain quarantined at home for 14 days.
For all settings: Provide information regarding close contacts to the County of Santa Clara Public Health Department via secure fax or email.

No actions need to be taken for persons who have not had close contact with a confirmed COVID-19 case, and instead have had close contact with persons who were in direct contact.
Return to Campus after Testing – Requirements

- Positive test results
  - Symptomatic individuals who test positive for COVID-19 can return at least 10 days since symptoms first appeared AND at least 3 days with no fever AND improvement in other symptoms.
  - Asymptomatic individuals who test positive for COVID-19 can return 10 days after their positive test result.
Return to Campus after Testing - Requirements

- **Negative test results**
  - Symptomatic individuals, who are not close-contacts and who test negative for COVID-19 can return 72 hours after resolution of fever (if any) and improvement in symptoms.
    - Documentation of a negative test result should be provided to school administrators.
    - In lieu of a negative test result, allow students and staff to return to work with a medical note by a physician that provides alternative explanation for symptoms and reason for not ordering COVID-19 testing.
  - Individuals who are close contacts to confirmed COVID-19 cases, who test negative at least 7 days after exposure, and remain asymptomatic, can return 14 days after the date of last exposure to the case. If a close contact continues to be exposed to a case during their isolation (e.g. household member), quarantine ends 14 days after the case’s isolation period ends.
SUMMARY & KEY POINTS
Summary & Key Points for Special Education Services

- **Supporting Stable Cohorts**
  - Students with disabilities, and staff supporting them, can rotate into general ed classrooms for a portion of the day and students may spend a portion of the day in a separate classroom cohort.
  - Students with disabilities may spend a portion of the day in a separate classroom cohort for the provision of special education services.

- **Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)**
  - Surgical mask and face shield is recommended when providing services with repeat close contact or when conducting health assessments.
  - Exceptions for face covering regulations for some students with special needs are detailed in the guidance document.
  - When supporting phonological instruction face coverings with clear windows are recommended.
https://www.sccgov.org/sites/phd/Pages/phd.aspx
Connect with SCCPHD

Social Media

For COVID-19 information: www.sccgov.org/covid19

For school-specific guidance: https://www.sccgov.org/sites/covid19/Pages/school-guidance.aspx
Connect with SCCOE

Social Media

https://www.sccoe.org/covid-19/Pages/default.aspx

Ed Bulletin (e-newsletter)

www.sccoe.org

https://www.sccoe.org/covid-19/Pages/default.aspx