



**DIRECTIVE OF THE HEALTH OFFICER No. 2020-33c**

**DIRECTIVE OF THE HEALTH OFFICER OF  
THE CITY AND COUNTY OF SAN FRANCISCO REGARDING REQUIRED BEST  
PRACTICES FOR SCHOOLS**

**(PUBLIC HEALTH DIRECTIVE)**  
DATE OF DIRECTIVE: January 27, 2021

By this Directive, the Health Officer of the City and County of San Francisco (the “Health Officer”) issues industry-specific direction that schools as described below must follow as part of the local response to the Coronavirus Disease 2019 (“COVID-19,” including SARS-CoV-2, the virus that causes the disease) pandemic. This Directive constitutes industry-specific guidance as provided under Section 4 of Health Officer Order No. C19-07s issued on January 27, 2021 (the “Stay-Safer-At-Home Order”) and unless otherwise defined below, initially capitalized terms used in this Directive have the same meaning given them in that order. This Directive goes into effect immediately upon issuance, and remains in effect until suspended, superseded, or amended by the Health Officer. This Directive has support in the bases and justifications set forth in the Stay-Safer-At-Home Order. As further provided below, this Directive automatically incorporates any revisions to the Stay-Safer-At-Home Order or other future orders issued by the Health Officer that supersede that order or reference this Directive. This Directive is intended to promote best practices to help prevent the transmission of COVID-19 and safeguard the health of workers, children, their families, and the community.

**UNDER THE AUTHORITY OF CALIFORNIA HEALTH AND SAFETY CODE SECTIONS 101040, 101085, AND 120175, THE HEALTH OFFICER DIRECTS AS FOLLOWS:**

1. The Stay-Safer-at-Home Order allows transitional kindergarten (TK)-12 schools in the City and County of San Francisco (“Schools”) to reopen for in-person, on-site instruction with a waiver or advance written approval of a comprehensive Health and Safety Plan by the Health Officer. *See* Stay-Safer-At-Home Order Section 5(a).
2. Schools are also permitted to offer specialized and targeted support services to vulnerable children as provided in Section 5.a.3 of the Stay-Safer-At-Home Order. Such services must be offered in compliance with the requirements set forth in Health Officer Directive No. 2020-26b and with the testing and cooperation requirements set forth in Sections 7 and 8 below.
3. Attached as Exhibit A to this Directive is guidance from the Department of Public Health regarding reopening Schools for in-person, on-site instruction (“TK-12 Guidance”). All Schools offering in-person, on-site instruction must comply with all applicable requirements listed in the Guidance, including as it may be amended in the future.
4. Each School must (a) make their approved Health and Safety Plan available online at a permanent URL and in hard copy upon request, and (b) provide a summary of the plan to parent(s) and guardian(s) of students in the School, and to all Personnel working on site or otherwise in the City in relation to its operations. Also, each School must provide a copy of the Health and Safety Plan and evidence of its implementation to any authority enforcing this Directive or the Stay-Safer-At-Home Order upon demand.



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5. Each School must require the parent/guardian of each child that participates in the program to sign an acknowledgement of health risks containing the following language:

The collective effort and sacrifice of San Francisco residents staying at home limited the spread of COVID-19. But community transmission of COVID-19 within San Francisco continues, including transmission by individuals who are infected and contagious, but have no symptoms. Infected persons are contagious 48 hours before developing symptoms (“pre-symptomatic”), and many are contagious without ever developing symptoms (“asymptomatic”). Pre-symptomatic and asymptomatic people are likely unaware that they have COVID-19.

The availability of childcare, summer camp, Out of School Time (OST) programs, and TK-12 schools is an important step in the resumption of activities. However, the decision by the Health Officer to allow childcare, summer camp, OST programs, and TK-12 schools at facilities that follow required safety rules, does not mean that attending childcare, summer camp, OST programs, and/or TK-12 schools is free of risk. Enrolling a child in childcare, summer camp, OST programs, and/or TK-12 schools could increase the risk of the child becoming infected with COVID-19. While the majority of children that become infected do well, there is still much more to learn about coronavirus in children, including from recent reports of Multisystem Inflammatory Syndrome in Children (MIS-C).

Each parent or guardian must determine for themselves if they are willing to take the risk of enrolling their child in childcare, summer camp, OST programs, and TK-12 schools, including whether they need to take additional precautions to protect the health of their child and others in the household. They should particularly consider the risks to household members who have a higher risk of severe COVID-19 illness. Parents and guardians may want to discuss these risks and their concerns with their pediatrician or other health care provider.

More information about COVID-19 and MIS-C, is available on the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention website at <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/>. See <http://www.sfc-dcp.org/covid19hcp> for a list of groups at higher risk for severe COVID-19.

I understand the risks associated with enrolling my child in childcare, summer camp, OST programs, and/or TK-12 schools, and agree to assume the risks to my child and my household. I also agree to follow all safety requirements that the childcare, summer camp, OST programs, and/or TK-12 schools imposes as a condition of enrolling my child.

6. Each School subject to this Directive must provide items such as Face Coverings (as provided in Health Officer Order No. C19-12d issued on December 22, 2020, and any future amendment to that order), hand sanitizer or handwashing stations, or both, and disinfectant and related supplies to any of that School’s Personnel. If any School is unable to provide these required items to Personnel or otherwise fails to comply with required Guidance, then it must cease operating until it can fully comply and demonstrate its strict compliance. Further, as to any non-compliant operation, any



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such School is subject to immediate closure and the fines and other legal remedies described below, as a violation of the Stay-Safer-At-Home Order.

- 7. Schools must comply with the following requirements with respect to testing:**
  - a. Routine Asymptomatic Testing for School-Based Adults**
    - i. All adults based in a School facility, including but not limited to teachers, staff, paraprofessionals, contracted janitorial staff, security, therapists, aides, essential volunteers, interns, and student teachers (“School-Based Adults”) must be tested for COVID-19 as follows:**
      - 1. Except as expressly provided in subsection 7(a)(i)(4) below, testing must be done via nucleic acid diagnostic test or other test as authorized by the San Francisco Department of Public Health (“DPH”). All processing of tests must be conducted by a lab that complies with Health Officer Order No. C19-10 (available online at [www.sfdph.org/healthorders](http://www.sfdph.org/healthorders)), including that the lab must meet the requirements to perform testing classified as high complexity under the Clinical Laboratory Improvement Amendments (“CLIA”) of Section 353 of the Public Health Service Act (including but not limited to having a CLIA waiver to perform such tests). Except as expressly provided in subsection 7(a)(i)(4) below, any lab that processes tests must also submit all results (not just positive results) via the State of California’s California Reportable Disease Information Exchange (“CalREDIE”) system or any replacement to that system adopted by the State of California.**
      - 2. Each School-Based Adult must be tested within seven days before first returning to work for in-person, on-site instruction (“pre-return test”).**
      - 3. Each School-Based Adult also must be tested weekly after returning to work following the pre-return test as long as they are providing on-site work at any point during the week. School-Based Adults who have tested positive for active infection with SARS-coV-2 virus within the last 90 days are exempt from this weekly testing requirement.**
      - 4. In lieu of using nucleic acid diagnostic tests weekly, each School-Based Adult may be tested twice weekly using an antigen test. Positive antigen test results in asymptomatic people must be confirmed by nucleic acid testing. Until the result of the nucleic acid confirmatory test is known, the person is considered positive. If the nucleic acid diagnostic test is negative, the person should be considered not to be infected with COVID-19. Positive and negative antigen test results must be provided to the SFPDH Schools and Childcare Hub as described in subsection**



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7(a)(iv) below, and all positive and negative results must ultimately be entered into the CalREDIE surveillance system.

