

July 28, 2020 (updated 8/12/2020)



Addressing the Challenges  
of COVID-19

2020-2021

SCHOOL YEAR  
PLANNING

**EDCOE**  
EL DORADO COUNTY  
OFFICE OF EDUCATION

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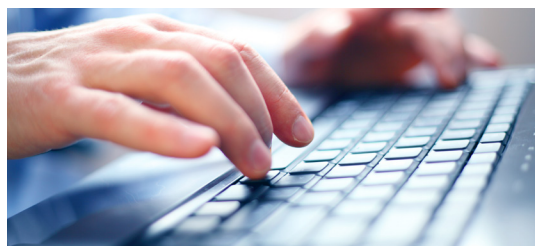
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## A Message from the El Dorado County Superintendent of Schools and the El Dorado County Public Health Officer

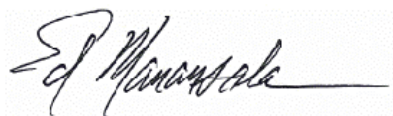
The El Dorado County Office of Education (EDCOE) and El Dorado County Public Health (EDC Public Health) have been working together with local school districts to prepare for the reopening of schools for 2020-2021.

We all appreciate the important and central role that schools play in bringing a sense of normalcy back into our children's lives, and we want to be able to do it as safely as possible. We look forward to continuing our partnership as we re-think the changes to our collective landscape. We will continue to work together to leverage resources and share best practices to operationalize public health guidelines for prevention of COVID-19 in the school environment. These recommendations may change as we learn more and as we continue to find new strategies to prevent the spread of infection in our communities.

There is no one-size-fits-all approach to reopening schools across El Dorado County's 15 districts. Each independent school district will decide how it will reopen schools while working closely with local public health officials and community stakeholders. This document is intended to assist districts, independent charter schools, private schools, and EDCOE programs as they finalize their plans. Implementation should be tailored to the setting of each district and school, including consideration of the unique needs of their students, families, and staff.

The information in this document aligns with [recommendations from the California Department of Public Health](#) and was developed jointly by EDCOE and EDC Public Health. Reopening schools in these unique times presents a significant challenge, and we are grateful for the collective strength and collaboration of the exceptional educational leaders throughout our county.

Sincerely,



Dr. Ed Manansala  
El Dorado County Superintendent of Schools



Dr. Nancy Williams  
El Dorado County Public Health Officer



## Working Together

The El Dorado County Office of Education (EDCOE), El Dorado County Public Health (EDC Public Health), and local school districts are committed to ensuring the health and safety of all students. EDC Public Health will continue closely monitoring the rates of infection in El Dorado County. As public health guidelines change, the districts and schools will adapt and modify plans. We will work together with our students and families to keep everyone as safe as possible as we transition to our new approach to providing the best possible educational programs and services for our students.

Dr. Ed Manansala, El Dorado County Superintendent of Schools

Dr. Nancy Williams, El Dorado County Public Health Officer

Jeremy Meyers, Black Oak Mine Unified School District

Dr. David Roth, Buckeye Union School District

Matthew Smith, Camino Union School District

Dr. Ron Carruth, El Dorado Union High School District

Meg Enns, Gold Oak Union School District

Scott Lyons, Gold Trail Union School District

Grant Coffin, Indian Diggings School District

Dr. Todd Cutler, Lake Tahoe Unified School District

Natalie Miller, Latrobe School District

Dr. Marcy Guthrie, Mother Lode Union School District

Annette Lane, Pioneer Union School District

Eric Bonniksen, Placerville Union School District

Pat Atkins, Pollock Pines and Silver Fork School Districts

Cheryl Olson, Rescue Union School District





## An Overview of What To Expect When Schools Reopen

The health and safety of our students, staff, and families are of utmost importance. When the 2020-2021 school year begins in El Dorado County, the on-campus school may look much different than previous years due to new COVID-19 health and safety measures. Each district is developing plans to reopen schools based on guidance from state and local public health officials. District plans will be updated as the situation evolves. While district plans will focus on academic instruction to enhance student performance and address learning loss, districts will also try their best to maintain the extracurricular programs, clubs, and athletics that are important to our students' physical, mental, and social well-being to the extent allowed by state and local guidelines. Schools will be faced with increased costs to address safety measures connected to the pandemic. This section provides an overview of public health recommendations for schools to begin the 2020-2021 school year. More details are available in the School Reopening Frequently Asked Questions section starting on [page 14](#).

