

BACK TO SCHOOL SAFELY DURING COVID-19



WHAT TO EXPECT WHEN YOUR CHILD GOES BACK TO SCHOOL

On July 12, 2021, the California Department of Public Health (CDPH) released updated school guidance for the 2021-2022 academic school year.

The primary principle of this guidance is that all students must have access to safe and full in-person instruction with as much instructional time as possible. In an effort to support this, many safety measures for K-12 schools are outlined in [the document](#).

Each of the below measures used together can optimize the safety for full in-person learning and lower the risk of COVID-19 infection:

- **Masks** are required indoors and highly encouraged outdoors. Those exempt from wearing a face covering due to a medical condition must wear a non-restrictive alternative.
- Recent data indicates that in-person school can occur safely without minimum **physical distancing** requirements when other mitigation strategies (e.g., masking, ventilation, hand hygiene) are implemented.
- For indoor settings, **ventilation** should be a priority at school campuses. To read more information on indoor **ventilation** visit [CDPH](#).

- Children should stay home when not feeling well. [People with the below symptoms may have COVID-19 and should get tested:](#)
 - Fever or chills
 - Cough
 - Shortness of breath or difficulty breathing
 - Fatigue
 - Muscle or body aches
 - Headache
 - New loss of taste or smell
 - Sore throat
 - Congestion or runny nose
 - Nausea or vomiting
 - Diarrhea

This list does not include all possible symptoms

Students with **symptoms** of COVID-19 infection are not to return for in-person instruction until:

- at least 24 hours have passed since the child's fever has stopped without the use of fever-reducing medications;
- other symptoms have improved;
- the child should have a negative test for COVID-19, OR a healthcare provider has provided documentation of an alternative named diagnosis (such as (e.g., allergies or asthma) strep throat, pharyngitis),
- OR at least 10 days have passed since symptom onset.

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- **COVID-19 testing program.** Free testing resources are available to support screening testing programs. It is important to have **COVID-19 testing** available in school to limit missed school days. Examples include preventing in-school transmission, avoiding outbreaks, and stopping asymptomatic transmission. Testing is especially valuable for children under the age of 12 who are currently not eligible to receive a COVID-19 vaccination.
- Schools are required to **report COVID-19 cases** to the local public health department. This includes both student and staff cases. This is required by [AB 86 \(2021\)](#) and [California Code Title 17, section 2500](#)
- In addition to the above safety measures, **quarantine and isolation** are necessary mitigation measures when someone has either become infected or been exposed to COVID-19. The definition of a close contact remains as someone who was within 0-6 feet with a COVID-19 positive person more than 15 minutes over a 24-hour period. Different quarantine recommendations are further discussed on page 3 of the newsletter. Isolation recommendations for both vaccinated and unvaccinated persons follow the CDPH [Isolation Guidance](#) for those diagnosed with COVID-19.
- It is very imperative to continue to emphasize **hand hygiene**. This includes teaching and reinforcing washing hands, avoiding contact with one's eyes, nose, and mouth, and covering coughs and sneezes among students and staff.
- **Cleaning** recommendations include cleaning once a day. This is usually enough to sufficiently remove potential virus that may be on surfaces. **Disinfecting** (using disinfectants on the [U.S. Environmental Protection Agency COVID-19](#) list) removes any remaining germs on surfaces, which further reduces any risk of spreading infection

- **Food service** recommendations for schools include maximizing physical distance as much as possible while eating (especially indoors). Using additional spaces outside of the cafeteria for mealtime seating such as classrooms or the gymnasium can help facilitate distancing for students and staff members. It is encouraged to eat outdoors as much as feasible.
- Schools may ask for COVID-19 **vaccination verification**. This will assist in implementation of prevention strategies that vary by vaccination status. This includes COVID-19 testing, contact tracing efforts, and quarantine and isolation practices. Visit the [CDC vaccine verification recommendations](#) to read further.
- It is a **best practice** for schools/districts to continue to provide transparency to the school community regarding the school's safety plans. It is recommended that at a minimum all districts **post a safety plan** to their website and make it available at school campuses as well as share with families in advance of the start of the school year.

COVID HOTLINE

The Sacramento County COVID Hotline can be reached at (916) 875-2400. It is staffed Monday-Friday between 8am and 5pm. If you would prefer to email, send general COVID-19 questions to COVID19@saccounty.net . If you have COVID-19 vaccine related questions, email COVID19vaccine@saccounty.net .



Additional resources can be found on the [SCPH Schools webpage](#).



NEW QUARANTINE GUIDANCE FOR STUDENTS

Quarantine recommendations for **unvaccinated students who were exposed to a positive case in the indoor classroom setting**, who are close contacts (more than 15 minutes over a 24-hour period within 0-6 feet indoors) when both parties were wearing a mask, as required in K-12 indoor settings:

May undergo a modified 10-day quarantine as follows. They may continue to attend school for in-person instruction if they:

- Are asymptomatic;
- Continue to appropriately mask, as required;
- Undergo at least twice weekly testing during the 10-day quarantine; and
- Continue to quarantine for all extracurricular activities at school, including sports, and activities within the community setting.