5. Each School must maintain a log of testing for all School-Based Adults who work or provide services onsite at the School (the “Testing Log”), including all of the information set forth in the SFDPH Testing Log Protocol available at <https://www.sfdph.org/dph/covid-19/schools-education.asp>. The log must be retained for 12 months and be made available to SFDPH upon request.
  - ii. A School must not allow any School-Based Adult to come to work or otherwise enter the School’s premises if that person refuses to be tested as outlined in subsection (i) above or to provide test results to the School, unless expressly permitted in advance and in writing by the Health Officer or the Health Officer’s designee. SFDPH encourages schools to give teachers the option of leave without pay if they decline to participate in testing.
  - iii. Schools must take all steps necessary to ensure the School receives the results of these tests promptly. Specifically, Schools must require School-Based Adults to either (1) sign a release of information (ROI) authorizing the testing lab or ordering provider to share the COVID-19 test result directly with the School or (2) commit to providing results to the School within *one hour* of receiving a *positive* or *inconclusive* result and *24 hours* of receiving a *negative* result. A sample ROI is available online at <https://www.sfdph.org/dph/covid-19/schools-education.asp>. If a School-Based Adult chooses to report results to the School themselves, the person may make an initial verbal report of a positive or inconclusive result to facilitate rapid infection control measures, but must follow-up with documentation of any result within 48 hours whether it be a positive, inconclusive, or negative result.
  - iv. Schools must immediately (within *one hour* of learning of the result) report any positive or inconclusive test result to SFDPH Schools and Childcare Hub: call 628-217-7499 or email [Schools-childcaresites@sfdph.org](mailto:Schools-childcaresites@sfdph.org) (please put “SECURE” in the subject line).
  - v. School-Based Adults who test positive for COVID-19 must not be allowed to return to the School until the relevant criteria set forth in SFDPH’s guidance on “Ending Isolation or Returning to Work for Those Who Have Confirmed or Suspected COVID-19” are satisfied. (The guidance is available online at <https://www.sfdcp.org/rtw>.) School-Based Adults who receive an inconclusive test result may get retested and use the new result. If they choose not to get retested, they must follow the return to work guidelines as though they have a positive result.



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**b. Symptomatic Testing**

- i. If any School-Based Adult has symptoms of COVID-19, the School must send that person home in compliance with the procedures set forth in the TK-12 Guidance. The person must not be allowed to return to the School until the relevant criteria set forth in SFDPH’s guidance on “Ending Isolation or Returning to Work for Those Who Have Confirmed or Suspected COVID-19” are satisfied. (The guidance is available at <https://www.sfdcp.org/rtw>.) It is strongly recommended that the person be tested as soon as possible for COVID-19. Schools must take all steps necessary to ensure the School receives the results of these tests promptly as set forth in Section 7.a.3, above. Schools must immediately (within one hour of learning of the result) report any positive or inconclusive test result to the SFDPH Schools and Childcare Hub: call 628-217-7499 or email Schools-childcaresites@sfdph.org (please put “SECURE” in the subject line).**
- ii. If any student has symptoms of COVID-19, the School must send that student home in compliance with the procedures set forth in the TK-12 Guidance. The student must not be allowed to return to the School until the relevant criteria set forth in SFDPH’s “Quick Guide for Schools, Childcares, and Programs for Children and Youth” are satisfied (available at <https://www.sfdcp.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/08/Quick-Guide-Suspected-Confirmed-COVID-19-Schools-Childcares-Programs-FINAL-2020-08-10.pdf>). It is strongly recommended that the student be tested as soon as possible for COVID-19. Schools must require parents or guardians to inform the School immediately (within one hour of learning of the test result) if their child tests positive or has an inconclusive test result and to provide documentation of the positive or inconclusive result within 48 hours. Schools must immediately (within one hour of learning of the test result) report any positive or inconclusive test result to the SFDPH Schools and Childcare Hub: call 628-217-7499 and email Schools-childcaresites@sfdph.org.**

**c. General Requirements**

- i. The School must share information about testing with SFDPH as required by this Directive and as requested by SFDPH at any time while this Directive is in effect. Such information may include and is not limited to information about attendance, contact information, health information, employment information (for School-Based Adults), and any other information related to this Directive required by SFDPH. The disclosure of any confidential information under this subsection is limited to the minimum necessary for public health purposes as determined by SFDPH, and any such information that is confidential must be protected by SFDPH as required by law.**



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- ii. All Testing must be done using tests that are authorized by the United States Food and Drug Administration or by the California Department of Public Health.
  - iii. Testing results, including but not limited to the Testing Log, are considered confidential health information of staff and students, and must be handled accordingly. For example, Schools can consider the following measures:
    - If test results are to be faxed to the School, the fax machine must be placed in a private, secure area;
    - Hard copy documentation must be kept in a secure location, such as a locked file cabinet behind a locked door, and must not be left unsecured while unattended;
    - Electronic information must be stored on password-protected computers; and
    - Any electronically-stored information must not be maintained in a cloud-based system that is located outside the United States.
  - iv. The School must maintain the confidentiality of information about testing results of School-Based Adults and students, and may only share such information as allowed or required by law.
  - v. In relation to reporting test results for School-Based Adults or students, the School must provide all information requested by SFDPH.
  - vi. The School must comply with SFDPH requirements regarding reporting of metrics as stated in “SFDPH Reporting Metrics” (available at <https://www.sfdph.org/dph/covid-19/schools-education.asp>).
8. Each School must cooperate with SFDPH by working and collaborating with SFDPH, and otherwise following the direction of SFDPH, in relation to the School and the subject matter of this Directive. Such cooperation includes, but is not limited to, all of the following:
- Submitting a “List of Close Contacts of a Positive Covid-19 Case” (available at <http://www.sfdph.org/dph/files/ig/TEMPLATE-School-Contact-Tracing.docx>) to the SFDPH Schools and Childcare Hub via email (Schools-childcaresites@sfdph.org) *within 24 hours* of learning of a positive COVID-19 case;
  - Promptly taking and responding to telephone calls, emails, and other inquiries and requests by representatives of SFDPH;
  - Allowing SFDPH personnel on-site without advance notice;



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- Responding to all SFDPH requests for information in a timely manner;
  - Communicating with School-Based Adults, students, and their parent(s) or guardian(s) as directed by SFDPH; and
  - Taking immediate action as required by SFDPH in the event of an outbreak or other time-sensitive situation that poses a risk to the health and safety of students, School-Based Adults, or the community.
9. Schools must advise all students and School-Based Adults that they must notify the school and stay home if any household member or other close contact has a positive or inconclusive COVID-19 test or was otherwise diagnosed with COVID-19 by a healthcare provider. School-Based Adults in these circumstances may return to school per the return to work guidance referenced in Section 7.a.v, above. Students may return to school when the relevant criteria set forth in SFDPH’s “Quick Guide for Schools, Childcares, and Programs for Children and Youth” are satisfied (available at <https://www.sfdcp.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/08/Quick-Guide-Suspected-Confirmed-COVID-19-Schools-Childcares-Programs-FINAL-2020-08-10.pdf>). It is strongly recommended that individuals get tested for COVID-19 six days after their last close contact with the person with COVID-19.
10. For purposes of this Directive, “Personnel” includes all of the following people who provide goods or services associated with the Host in the City: employees; contractors and sub-contractors (such as those who sell goods or perform services onsite or who deliver goods for the business); vendors who are permitted to sell goods onsite (such as farmers or others who sell at stalls in farmers’ markets); volunteers; and other individuals who regularly provide services onsite at the request of the Host. “Personnel” includes “gig workers” who perform work via the business’s app or other online interface, if any.
11. This Directive may be revised by the Health Officer, through revision of this Directive or another future directive or order, as conditions relating to COVID-19 require, in the discretion of the Health Officer. All Schools must stay updated regarding any changes to the Stay-Safer-At-Home Order and this Directive by checking the Department of Public Health website ([www.sfdph.org/healthorders](http://www.sfdph.org/healthorders); [www.sfdph.org/directives](http://www.sfdph.org/directives)) regularly.