**When schools resume in the fall, they may look different.**

**Here is what you can expect: Schools plan to reopen with thoughtful safeguards to minimize risk.**



El Dorado County Public Health recommends the following health and safety guidance for the reopening of schools based on [current information](#). This guidance will be updated as the situation changes.

**Physical distancing helps limit the spread of the virus. Schools may consider the following strategies to achieve physical distancing in shared spaces:**

- Keep students in the same space and in groups as small and consistent as practicable.
- Consider outdoor options and provide fresh air circulation indoors, if possible.
- Minimize the movement of students and staff as much as practicable.
- Maximize space between student seating and desks.
- Maximize the distance between staff desks and student desks.
- Meals preferably will be served in classrooms (with students remaining in their assigned seats) or outdoors, or if not feasible in cafeterias or group dining rooms, with physical distancing requirements applied regardless of setting.
- Minimize congregate movement through hallways as much as practicable.
- Consider holding recess in separated areas designated by class.
- Avoid large gatherings such as assemblies and dances.
- Identify an isolation room for students who are not feeling well to minimize contact with others until they can be transported home or to a healthcare facility.
- Limit nonessential visitors on campus.

## What is physical distancing?

Physical distancing means keeping space between you and other people outside of your household, and avoiding group gatherings. In addition to everyday steps to prevent COVID-19, keeping space between you and others is one of the best tools we have to avoid being exposed to this virus and slowing its spread locally, nationally, and globally. Learn more about physical distancing at [www.cdc.gov](http://www.cdc.gov).

## Self-Screening for Symptoms

- Before students and staff come to school, they should conduct a self-screening for signs and symptoms of COVID-19. Parents/guardians must assist children with daily screening. Anyone with a fever of 100.4°F (38°C) or higher must not board a bus or go to a school site.
- Anyone who has been exposed to someone with COVID-19 in the past 14 days or has COVID-19 symptoms must not board a bus or go to a school site.
- At school, monitor staff and students throughout the day for signs of illness; students and staff with fevers of 100.4°F (38°C) or higher, cough, or other COVID-19 symptoms will be sent home immediately.



Anyone with a fever of 100.4°F (38°C) or higher must not board a bus or go to a school site.

## Transportation

- Physical distancing when waiting for or getting on/off the bus is required. Students should use face coverings while waiting for buses. This is mandatory if they cannot keep at least 6 foot distances from others.
- Open windows and maximize space between students and between students and the driver on school buses where practicable.
- All passengers and driver will wear face coverings per state and local guidance (see FAQ's, [pages 15-16](#)).
- Siblings should sit together to maximize spacing between unrelated passengers.
- Buses should be thoroughly cleaned and disinfected daily and after transporting any individual who exhibits symptoms of COVID-19.



## General Measures

- Establish and continue communication with local and State authorities to determine current disease levels and control measures in your community. For example:
  - Be aware of the current COVID-19 situation in the County on [State](#) and [County](#) websites.
  - Consult with El Dorado County's Public Health Officer, or designated staff, who are best positioned to monitor and provide advice on local conditions.
  - Collaborate with other schools and school partners in your region, including EDCOE.
  - Regularly review updated general and school-specific guidance from state agencies, including the [California Department of Public Health](#) and [California Department of Education](#).
- Establish a written, worksite-specific COVID-19 prevention plan at every facility, perform a comprehensive risk assessment of all work areas and work tasks, and designate a person at each school to implement and monitor the plan.
  - Identify contact information for the local health department where the school is located for communicating information about COVID-19 outbreaks among students or staff. (<https://www.edcgov.us/Government/PublicHealth> - if calling, choose option for Communicable Disease)
  - Incorporate the [CDPH Guidance for the Use of Face Coverings](#), into the School Site Specific Plan that includes a policy for handling exemptions.
  - Train and communicate with workers and worker representatives on the plan. Make the written plan available and accessible to workers and worker representatives.
  - Regularly evaluate the workplace for compliance with the plan and document and correct deficiencies identified.
  - Investigate any COVID-19 illness, following the protocols of [EDC COVID-19 Potential Response Scenarios in a School Setting](#), and determine if any work-related factors could have contributed to risk of infection. Update the plan as needed to prevent further cases.



