

TOOLS, TIPS AND UPDATES TO HELP PARENTS MEET THE CHALLENGE OF RETURNING TO SCHOOL

Newsletter Issue 2

BACK TO SCHOOL SAFELY DURING COVID-19



WHEN CAN SCHOOLS REOPEN?

Sacramento County now has an adjusted case rate of less than 25/100,000 population, which makes Sacramento County eligible for the elementary re-opening process. Although the County is still in the Purple Tier, Schools serving grades K-6 may reopen for in-person instruction if they complete and post a COVID-19 Safety Plan (CSP) to their website homepage and submit the CSP to their local health officer and the State Safe Schools for All Team and there are no identified deficiencies.

According to the [CDPH COVID-19 Reopening In-Person Instruction Framework & Public Health Guidance for K-12 Schools in California](#), elementary schools (K-6) that did not previously reopen for in-person instruction may do so only **after** they satisfy the requirements in the guidance. Schools that intend to open an elementary school for in-person instruction, must submit completed:

1. COVID-19 Safety Plan;
2. Cal/OSHA Prevention Plan; and
3. [COVID-19 School Guidance Checklist](#)

to Sacramento County Public Health (SCPH) and the California Department

Public Health (CDPH) for review. SCPH will notify schools within seven business days if their documents are approved or if they require changes.

Middle and High Schools (grades 7-12) that did not previously reopen for in-person instruction may do so the day after Sacramento County moves to Red Tier 2, which currently requires an adjusted case rate of less than 7 per 100,000 for two consecutive weeks.

Adjusted Case Rate

When making determinations about thresholds for allowable activities, we are required to use the Adjusted Case Rate (ACR) displayed on the [CA Blueprint for a Safer Economy](#) webpage, not the SCPH dashboard, which uses a shorter lag period. CDPH usually updates the ACR around noon on Tuesdays.

SCHOOL SITE VISITS

As schools consider how to safely re-open for in-person learning and activities Sacramento County Public Health is scheduling **School Site Visits** to assist schools with mitigation strategies to help protect students, teachers, and staff and slow the spread of COVID-19. Ruth Love and our School Nurse Team are currently available to visit all school sites.

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MASKING FOR CHILDREN

Just over a year into this pandemic, there is much that remains unknown. We do know that success in preventing transmission of the virus causing COVID-19 in schools seems to depend on adhering to measures such as proper and widespread masking (and other measures) **along with** doing our best to control transmission in the community. The California Department of Public Health requires all students and school staff over the age of 2, without a medical exception to wear face coverings to school. As more Sacramento County area schools work toward reopening, we want to encourage you to prepare your child for a school year that may look different than prior years. Parents can practice mask wearing at home and model proper masking for children. Proper masking, as demonstrated below has been shown to be more protective in preventing the virus causing COVID-19 than improper masking.

IN ORDER TO BE EFFECTIVE, MASKS SHOULD:

- Cover both the nose and mouth
- Fit snugly but comfortably against the sides of the face
- Be secured with ear loops or ties
- Have multiple layers of fabric
- Allow for unrestricted breathing
- Be washed and dried carefully after use



Source: U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

COVID-19 INFECTIONS AMONG CHILDREN

The number and rate of cases in children in the United States have been steadily increasing however true rate of COVID-19 infection in children is not known due to lack of widespread testing and the prioritization of testing for adults and those with severe illness. Hospitalization rates in children are much lower than rates in adults with COVID-19, suggesting that children may have less severe illness from COVID-19 compared to adults.

The incubation period appears to be about the same for children as in adults, at 2-14 days with an average of 6 days. Children infected with COVID-19 may have many COVID-19 symptoms, only have a few (such as only upper respiratory symptoms or only gastrointestinal symptoms), or may be asymptomatic.

According to CDC the most common symptoms in children are cough and/or fever. Evidence suggests that as many as half of pediatric infections may be asymptomatic (*Clin Infect Dis.* 2020). The signs and symptoms of COVID-19 in children are similar to those of other infections and noninfectious illnesses, including flu, strep throat, and allergies. The lack of specific symptoms and the significant proportion of asymptomatic infections make symptom-based screening for identification of SARS-CoV-2 in children particularly challenging.

Many Schools are working in close collaboration with public health officials to test students, teachers, or staff for purposes of surveillance, diagnosis, screening, or in the context of an outbreak and public health consultation.

GET KIDS TESTED

Anyone living in the county who is 2 years old and older can get tested at the 13 community-based testing sites in Sacramento County. Find testing locations [HERE](#)

To find out more about how to properly wear a mask visit [HERE](#)

WHAT ABOUT SCHOOL SPORTS?

The California Department of Public Health issued [new guidance](#), effective February 26th that applies to all organized youth sports and recreation. On March 5th an update was added that would:

- Require masking for youth and adult sports participants, coaches, and support staff.
- Specify that teams can return to competition only if they adhere to the stricter requirements in place for college teams, which include rigorous testing requirements around each competition, following contact tracing protocols, and coordination with local health authorities.

The State guidance provides direction on outdoor and indoor youth and recreational adult sports activities to support a safe environment for these sports. The guidance applies to all organized youth sports and recreation— including school- and community-sponsored programs, and privately-organized clubs and leagues. For additional details on the State guidance visit:

<https://www.cdph.ca.gov/Programs/CID/DCDC/Pages/COVID-19/outdoor-indoor-recreational-sports.aspx>

WHAT AGES HAS THE COVID-19 VACCINE BEEN AUTHORIZED FOR?

Pfizer's vaccine has been authorized for ages 16 and up. The Moderna and Johnson & Johnson vaccines are currently authorized for ages 18 and up. Companies have begun clinical trials for younger kids.

SINCE PFIZER'S VACCINE IS ALREADY AUTHORIZED FOR AGES 16 AND UP, WHEN WILL TEENS IN THIS AGE BRACKET BE ABLE TO RECEIVE IT?

Keep in mind, young adults and kids aren't typically at high risk for severe illness from COVID-19. Because of this, even teens who are old enough to receive Pfizer's COVID-19 vaccine will likely be in the final group to receive it. There are a few exceptions: Individuals ages 16 and up with high-risk health conditions may have the opportunity to get the vaccine sooner, as well as individuals age 16 and up who are essential workers.

THE NEW JOHNSON & JOHNSON VACCINE

The Johnson & Johnson vaccines are currently authorized for ages 18 and up. The vaccine is what's called a viral vector vaccine. To create this vaccine, the Johnson & Johnson team took a harmless adenovirus – the viral vector – and replaced a small piece of its genetic instructions with coronavirus genes for the SARS-CoV-2 spike protein.

The adenovirus vector vaccine is safe because the adenovirus can't replicate in human cells or cause disease, and the SARS-CoV-2 spike protein can't cause COVID-19 without the rest of the coronavirus.



Additional resources can be found on our schools website page [HERE](#)