**This Directive is issued in furtherance of the purposes of the Stay-Safer-At-Home Order. Where a conflict exists between this Directive and any state, local, or federal public health order related to the COVID-19 pandemic, the most restrictive provision controls. Failure to carry out this Directive is a violation of the Stay-Safer-At-Home Order, constitutes an imminent threat and menace to public health, constitutes a public nuisance, and is a misdemeanor punishable by fine, imprisonment, or both.**

Susan Philip, MD, MPH,  
Acting Health Officer of the  
City and County of San Francisco

Date: January 27, 2021



**Reopening TK-12 Schools for In-Person Instruction  
Interim Guidance for School Year 2020-2021**

**1/27/2021**

The following guidance was developed by the San Francisco Department of Public Health (SFPDH) for local use. It will be posted at <http://www.sfcdcp.org/CovidSchoolsChildcare>.

**AUDIENCE:** Public, private and parochial TK-12 schools in San Francisco. Transitional kindergarten (TK) programs that are not part of an elementary school should refer to SFPDH guidance for childcares.

**Summary of Changes since the 12/8/2020 Version**

Major revisions are highlighted throughout the document **in blue color**.

- Updated to reflect California Department of Public Health (CDPH) [Consolidated Schools Guidance](#) and Cal/OSHA requirements, including new testing recommendations. Section on testing added.
- Schools must post signs on reporting unsafe working conditions, taking a break safely, and ventilation in break rooms by 2/3/2021. Section on required signs added. Section on staff break rooms and workrooms updated.
- Home screening for COVID-19 symptoms and exposure recommended for students and staff.
- The term “stable group” or “group” has replaced the term “cohort” when referring to classroom instruction, to align with the language in the CDPH Schools Guidance of 1/14/2020. The principle of cohorting staff and students in stable groups remains unchanged.
- Instructions on what to do for a suspected or confirmed COVID case updated. Links to sample notification letters added.
- Clarification on school closure due to COVID-19 added.

**PURPOSE:** To help TK-12 schools understand health and safety practices needed to safely offer in-person instruction.

**BACKGROUND:** In order for a school to reopen, SFPDH must first review and approve the school’s application. In addition, local COVID-19 transmission must be low enough to allow school reopening, as defined by state and local health orders.

Since the start of the COVID-19 epidemic, our understanding of COVID-19 has increased tremendously. We now know that certain precautions, such as universal face coverings, effectively decrease the risk of COVID-19 transmission. By coordinating and layering effective interventions, schools can reduce the risk of COVID-19 enough to reopen safely for staff and students.

The recommendations below are based on the best science available at this time and the current degree of COVID-19 transmission in San Francisco. They are subject to change as new knowledge emerges and local community transmission changes.



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## Key messages for schools

- **Address adult-to-adult transmission and adults as sources of infection.** In many cases, staff are the source of COVID-19 in a school. Although children can be infected with COVID-19 and spread it to adults, spread of infection between adults is more common.
  - **Minimize the number of staff eating together in indoor break rooms.** Eating together in break rooms is a common way that staff are exposed to COVID-19 in work settings.

- **Preventing person-to-person transmission via respiratory droplets is more important than cleaning and disinfection.** Face masks, physical distancing, and indoor ventilation are most important in preventing the spread of COVID-19.

COVID-19 spreads from person-to-person in the air through virus-containing respiratory droplets. These droplets enter the air when a person with COVID-19 breathes, especially when they talk, sing, cough, sneeze or exercise. In poorly ventilated indoor spaces, smaller droplets can float in the air and travel more than 6 feet. The virus that causes COVID-19 must enter a person's eyes, nose or mouth to infect them.

COVID-19 can also spread if a person touches their eyes, nose or mouth after touching a contaminated surface (also known as a fomite), but this is less common.

- **Exposure risk lies along a continuum.** A rule of thumb is that a person must spend a total of 15 minutes in 24 hours within 6 feet of someone with COVID-19 to be at risk of infection.
  - Spending less time together is safer than more time; being further apart is better than being closer together.
  - Smaller groups are safer than larger ones, outdoor settings are safer than indoor ones.
  - More people using face masks is safer than fewer people using face masks.
  - Activities that produce fewer respiratory droplets are safer than those that produce many droplets (silence < quiet talking < loud talking < singing).

## Prepare for reopening

### Eligibility to reopen under the CDPH Reopening Framework

	Red, Orange and Yellow Tiers	Purple Tier	“Deep Purple” Tier (adj case rate >25)
School sites that have <b>not</b> reopened	All schools whose applications have been approved by SFDPH may open after the county has been in Red Tier or lower for 5 consecutive days.	Schools with grades TK-6 whose applications have been approved by SFDPH and who have passed 7-day review by CDPH may open.	No schools may reopen. School sites may offer or expand targeted specialized support and limited instruction for small cohorts of students (i.e. “Learning Hubs” or Special Day Classes for special education students). These groups must follow CDPH cohorting guidance.
School sites that have reopened	School sites can continue to phase-in additional grades, students, or days/hours per week. School sites that have opened for TK-6 can phase-in grades 7-12.		

- To be considered to have “reopened” for in-person instruction for purposes of the chart above, the specific school site or location must have offered ALL students in at least 1 grade the option to attend in-person, and begun in-person instruction to at least some of those students.
- Reopening applies to a school site, not for an entire school or LEA. For example, if a school has one campus for grades K-2 and another for grades 3-5, each site is considered separately when looking at eligibility to reopen.
- If an elementary school is approved to reopen in purple tier, but does not reopen, and the county moves into deep purple tier, the school must wait until the county moves back into purple tier to reopen.
- A middle school with grades 6-8 that is approved to open for 6<sup>th</sup> grade in purple tier cannot then phase in 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> grades. However, a middle school with grades 6-8 that was already open before the county moved into Purple Tier can continue to phase in 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> grades in Purple Tier. Similarly, a K-12 school site that was already open for lower grades before the county entered Purple Tier can phase in grades 7-12.
- If a school was temporarily closed, for example, for 10-14 days following an outbreak, the school may reopen.

## Applying to reopen

- Submit an application to SFPDH. Your school will also need a facility review and site assessment to be approved to re-open for in-person instruction. For the application process, see <https://www.sfdph.org/dph/COVID-19/Schools-Education.asp>

Your application will need to include the following documents:

- A Health and Safety Plan outlining what the school will do to implement the requirements in this guidance and any relevant San Francisco Health Orders or Directives.
- A CDPH COVID-19 Safety Plan (CSP), consisting of two documents:
  - [CDPH COVID-19 School Guidance Checklist](#)
  - Cal-OSHA COVID-19 Prevention Program (CPP), required of all employers per [Cal/OSHA's Emergency Temporary Standards](#) published 12/1/2020.  
*Your school's Health and Safety Plan can serve as your CPP if it includes all the elements required by Cal-OSHA.*
- Elementary schools that are applying to reopen in purple tier must also submit the COVID-19 Safety Plan to CDPH for review 7 days prior to reopening.
- Post your CDPH COVID-19 Safety Plan on your school or LEA website's homepage at least 5 days before reopening. **Schools that have already reopened must post their CDPH COVID-19 Safety Plan on their LEA or school website's homepage by February 1, 2021.**

## Prepare for re-opening

- Designate a COVID-19 staff liaison to be the single point of contact at each school for questions or concerns around practices, protocols, or potential exposure. This person will also serve as a liaison to SFPDH.
- Establish health and safety protocols to prevent COVID-19 transmission, as required by SFPDH Health Orders.
- Train staff and students on health and safety practices. Cal/OSHA requires that employee training cover certain COVID-19 information. See <https://www.dir.ca.gov/dosh/coronavirus/COVID19FAQs.html>
- Identify isolation rooms for students with symptoms of COVID-19 who are waiting to be picked up. Isolation rooms should be in an area where others do not enter or pass through.
- Establish protocols for staff and students with symptoms of COVID-19 and for communication with staff, students and families after a confirmed COVID-19 case at school.
- Share your school's health and safety plan with staff, families, students and other members of the school community.