- Implement the necessary processes and protocols when a workplace has an outbreak, in accordance with [CDPH guidelines](#).
- Identify individuals who have been in close contact (within six feet for 15 minutes or more) of an infected person and take steps to isolate COVID-19 positive person(s) and close contacts. ([See EDC COVID-19 Potential Response Scenarios in a School Setting](#)).
- Adhere to these guidelines. Failure to do so could result in workplace illnesses that may cause classrooms or an entire school to be temporarily closed or limited. Following the guidance should limit the numbers of students or staff needing to be quarantined and minimize disruption when cases of COVID-19 are identified.
- Evaluate whether and to what extent external community organizations can safely utilize the site and campus resources. Ensure external community organizations that use the facilities also follow this guidance.
- Develop a plan for the possibility of repeated closures of classes, groups or entire facilities when persons associated with a facility or in the community become ill with COVID-19.
- Develop a plan to further support students with access and functional needs who may be at increased risk of becoming infected or having unrecognized illness due to COVID-19. For example, review existing student health plans to identify students who may need additional accommodations, develop a process for engaging families for potentially unknown concerns that may need to be accommodated or identify additional preparations for classroom and non-classroom environments as needed. Groups who might be at increased risk of becoming infected or having unrecognized illness include the following:
  - Individuals who have limited mobility or require prolonged and close contact with others, such as direct support providers and family members;
  - Individuals who have trouble understanding information or practicing preventive measures, such as hand washing and physical distancing; and
  - Individuals who may not be able to communicate symptoms of illness.
- Schools should review the [CDPH Guidance for the Use of Face Coverings](#) and any applicable local health department guidance and incorporate face-covering use for students and workers into their COVID-19 prevention plan. Some flexibility may be needed for younger children consistent with child development recommendations. [See FAQ's pages 15-16](#), Face Coverings and Personal Protective Equipment, for more information.

## General Safety Precautions

- Schools should teach and reinforce among students and staff washing hands, avoiding contact with one's eyes, nose, and mouth, and covering coughs and sneezes.
- Students and staff should wash their hands for at least 20 seconds with soap, rubbing thoroughly after application, and use paper towels (or single-use cloth towels) to dry hands thoroughly. Hand sanitizer with at least 60% ethyl alcohol should be used when handwashing is not practicable.
- Portable handwashing stations throughout a site and near classrooms should be considered to minimize movement and congregations in bathrooms to the extent practicable.
- Schools should limit sharing, including by ensuring adequate supplies to minimize the sharing of high-touch materials to the extent practicable or limit use of supplies and equipment to one group of children at a time, with cleaning and disinfection between uses.



**“Cloth face coverings are one of the most powerful weapons we have to slow and stop the spread of the virus – particularly when used universally within a community setting...”**

**- CDC Director Dr. Robert R. Redfield\***

- Schools must incorporate face-covering use for students and workers into their COVID-19 prevention plan.
- Some flexibility may be needed for younger children consistent with child development recommendations. [See FAQ's pages 15-16](#), Face Coverings and Personal Protective Equipment, for more information.
- Students and staff should be frequently reminded not to touch their face coverings and to wash their hands frequently.
- Food service workers, custodial staff, and health/office staff will use facial coverings and should wear gloves.



\*See [CDC Press Release - July 14, 2020](#)

# Instructional Scheduling Options



Quality instruction and a commitment to equity for all students continue to drive the success of educational programs. Each district will make decisions based on available resources, local needs, EDC Public Health's current assessment of the COVID-19 situation within the district's boundaries, and state policy. Schools may modify school schedules throughout the year in response to directives from Public Health, the county, or state. Some instructional scheduling options that local school boards and districts may consider, which reduce frequency of contact, reduce duration of contact, and/or better enable physical distancing, include:

## Traditional Schedule with Safeguards to Minimize Risk

If the balance of benefits vs. risks is judged by the district to be more favorable for traditional schedule and in-person learning and it is currently allowed by state policy, students may return to school campuses five days a week according to their district's traditional school schedule. Districts will follow California Department of Public Health guidance, requiring the use of face coverings and promoting healthy hygiene practices and physical distancing. Parents concerned about sending their children back to school with a traditional reopening for the 2020-2021 school year should work with their school districts to develop distance or alternative learning plans. To create school environments that minimize risk of COVID-19 transmission, districts should consider implementing one or more of the following strategies, as much as practicable. If the balance between benefit and risk is not judged to favor in-person learning, districts may choose to reopen schools in hybrid (distance + in-person learning) or full distance learning models instead.