Quarantine recommendations for:

unvaccinated close contacts who were not wearing masks or for whom the infected individual was not wearing a mask during the indoor exposure:

For these contacts, those who remain asymptomatic, meaning they have NOT had any symptoms, may discontinue self-quarantine under the following conditions:

- Quarantine can end after Day 10 from the date of last exposure without testing; OR
- Quarantine can end after Day 7 if a diagnostic specimen is collected after Day 5 from the date of last exposure and tests negative.

Asymptomatic close contacts must:

- Continue daily self-monitoring for symptoms through Day 14 from last known exposure; AND
- Follow all recommended interventions (e.g., wearing a mask when around others, hand washing, avoiding crowds) through Day 14 from last known exposure.
- If any symptoms develop during this time the exposed person must isolate, get tested and contact their doctor.

VACCINE SAFETY FOR CHILDREN

Before getting FDA emergency use authorization, clinical trials showed COVID-19 vaccines to be remarkably safe and effective for adults and teens age 16 and up. Trials involved tens of thousands of volunteers. After getting additional safety data for younger teens, the FDA extended authorization to adolescents age 12 and older. Clinical trials are underway for children as young as six months old.

The vaccines continue to be monitored very closely. In fact, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) say that COVID-19 vaccines will have “the most intensive safety monitoring in U.S. history.” COVID-19 vaccines are safe, but there are some short-term side effects your child may experience. In clinical trials, some adolescents had no side effects, and some had side effects similar to those reported by adults:

- Pain, redness, and swelling where the injection was given
- Fever
- Chills
- Headache
- Fatigue
- Nausea
- Pain in the muscles

COVID-19 VACCINE APPOINTMENTS

can be made at <https://myturn.ca.gov/>
If you need help making an appointment, call 211 or (916) 529-4519.

Visit [HealthyChildren.org](https://www.healthychildren.org) the American Academy of Pediatrics website to get more information for families about the COVID-19 vaccine.

IF SOMEONE IN YOUR FAMILY HAS TESTED POSITIVE FOR COVID-19

If your COVID-19 test comes back positive and you feel you cannot safely isolate without food assistance (groceries or prepared meals), Sacramento County has Resource Coordinators to connect you with the resources you need. Please ask one of the staff at your testing site for assistance or contact: SacCollab@shfcenter.org

Resources we can provide to you during your isolation period are: • Prepared meals for two weeks • Groceries • Food boxes • Mental health support services • Health insurance/Cal Fresh enrollment

COVID-19 TESTING

Our 13 COVID-19 Community Testing Sites have added antigen rapid testing options (results in 15 minutes) for those who need immediate results, in addition to the traditional PCR testing currently offered. Patients may follow-up a positive antigen result with a PCR test to ensure accuracy in the same visit (PCR results are within 3 days).

The antigen test is not as sensitive as the PCR test. Antigen testing will not suffice for air travel or when a PCR test is required to get into an event. However, it is a great option for those who are unvaccinated and must have regular testing for school sports, workplace testing, or if you've been around a large group of people, or have a known COVID-19 exposure, for example.

Testing appointments are available regardless of U.S. citizenship or legal residency status for anyone 2 years and older (minors must be accompanied by a parent/guardian). For your scheduled appointment, bring any form of identification with your date of birth to check-in. Face masks/coverings must be worn at all testing sites, some masks will be available.

2021 COVID-19 SUPPLEMENTAL PAID SICK LEAVE

Covered Employees in the public or private sectors who work for employers with more than 25 employees are entitled to up to 80 hours of COVID-19 related sick leave from January 1, 2021 through September 30, 2021, immediately upon an oral or written request to their employer.

A covered employee may take leave if the employee is unable to work or telework for any of the following reasons:

- **Caring for Yourself:** The employee is subject to quarantine or isolation period related to COVID-19 guidelines or has been advised by a healthcare provider to quarantine, or is experiencing COVID-19 symptoms and seeking a medical diagnosis.
- **Caring for a Family Member:** The covered employee is caring for a family member who is subject to a COVID-19 quarantine or isolation period or has been advised by a healthcare provider to quarantine due to COVID-19, or is caring for a child whose school or place of care is closed or unavailable due to COVID-19 on the premises.
- **Vaccine-Related:** The covered employee is attending a vaccine appointment or cannot work or telework due to vaccine-related symptoms

SACRAMENTO COUNTY FREE TESTING LOCATIONS CAN BE FOUND AT:

https://www.saccounty.net/COVID-19/Pages/Symptom-Screening_MobileTestingSite.aspx