## Staff considerations

Protect staff, especially those at high risk of severe COVID-19 illness. See [sfcdcp.org/vulnerable](https://sfcdcp.org/vulnerable) for a list of groups at higher risk for severe COVID-19.

- Offer options that reduce exposure risk to staff who are in groups at higher risk for severe COVID-19 (e.g. telework, reassignment, or modified job duties that limit direct interaction with staff and students).
  - Avoid assigning non-medical staff in groups at higher risk for severe COVID-19 to assess students who feel sick or monitor/care for sick students waiting to be picked up.
  - Consider using portable plexiglass barriers, a clear window, or other barrier for staff who must interact with large numbers of students or adults within 6 feet.
  - Consider the use of face shields, to be used with face coverings, for staff whose duties make it difficult to maintain physical distancing.
  - Keep staff in different stable groups from mixing. During the two weeks before school opens, do not hold in-person staff development, meetings, or team-building activities that bring together staff who will be working with different stable groups.
- Implement sick leave policies that support staff in staying home when ill.
- Monitor staff absenteeism. Plan for staff absences of 10 days due to COVID-19 infection or exposure, as community transmission increases. Have a roster of trained back-up staff.
  - **Avoid combining stable groups when staff are absent**, as this increases the risk of infection spreading in your school.
  - Be prepared to offer distance learning to students whose teachers must stay home due to COVID-19 infection or exposure, and no other teacher is available.

## Student considerations

- Prioritize students who are likely to experience the greatest negative impacts from not being able to attend school in-person, keeping equity in mind.
- Ensure that students, including students with disabilities, have access to instruction as required by federal and state law.
- Offer distance learning to students for whom in-person attendance would pose a health risk to the student or their family/household. For a list of groups at higher risk of severe COVID-19, see [sfcdcp.org/vulnerable](https://sfcdcp.org/vulnerable).
- Do not exclude students from in-person attendance solely because of medical conditions that put them at higher risk of severe COVID-19. Allow the child's medical team and family to determine whether in-person attendance is safe.

## Required Signs

Schools that are open must post these signs as soon as possible, **no later than February 3, 2021**:

- **Reminder to wear a face covering, stay 6 feet apart, and stay home if ill**  
Post at all public entrances and other places where the signs will be easily noticed. SFDPH-approved signs are online at [sf.gov/outreach-toolkit-coronavirus-covid-19](https://sf.gov/outreach-toolkit-coronavirus-covid-19)

- **Reporting unsafe conditions related to COVID-19**  
Post in staff break rooms and other staff areas.  
Online at <https://sf.gov/file/reporting-health-order-violations-poster-11x17>  
and <https://sf.gov/sites/default/files/2020-11/YourHealthOnTheJob-8.5x11-111220.pdf>  
Signs must say that personnel can report violations of COVID-19 health orders and directives by calling 311 or online at <https://www.sf.gov/report-health-order-violation>, and that the employee’s identity will not be disclosed to the employer.
- **Ventilation Checklists** (indoor programs only)  
Post in staff break rooms. Online at <https://sf.gov/file/ventilation-checklist-poster>  
Signs must list how the program is ventilated:
  - All available windows and doors are kept open
  - Fully operational HVAC systems
  - Appropriately sized portable air cleaners in each room
  - None of the above
- **Take a Break Safely**  
Post in staff break rooms. Online at <https://sf.gov/file/covid-break-room>.

## Strategies to prevent spread of COVID-19 in schools

### Prevent COVID-19 from entering the school

Screen everyone entering the school for COVID-19 symptoms and exposure.

- Give staff and families of students a screening form to review at home each day. Instruct staff and students to stay home and get tested if they have COVID-19 symptoms or exposure (close contact). Schools may require staff and families to submit screening responses by app, email, on paper, or by other means.
- Ask all other persons entering the school about COVID-19 symptoms and exposures when they arrive – including parents/caregivers, visitors, contractors, and government officials. Emergency personnel responding to a 911 call do not need to be screened.
- If people answer “yes” to any of the screening and exposure questions, do not let them enter.
- If students arrive with symptoms, send them home. Keep students who are waiting to be picked up in a designated isolation room.
- Schools may choose to require temperature checks of people entering the school, either at home or upon arrival. SFDPH does not require temperature checks at schools.

For more information about screening and temperature checks, see [sfcdcp.org/screen](https://sfcdcp.org/screen).

Staff and children who are sick must stay home.

- Remind parents to keep students home when ill. A parent/guardian handout, “COVID-19 Health Checks/If Your Child has Symptoms” is available at <https://sfcdcp.org/covidschoolschildcare>.
- Encourage family members of students and staff with symptoms of COVID-19 to get tested promptly, before they can spread infection to students and staff.

## Encourage staff and students to stay home for 10 days after traveling.

- SFDPH recommends that travelers quarantine at home after travel outside the Bay Area, if their activities put them at risk for COVID-19 infection. Higher-risk activities include:
  - Spending time within 6 feet of people outside their household when not wearing face coverings, especially if indoors.
  - Travel on planes, buses, trains, or other vehicles shared with people outside their household if face coverings were not worn at all times by all passengers.

This recommendation does not apply to staff and students who commute to school from outside of the Bay Area. For more information, see

<https://www.sfdph.org/dph/alerts/covid-guidance/COVID-Travel-Advisory.pdf>

- While San Francisco Health Order C19-17 requiring travel quarantine is in effect, most individuals who travel, move, or return to the Bay Area must quarantine for at least ten days. Check <https://www.sfdph.org/healthorders> for the latest status of the travel quarantine order.
- CDPH also recommends that travelers quarantine after non-essential travel outside of California. For more information, see <https://www.cdph.ca.gov/Programs/CID/DCDC/Pages/COVID-19/Travel-Advisory.aspx>

## Restrict non-essential visitors

- Limit non-essential visitors, including volunteers.
- Discourage parents and other family members from entering the school. Avoid allowing family members into classrooms and other student areas.
- School tours and open houses must meet CDPH and SFDPH requirements for gatherings. For more information, see <https://www.sfdph.org/dph/alerts/covid-guidance/Gatherings-Tips.pdf>. Do not hold tours and open houses when students are present. Keep a log of all persons present, in case a person at the tour or open house later tests positive for COVID-19.

For relevant Health Orders and Health Officer directives, see

<https://www.sfdph.org/dph/alerts/files/C19-07-Shelter-in-Place-Health-Order.pdf>

<https://www.sfdph.org/directives>.