### Half-Day Schedule

Offer double sessions where half the students attend class in the morning and the other half of the students attend in the afternoon.

### Stagger & Modify Schedule

Stagger start and end times within a day; modify recess schedules and lunch periods, and stagger breakfast/lunch schedules or breakfast/lunch in-classroom options.

## Smaller Cohorts/Student Groups

Divide classes into smaller cohorts/student groups. A cohort is a stable group with fixed membership that stays together for all courses and activities (e.g., lunch, recess, etc.) and avoids contact with other persons or cohorts (e.g., one group may come to school on Monday and Wednesday, the other on Tuesday and Thursday, or any combination of two days per group. The fifth day could be flexible based on district/school site plans.)

To address childcare needs, community partnerships may be explored to offer expanded learning programs (before school, after school, and summer programs) to support families, especially families with preschool and elementary students. Schools will work with students and families on issues related to equity and access to quality instruction. Accommodations for students with disabilities, students with diverse learning needs, students who are medically vulnerable, and English learners will be made as needed.



**Attending to the physical, mental, social, and emotional well-being of our students will be a top priority as they return to school.**

District and school staff are committed to supporting students' physical, mental, social, and emotional wellness and offering resources to ensure students transition back to school smoothly. Support may include social-emotional learning, building relationships, community-building activities, and increased access to mental health and wellness services. Families and schools will need to work together to check how students are feeling and assess their individual needs to provide support during these challenging times.



**Activities that require students to congregate should be modified or eliminated to meet physical distancing guidelines.**

Physical distancing is important to ensure the health and safety of our students. It may impact how some courses will be taught and which sports and extracurricular activities students may be able to participate in safely.

## Courses

- To minimize close contact among students, physical distancing should be implemented and maintained in all classes and courses to the extent possible.
- Even if close contact (<6 feet) can be avoided in classrooms, students are required to wear face coverings while indoors.
- Some courses may need modifications to how the course will be taught if physical distancing is not feasible or when there is an increased risk for spreading the virus.
- Schools may work with students and families to ensure accommodations are made, and alternative options may be considered.





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**Additional state guidance for schools related to sports and extracurricular activities will be provided at a later date, according to the California Department of Public Health.**

**Field trips are not currently recommended. Schools may consider virtual field trips when possible.**

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## **Acknowledgments**

*The El Dorado County Office of Education (EDCOE) 2020-2021 School Year Planning: Addressing the Challenges of COVID-19, was developed in coordination with EDCOE, El Dorado County school district leadership, and El Dorado County Public Health. This document is aligned with California Department of Public Health guidelines. It is partially adapted from planning documents from the Sacramento, Stanislaus, and San Joaquin county offices of education. Guidance will be modified as public health guidelines are updated.*



## Health Resources for Reopening Schools

- California Department of Public Health 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, July 17, 2020:  
<https://www.cdph.ca.gov/Programs/CID/DCDC/CDPH%20Document%20Library/COVID-19/Schools%20Reopening%20Recommendations.pdf>
- El Dorado County Health and Human Services (Public Health):  
<https://www.edcgov.us/Government/hhsa/edccovid-19>
- Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) Considerations for Schools:  
<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/schools-childcare/schools.html>
- CDC - Preparing K-12 School Administrators for a Safe Return to School in Fall 2020: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/schools-childcare/prepare-safe-return.html>
- SIA COVID Resources for Schools:  
<https://www.sia-jpa.org/resources/school-risk-management-and-compliance/coronavirus-covid-19-guidance-for-schools/>





The information provided is in accordance with current health orders and guidance from the California Department of Public Health (CDPH) and El Dorado County Public Health as of July 2020.

Districts may seek guidance from EDC Public Health to address unique circumstances. Information will be modified based on new guidance or directives from state and local agencies.

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Nothing in this guidance should be interpreted as restricting access to appropriate educational services.