## Stable groups of staff and students

*A stable group has the same staff and students each day, stays together for all activities (e.g., lunch, recess, etc.) and avoids contact with people outside the group. Keeping teachers and students in the same group lowers their exposure risk by decreasing the number of people they interact with each day. Keeping groups as small as feasible further reduces exposure risk.*

- Elementary schools must keep students in stable classroom groups, no larger than the standard class size for each grade level, with the same teacher(s) for the entire day.
- Middle schools and high schools may have larger groups with students from more than one classroom. Keep stable groups as small as possible, while ensuring that groups are not segregated by race/ethnicity or socioeconomic class.
  - Limit cross-over of students and teachers as much as possible. Cross-over of students between groups is permitted to meet students' educational needs.

- Consider block schedules or other schedules with longer classes and fewer subjects per day, to decrease the number of students that teachers interact with each day. This will also decrease opportunities for students to mix in hallways during class changes. If a block schedule is used, groups should change no more often than every 3-4 weeks.
- School staff should document visits to classrooms that are not part of their group. Consider a sign-in sheet/log on the classroom door.

### Limit mixing of groups, including staff assigned to different groups.

- Stagger schedules for arrival/dismissal, recess and lunch to prevent mixing of groups.
- Designate specific routes to enter and exit the school for each group, using as many entrances/exits as feasible.
- Minimize movement of students through hallways  
*Examples of strategies to keep hallways clear:*
  - Have a small, stable set of teachers rotate into the classroom for different subjects while students remain in the classroom.
  - Stagger class change times so that only one group is in the hallway at any given time.
  - Consider creating one-way hallways to minimize congestion. Place physical guides, like tape, on floors and sidewalks to mark one-way routes.
  - Assign adjacent classrooms to teachers in the same group to minimize the distance that students travel between classes.
- Gatherings of more than one group are currently prohibited (i.e., school assemblies, performances, morning circle).

### Physical distancing

*Physical distancing decreases the risk of COVID-19 from respiratory droplets.*

- Staff must stay at least 6 feet from other adults, including staff in the same group, whenever possible.
  - Set up staff workspaces so that staff do not work or sit within 6 feet of each other.
  - Consider virtual meetings using video conferencing apps for parent-teacher meetings and staff meetings, even if all staff are on campus.
- Staff should stay at least 6 feet away from students as much as possible while meeting their developmental and learning needs.
  - Consider using alternative spaces like cafeterias and auditoriums for instruction to allow more space between students.
- Elementary school: During group activities, playtime and recess, physical distancing may be relaxed for younger students in a classroom who are wearing face masks. When outside or in shared spaces, prioritize preventing interactions between stable groups over distancing of students within a group.



- Middle and high school: Physical distancing of students becomes more important when stable groups are larger than a single class, or if there is cross-over between stable groups.

### In the classroom

- Space student desks six feet apart, or as much as space permits. Consider partitions between students when desks cannot be spaced 6 feet apart.
- Staff desks must be at least 6 feet away from student desks, regardless of space limitations.
- Arrange desks facing in the same direction, so that students do not sit facing each other.
  - Have students sit in the same seats each day if feasible. Avoid changing seat assignments more often than every 3-4 weeks, unless needed for student safety or well-being. If groups change classrooms for different subjects, try to keep the same seating arrangements across classes.

### Outside the classroom

- Limit occupancy of bathrooms, elevators, locker rooms, staff rooms, and other shared spaces to allow 6 feet of distancing. Adjacent bathroom stalls may be used. Post signs with occupancy limits.
- At places where students congregate or wait in line, mark spots on the floor or the walls 6 feet apart to indicate where to stand.
- Consider eliminating use of lockers in hallways and other shared spaces. If used, ensure 6 feet of distancing between students accessing lockers.  
*Example:* Assign lockers so that students in the same stable group are given lockers 6 feet apart, and stagger times for locker access between groups.
- Consider suspending uniform requirements for PE, so that students do not need to use the locker room to change.

### Face masks and cloth face coverings

*Face masks and other face coverings keep people from spreading the infection to others, by trapping respiratory droplets before they can travel through the air. They also help protect the person wearing the face covering from infection.*

For this guidance, “face masks” includes cloth face coverings that cover the mouth and nose and do not have an exhalation valve.

- All adults and students, including those in TK-2<sup>nd</sup> grade, must wear face masks over both their nose and mouth while on campus. This includes family members and caregivers dropping-off or picking-up students outside the building.
- People may not enter the building unless they are wearing a face mask or have documentation of a medical contraindication to face masks.
- Provide face masks to students who forget to bring their face mask to school. Reusable cloth face masks are recommended over disposable masks, and can be sent home with families to be laundered.
- Keep a supply of face masks for other individuals who have forgotten to bring one.

- CDPH requires schools to exclude students from in-person attendance if the student refuses to wear a face mask and does not have a medical exemption.
- Some students will need additional support to consistently wear face masks. Schools should take into account equity and each student’s individual circumstances when deciding how to best support students in wearing face masks.
- Do not exclude students from in-person learning if they have an approved medical exemption to face masks. For students whose exemptions are due to developmental delay, autism or other conditions that limit their ability to tolerate face masks, encourage and remind them to wear their face mask as much as possible. For these students and others who have difficulty keeping their face masks on at all times, prioritize consistent face mask use.
  - When in hallways, bathrooms and other spaces where students may encounter staff and students from other classrooms.
  - For younger students, during times when physical distancing is relaxed.
  - When off-campus in public spaces, for example, when walking to a nearby park or outside the building at drop-off or pick-up.
  - When a student is ill and waiting to be picked up (and is not asleep).
- Schools should act judiciously when considering whether exclude a student from in-person learning. Exclusion from in-person learning should be done only after exhausting efforts to support students in consistently wearing a face mask. Offer alternative educational opportunities for students who must be excluded from campus.

#### Exemptions to face masks and cloth face coverings; use of face shields

- Students with documented medical or behavioral contraindications to face masks and cloth face coverings are exempt. This includes children who are unable to tolerate face masks due to autism or developmental delay and children unable to independently remove face masks due to developmental delay or disability. Seat students who cannot wear face masks at least 6 feet away from other students, if possible to do so without stigmatizing the student.
- School districts’ or independent schools’ health teams must confirm student exemptions. Students with exemptions must wear a non-restrictive alternative, such as a face shield with a drape on the bottom edge, if their condition permits it.
- Asthma, claustrophobia, and anxiety are not generally considered to be contraindications to face masks.
- Staff with a medical contraindication to face mask, documented by a medical provider, may be allowed to wear a face shield with a cloth drape on the bottom tucked into the top of their shirt. However, this is not as effective as a face mask in preventing spread of infection.
  - Staff not wearing a face covering, face shield with a drape or other effective alternative respiratory protection, for any reason, should be at least six feet apart from all other persons unless the unmasked employee is tested at least twice weekly for COVID-19. Do not use COVID-19 testing as an alternative to face coverings when face coverings are otherwise required.

- Staff working alone in a private indoor space do not need to wear a face mask if
  - The space is completely enclosed (i.e. a private office, not a cubicle), and
  - Other people are not likely to enter the space at any time in the following few days

However, staff working alone in a classroom that will be used later by others are not exempt, and must wear a mask. Similarly, administrators in a private office must wear a mask, even when alone, if they can reasonably expect others to enter their office to ask questions or to meet.

- Staff working with students who are hard-of-hearing may use a clear mask (a disposable or cloth face mask with a clear inset). If this is not feasible, a face shield with a cloth drape tucked into the shirt or a clear barrier may also be used. Staff should wear a face mask at other times.
- Do not use face shields in place of face masks in other situations. Face shields have not been shown to keep the wearer from infecting others.
- Consider using a face shield in addition to a face mask. Face shields provide additional eye protection for the wearer. When a face shield is used with a mask, a cloth drape is not needed.
- For more information, see <https://www.sfdph.org/dph/alerts/files/Order-C19-12-Face-Coverings.pdf>  
<https://www.cdph.ca.gov/Programs/CID/DCDC/Pages/COVID-19/guidance-for-face-coverings.aspx>

## Ventilation and outdoor spaces

*Being outside is much lower risk than being inside. When indoors, increasing outdoor air circulation lowers the risk of infection by “diluting” any infectious respiratory virus in the air with fresh outdoor air.*

### Outdoor spaces

- Do as many activities outside as possible, especially higher-risk activities like snacks/meals and exercise.
- Stagger use of outdoor spaces to keep groups from mixing. If the outdoor space is large enough, consider designating separate spaces for each group.
- Outdoor spaces may be covered with a tent, canopy, or other shelter, as long as the shelter complies with: (1) CDPH’s November 25, 2020 guidance regarding “Use of Temporary Structures for Outdoor Business Operations” (available at <https://www.cdph.ca.gov/Programs/CID/DCDC/Pages/COVID-19/Use-of-Temporary-Structures-for-Outdoor-Business-Operations.aspx>); and (2) SFDPH’s guidance on “Safer Ways to Use New Outdoor Shared Spaces for Allowed Activities During COVID-19” (available at <https://www.sfdph.org/dph/files/ig/Guidance-Shared-Outdoor-Spaces.pdf>).
- Outdoor playgrounds/natural play areas only need routine maintenance. Make sure that children wash or sanitize their hands before and after using these spaces. When hand hygiene is emphasized, cleaning of outdoor play structures is not needed between groups.

Make sure that indoor spaces are well-ventilated.

*Ventilation systems can decrease the number of infectious respiratory droplets in the air by replacing indoor air with fresh, uncontaminated air and/or filtering droplets out of the air.*

SFDPH reviews ventilation as part of all schools’ applications to reopen for in-person instruction. Schools must make any ventilation improvements required by SFDPH.

General recommendations include:

- Open windows to increase natural ventilation with outdoor air when health and safety allow. When possible, consider also leaving room doors slightly open to promote flow of outdoor air through the indoor space.
- Do not prop or wedge open fire doors. Continue to follow fire and building safety requirements.
- If open windows pose a risk of falls for children, use window locks to keep windows from opening more than 4 inches, or other safety devices to prevent falls.
- If your program has an HVAC system (sometimes called mechanical ventilation, forced air, or central air), maximize the intake of outdoor air and minimizing recirculated air.
- Consider portable air cleaners (“HEPA filters”).
- If the school uses fans, adjust the direction of fans to so that air does not blow from one person’s space to another’s space.

For detailed guidance on ventilation, see <https://www.sfdcp.org/COVID-ventilation>.

## Testing

Detailed information about current testing requirements is set forth in Health Officer Directive No. 2020-33, online at <https://www.sfdph.org/directives>.

- Staff at school sites offering in-person instruction must be tested within seven days before their first day of work at the school site.
- Schools must test asymptomatic staff and students at school sites offering in-person instruction as listed below. Students and staff who have had COVID-19 in the last 90 days, confirmed by a lab test, are exempt.

	<b>Yellow/Orange</b>	<b>Red/Purple</b>	<b>“Half-Deep Purple”</b> Adjusted Case Rate >14
<b>Asymptomatic staff with no known exposures</b>	A sampling of staff, frequency to be determined by SFDPH.	All staff every 2 weeks	All staff, weekly PCR or twice weekly antigen testing
<b>Asymptomatic students with no known exposures</b>	A sampling of students, frequency to be determined by SFDPH. Testing to monitor the degree of COVID-19 in the school population.		

- At this time, rapid antigen testing is only recommended for twice-weekly screening testing.

- If a person without symptoms has a positive rapid antigen test, the result should be confirmed with a PCR test. If the PCR is negative, the person is considered NOT to have COVID-19. For details, see <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/lab/resources/antigen-tests-guidelines.html#evaluating-test-results>
- Cal/OSHA requires that staff be tested weekly during an outbreak. Workers who are exposed on the job must also be offered testing. For more information, see <https://www.dir.ca.gov/dosh/coronavirus/COVID19FAQs.html#testing>

## Hand hygiene

*Frequent handwashing and hand sanitizer use removes COVID-19 germs from people's hands before they can infect themselves by touching their eyes, nose or mouth.*

- Develop routines and schedules for staff and students in all grades to wash or sanitize their hands, especially before and after eating, upon entering/re-entering a classroom, and before and after touching shared equipment such as computer keyboards.
- Every classroom/instructional space and common area (staff work rooms, eating areas) must have hand sanitizer or a place to wash hands upon entering.
- Establish procedures to ensure that sinks and handwashing stations do not run out of soap or paper towels, and that hand sanitizer does not run out.
- Post signs encouraging hand hygiene. A hand hygiene sign in multiple languages is available for download at <http://eziz.org/assets/docs/IMM-825.pdf>

## Limit sharing

- Consider suspending or modifying use of drinking fountains. Encourage the use of reusable water bottles instead.
- Limit sharing of art supplies, manipulatives, and other high-touch materials as much as possible. If feasible, have a separate set of supplies for each student. Keep each student's supplies and belongings in separate, individually labeled boxes or cubbies.
- Avoid sharing electronic devices, sports equipment, clothing, books, games and learning aids when feasible. Clean and disinfect shared supplies and equipment between students.

## Cleaning and disinfection

*Routine cleaning should continue, but routine disinfection is no longer recommended in schools. Contaminated surfaces are not thought to be a significant route of transmission, and frequent disinfection can pose a health risk to students due to the strong chemicals often used.*

- Clean frequently touched surfaces daily and between stable groups. Routine cleaning focuses on frequently touched surfaces like door handles, shared desks and tables, light switches, sink handles, and keyboards.
  - Desks and chairs that are only used by one person do not need to be cleaned daily.
- After a known case of COVID-19, clean and disinfect the areas where the person with COVID-19 spent a large proportion of their time (classroom, or an administrator's office). Take the following steps:

- Open windows and use fans to increase outdoor air circulation in the areas to be cleaned.
- Wait 24 hours, or as long as practical, before cleaning and disinfection.
- Clean and disinfect all surfaces in the areas used by the ill person, including electronic equipment like tablets, touch screens, keyboards, and remote controls. Use a disinfectant effective against COVID-19. See [EPA's List N](#) for EPA-approved disinfectants effective against COVID-19.
- Vacuum the space if needed.
- For more information, see CDC guidelines on “Cleaning and Disinfecting Your Facility” at <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/disinfecting-building-facility.html> and CDPH COVID-19 and Reopening In-Person Instruction Framework & Public Health Guidance for K-12 Schools, section on Cleaning and Disinfection [https://www.cdph.ca.gov/Programs/CID/DCDC/CDPH%20Document%20Library/COVID-19/Consolidated\\_Schools\\_Guidance.pdf](https://www.cdph.ca.gov/Programs/CID/DCDC/CDPH%20Document%20Library/COVID-19/Consolidated_Schools_Guidance.pdf)

## Specific situations

### Staff break rooms and teacher work rooms

*Break rooms are a common source of COVID-19 exposure in all work settings. Staff often do not view themselves and colleagues as sources of infection, and may forget to take precautions with co-workers, especially during social interactions such as breaks or lunch time, in the copy room, when checking mailboxes, etc.*

- Strongly discourage staff from eating together, especially indoors.
  - Schools must notify staff that they should not eat indoors when possible.
  - Schools must provide an outdoor break area, if feasible, for staff to eat.
- Discourage staff from gathering in break rooms and other indoor staff spaces.
- Limit the number of people in indoor break rooms and other staff spaces to the lesser of a) 25% of the maximum occupancy or b) the number of people allowed by 6 foot distancing.
- Post the maximum occupancy for break rooms and other staff areas.
- Post required signs in break rooms, including signs reminding staff to stay 6 feet apart, keep their facemasks on unless eating, and wash their hands before and after eating
- Open windows and doors to maximize ventilation, when feasible, especially if staff are eating or if the room is near maximum occupancy.

### Transportation

*Since vehicles are small enclosed spaces that do not allow physical distancing, they can be settings with higher risk of COVID-19 transmission. Biking and walking are lower risk than shared vehicles.*

- School Buses
  - Parents/guardians should screen students for COVID-19 symptoms and exposure before students leave home to ride the bus.

- Drivers and passengers must wear face coverings over their nose and mouth, unless a student has a documented medical or behavioral contraindication. Drivers should carry a supply of face coverings in case a student forgets theirs.
- Students must sit at least 6 feet away from the driver.
- Maximize space between students. Students from the same household may sit together.
- Keep vehicle windows open when weather and safety permit.
- Buses should be cleaned daily and after transporting any individual with COVID-19.
- Public transportation: Staggered school start times might allow students and staff who use public transportation to do so when buses and trains are less crowded. This will decrease their exposure risk.
- Carpools and shared rides: Advise staff and families to carpool with the same stable group of people. Open windows and maximize outdoor air circulation. Everyone in the vehicle should wear a face covering.

## Arrival and dismissal

*If students and parents/caregivers from different households gather and interact with each other during arrival and dismissal, this creates an opportunity for COVID-19 to spread in the school community.*

- Stagger arrival and dismissal times to minimize contact, using different entrances/exits for each group.
- Mark spaces 6 feet apart for students waiting to enter the building and for adults waiting to pick up students. Post signs to remind family members to stay 6 feet away from people from other households when dropping off or picking up their student.
- Face coverings are required for adults who are dropping off or picking up children in person. Provide face coverings for family members who have forgotten theirs.

## Meals and snacks

*Eating together is especially high risk for COVID-19 transmission because people must remove their masks to eat and drink. People often touch their mouths with their hands when eating. In addition, meals are usually considered time for talking together, which further increases risk, especially if students must speak loudly to be heard.*

- Eat meals outdoors or in the group's classroom instead of using cafeterias or dining rooms, when feasible. Use individually plated or bagged meals. Do not use shared tables or self-service buffets.
- Eating outdoors is safer than eating indoors.
  - Designate an outdoor eating area for each class, and mark places 6 feet apart for students to sit. Without marked spaces, most students will sit more closely.

- Outdoor eating areas may be covered (e.g., by a tent, canopy, or other shelter), as long as the shelter complies with: (1) CDPH’s November 25, 2020 guidance regarding “Use of Temporary Structures for Outdoor Business Operations” (online at <https://www.cdph.ca.gov/Programs/CID/DCDC/Pages/COVID-19/Use-of-Temporary-Structures-for-Outdoor-Business-Operations.aspx>); and (2) SFDPH’s guidance on “Safer Ways to Use New Outdoor Shared Spaces for Allowed Activities During COVID-19” (online at <https://www.sfdph.org/dph/files/ig/Guidance-Shared-Outdoor-Spaces.pdf>).
- Stagger lunch times to prevent mixing of groups and to maximize use of outdoor space.
- Consider having meals delivered to the classroom or outdoor eating area instead of having students go to the cafeteria for meals.
- Staff should be especially vigilant about staying 6 feet away from students, and making sure that students remain 6 feet apart, when students’ masks are off to eat. If eating in the classroom, make sure that students are spaced as far apart as possible.
- Everyone should wash their hands or use hand sanitizer immediately before and after eating. Pay special attention to younger students who are more likely to eat with their hands or suck/lick their hands clean.
- Consider starting lunch with silent eating time, followed by conversation time, to discourage talking while masks are off.
- Clean and disinfect the eating area between different classes. Sidewalks and asphalt do not have to be disinfected.

## Group singing/chorus, band, and field trips

- Avoid group singing. Suspend chorus and wind instruments (band). These activities are higher risk for COVID-19 transmission due to the large numbers of respiratory droplets produced. Percussion and string instruments are allowed.
- Field trips are currently not allowed.

## Sports, dance and exercise

*Sports, dance, and exercise, especially indoors, are higher risk for COVID-19 transmission, and have been linked to numerous outbreaks. In other parts of the US, youth sports have been a major source of COVID-19 spread between youth.*

*Sports, dance and other exercise are higher-risk for COVID-19 due to heavier breathing, as well as close contact in some sports. People breathe much more air when exercising, over 10 times as much air with vigorous exercise. During exercise, a person with COVID-19 will breathe many more infectious droplets into the air. The infectious droplets in their breath will travel further because they are breathing harder. People without COVID-19 also are more likely to be infected during exercise because they are breathing more air. This is especially true in poorly ventilated indoor spaces where the virus can remain floating in the air.*

Sports, dance and physical education must comply with the following guidelines to prevent the spread of COVID-19:



- All sports, dance, physical conditioning and training must occur outside.
- Face masks or other cloth face coverings must be worn by all participants at all times, including when outdoors and 6 feet apart. Participants may need to limit vigorous exercise while wearing face coverings.
- Participants must stay at least 6 feet apart at all times. Sports that require closer contact are not permitted. Physical conditioning and individual training for such sports (e.g., individual drills, running, and training) is permitted as long participants stay 6 feet apart at all times.
- Limit sharing of equipment between youth in a group. Balls may be shared between youth in the same stable group, for example, for passing drills. If a ball has contact with a person's face, it should be removed from play until it can be cleaned. Do not share equipment between groups until it has been cleaned.
- Youth from different stable groups are not allowed to play against or with each other.
- Tournaments, events, and competitions between schools are not permitted at this time.
- For CDPH's mandatory guidance on youth sports, see <https://www.cdph.ca.gov/Programs/CID/DCDC/Pages/COVID-19/Youth-Sports-FAQ.aspx>

## Students receiving special services

- Provide accommodations and related services for special education, learning disabilities and medical conditions, even if it creates cross-over between stable groups.
- Additional accommodations may be needed for students to safely attend class. For example, a student who cannot tolerate a face covering due to a medical or developmental condition may need a desk with a partition or clear screen. Other students may need additional supervision and support around physical distancing, wearing a face covering, or handwashing.
- Nurses and therapists who are not school employees but work with students in schools, such as occupational therapists and physical therapists, are considered essential staff and should be allowed on campus to provide services.
  - When students are unable to attend school due to COVID-19 infection or exposure, consider remote video sessions for therapy.

## Flu Vaccination

*People who have flu and COVID-19 at the same time are more than twice as likely to die. Flu vaccination can also help reduce absences of staff and students due to possible COVID-19 symptoms.*

- Strongly encourage all personnel and students to get a flu vaccine this year. Consider posting signs to promote flu vaccination.

## What to do when someone has COVID-19 symptoms or confirmed COVID-19

Refer to the Quick Guide for Suspected or Confirmed COVID-19 Cases.

First See the [Quick Guide for suspected or confirmed COVID-19](#) at [sfcdcp.org/COVIDSchoolsChildcare](https://sfcdcp.org/COVIDSchoolsChildcare) for the following summary charts:

- Steps to take when staff or children have COVID-19 symptoms, have been exposed (for example, a parent or sibling has tested positive), or have confirmed COVID-19.
- Returning to childcare after COVID-19 symptoms, close contact, or confirmed COVID-19.

### For staff or students with symptoms of COVID-19

- Staff who become ill while at school must notify their supervisor and leave work as soon as they can.
- Send ill students home. Keep students who are waiting to be picked up in a designated isolation room. Make sure that students keep their face coverings on.

When a parent or guardian arrives to pick up a student, have the student walk outside to meet them if possible instead of allowing the parent or guardian into the building. Since children with COVID-19 may have been infected by a parent or other adult in their home, the parent may also have COVID-19.

### For confirmed COVID-19 cases, take these steps

All documents listed below are online at [sfcdcp.org/COVIDSchoolsChildcare](https://sfcdcp.org/COVIDSchoolsChildcare).

1. Use the [Exposure and Investigation tool](#) to collect the important details about the case BEFORE contacting the School/Childcare Team.
2. If possible, obtain a copy of the lab report and attach it to *Exposure and Investigation tool*. If the school does not have the test results yet, please note the test results are pending. Send the lab result to the School/Childcare team when you receive it.
3. Report the case **within 1 hour** to the SFDPH Schools and Childcare Hub by emailing [schools-childcaresites@sfdph.org](mailto:schools-childcaresites@sfdph.org) (please put SECURE: in the subject line) OR calling (628) 217-7499. An on-call public health professional will get back to you as soon as possible.
4. The Schools and Childcare Hub may ask you to identify people who had close contact with the COVID-19 case and may have been infected. When interviewing people to determine if they had close contact, and informing them that they may have been exposed, **do not disclose the identity of the person with COVID-19**, as required by law. For more information, see the [FAQ for schools on contact tracing](#).
5. Use the [List of Close Contacts](#) template to collect details of any close contacts.
6. Email the *List of Close Contacts* to [schools-childcaresites@sfdph.org](mailto:schools-childcaresites@sfdph.org) **within 24 hours**. Please put SECURE: in the subject line of the email.
7. Communicate to your school community **within one business day** as indicated in the [Quick Guide](#).

8. SFPDPH has developed standard notification letters for schools. Translations will be posted at [sfcdcp.org/CovidSchoolsChildcare](https://sfcdcp.org/CovidSchoolsChildcare).
  - [Close Contact Advisory — Children and Youth under 18](#)
  - [Close Contact Advisory — Adult](#)
  - [General Exposure Advisory — Children and Youth under 18](#)
  - [General Exposure Advisory — Adult](#)
  - [Notification of an school member in quarantine for exposure to COVID-19](#)

Clean and disinfect areas where the person with COVID-19 spent significant time

- Open windows in areas used by the sick person to maximize outdoor air circulation.
- Clean and disinfect the classroom and other areas where the person spend significant time. This does not have to be done until students and staff have left for the day.
- If needed, find alternative locations for classes whose regular classroom is being cleaned or disinfected.

## Deciding if your school should close due to COVID-19

Schools should [avoid unilaterally closing](#) due to community surges in COVID-19, without direction from public health officials. Doing so may not decrease the risk to staff and students, and may lead to more COVID-19 infections due to staff and students spending more time in settings where the risk of transmission is higher than in schools.

Even when COVID-19 is widespread in the general community, spread of COVID-19 in schools has remained rare. Almost all cases of COVID-19 in schools in San Francisco have been in staff and students who were infected outside of the school. Routine testing of elementary school staff and students has also provided reassuring evidence of the lack of transmission in schools.

This reflects the success of schools in implementing precautions like face masks, physical distancing, hand hygiene, and staying home when sick. When these basic precautions are enforced, they are very effective at keeping COVID-19 from spreading. In contrast, people not following these precautions in informal or unsupervised settings has been largely responsible for community spread of COVID-19.

The decision to close a school should be based on COVID-19 cases within the school, not on community COVID-19 rates, which may not reflect the conditions at the school. Any decisions should be made in consultation with SFPDPH. In general, schools with smaller, more contained stable groups are less likely to require closure.

Situations where SFPDPH may recommend closing a school may include the following:

- 25% or more of the stable groups in a school have had outbreaks<sup>1</sup> in the last 14 days.

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<sup>1</sup> A [outbreak](#) is 3 or more COVID-19 cases in a school in a 14-day period, where the transmission likely happened at school. For example, 3 cases in 3 siblings would not constitute an outbreak, nor would 3 cases in students who also play on a sports team already being investigated for an outbreak. Similarly, 3 cases in students or staff who do not have contact (or overlap in shared spaces) in the school would not be considered an outbreak.

- At least three outbreaks have occurred in the last 14 days AND more than 5% of the school population is infected.
- Investigation of an outbreak by SFPDH suggests ongoing COVID-19 transmission within the school.

A more common situation is that **schools that do not limit interactions between staff assigned to different groups may be forced to close due to staff shortages after a staff member tests positive**, if a number of other staff were exposed and must quarantine.

Closures are generally for 10-14 days, and are meant to prevent further transmission within the school as well as to better understand how transmission in a school occurred, in order to prevent repeat outbreaks.

## Resources

### San Francisco Department of Public Health (SFPDH)

- **SFPDH Schools and Childcare Hub** for COVID-19 consultation and guidance (628) 217-7499 or [schools-childcaresites@sfdph.org](mailto:schools-childcaresites@sfdph.org)
- COVID-19 guidance for the public, including employers <https://www.sfdcp.org/covid19>
- COVID-19 guidance for schools at <https://sfdcp.org/CovidSchoolsChildcare>
  - [“What to do when someone has suspected or confirmed COVID-19: Quick Guide for Schools, Childcares, and Programs for Children and Youth”](#)
  - [“Parent and Caregiver Handout: COVID-19 Health Checks/If Your Child has Symptoms”](#)  
Instructions for parents on health screenings and return to school criteria
  - [“Frequently Asked Questions \(FAQ\): COVID 19 Contact Tracing At Schools, Childcares, and Programs for Children and Youth”](#)
  - Outreach Toolkit for Coronavirus. Posters and flyers on physical distancing, hand hygiene, face masks, getting tested, and other COVID-19 topics at <https://sf.gov/outreach-toolkit-coronavirus-COVID-19>

### California Department of Public Health (CDPH)

- “COVID-19 Industry Guidance: Schools and School Based Programs” <https://covid19.ca.gov/pdf/guidance-schools.pdf>
- “COVID-19 and Reopening In-Person Learning Framework for K-12 Schools in California, 2020-2021 School Year” <https://www.cdph.ca.gov/Programs/CID/DCDC/CDPH%20Document%20Library/COVID-19/Schools%20Reopening%20Recommendations.pdf>
- Guidance for the Use of Face Coverings <https://www.cdph.ca.gov/Programs/CID/DCDC/Pages/COVID-19/guidance-for-face-coverings.aspx>

### **California Department of Education (CDE)**

- “Stronger Together A Guidebook for the Safe Reopening of California’s Public Schools”  
<https://www.cde.ca.gov/ls/he/hn/documents/strongertogether.pdf>

### **Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC)**

- Guidance for Schools and Childcare  
<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/schools-childcare/index.html>
- Cleaning and Disinfection for Community Facilities  
<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/organizations/cleaning-disinfection.html>

### **American Academy of Pediatrics**

- “COVID-19 Planning Considerations: Guidance for School Re-entry”  
<https://services.aap.org/en/pages/2019-novel-coronavirus-covid-19-infections/clinical-guidance/covid-19-planning-considerations-return-to-in-person-education-in-schools/>

### **Harvard TH Chan School of Public Health**

- “Schools for Health: Risk Reduction Strategies for Reopening Schools”  
<https://schools.forhealth.org/wp-content/uploads/sites/19/2020/06/Harvard-Healthy-Buildings-Program-Schools-For-Health-Reopening-Covid19-June2020.pdf>