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## **Screening & Testing**

### **Will students and adults entering campuses be screened for symptoms?**

Schools may implement screening measures for students and adults entering campus; however, doing so would likely be challenging to implement, especially for larger schools. Before students and staff come to school, they should conduct a self-screening for signs and symptoms of COVID-19. Parents/guardians will screen children daily. Anyone with a fever of 100.4°F (38°C) or higher and/or signs of COVID-19 must not come on a school campus. Students and adults experiencing any symptoms of COVID-19 or that have been exposed to someone with

COVID-19 in the past 14 days must not come on a school campus. Schools should consider the following strategies, where possible and appropriate:

- Prevent discrimination against students who (or whose families) were or are diagnosed with COVID-19 or who are perceived to be a COVID-19 risk.
- Actively encourage staff and students who are sick or who have recently had close contact with a person with COVID-19 to stay home. Develop policies that require sick staff and students to stay at home without fear of reprisal, and ensure staff, students and students' families are aware of these policies.

- Implement screening and other procedures for all staff and students entering the facility.
- Conduct visual wellness checks of all students or establish procedures for parents to monitor their children at home. If checking temperatures at school, use a no-touch thermometer.
- Ask all individuals if they or anyone in their home is exhibiting COVID-19 symptoms.
- Document/track incidents of possible exposure and notify local health officials, staff and families immediately of any exposure to a positive case of COVID-19 at school while maintaining confidentiality, as required under FERPA and state law related to privacy of educational records. ([Additional guidance can be found on pages 21-22.](#))
- If a student is exhibiting symptoms of COVID-19, staff should communicate with the parent/caregiver, refer to the student's health history form and/or emergency card, and follow the protocol of [EDC COVID-19 Potential Response Scenarios in a School Setting](#).
- Monitor staff and students throughout the day for signs of illness; send home students and staff with a fever of 100.4°F (38°C) or higher, cough or other COVID-19 symptoms.
- Policies should not penalize students and families for missing class.

### **How should schools think about testing?**

Once schools are re-opened to at least some in-person instruction, it is recommended that surveillance testing be implemented based on the local disease trends. If epidemiological assessment by EDC Public Health data

indicates concern for increasing community transmission, schools should increase testing of staff to detect potential cases as lab testing capacity allows.

### **Who should be tested and how often?**

School staff are essential workers, and staff includes teachers, para-professionals, cafeteria workers, janitors, bus drivers, or any other school employee that may have contact with students or other staff. School districts and schools shall test staff periodically, as testing capacity permits and as practicable. Examples of recommended frequency include testing all staff over 2 months, where 25% of staff are tested every 2 weeks, or 50% every month to rotate testing of all staff over time.

## **Face Coverings and Personal Protective Equipment**

### **When should cloth face coverings be used?**

Face coverings must be used in accordance with CDPH guidelines unless a person is exempt as explained in the guidelines, particularly in indoor environments, on school buses, and areas where physical distancing alone is not sufficient to prevent disease transmission. Accommodations for medical exemptions to wearing of face coverings should be made but may not result in putting others at risk of exposure.

- Teach and reinforce use of face coverings, or in limited instances, face shields with drapes (per CDPH guidance).
- Students and staff should be frequently reminded not to touch the face covering and to wash their hands frequently.
- Information should be provided to all staff and families in the school community on

proper use, removal, and washing of cloth face coverings.

- Training should also include policies on how people who are exempted from wearing a face covering will be addressed.

### Are students to wear face coverings?

Face covering guidelines are as follows:

| Age                     | Face Covering Requirement        |
|-------------------------|----------------------------------|
| Under 2 years old       | No                               |
| 2 years old - 2nd grade | Strongly encouraged <sup>^</sup> |
| 3rd grade - High School | Yes, unless exempt               |

<sup>^</sup>Face coverings are strongly encouraged for young children between two years old and second grade, if they can be worn properly. A face shield is an acceptable alternative for children in this cohort who cannot wear them properly.

- Persons younger than two years old, anyone who has trouble breathing, anyone who is unconscious or incapacitated, and anyone who is otherwise unable to remove the face covering without assistance are exempt from wearing a face covering.
- A cloth face covering or face shield should be removed for meals, snacks, nap time, or outdoor recreation, or when it needs to be replaced. When a cloth face covering is temporarily removed, it should be placed in a clean paper bag (marked with the student's name and date) until it needs to be put on again. When face coverings are not in place, students must be spaced a minimum 6 feet apart and should be in cohort groups or assigned seating.
- In order to comply with this guidance, schools must exclude students from campus if they are not exempt from wearing a face covering under CDPH guidelines and refuse to wear one provided

by the school. Schools should develop protocols to provide a face covering to students who inadvertently fail to bring a face covering to school to prevent unnecessary exclusions. Schools should offer alternative educational opportunities for students who are excluded from campus.

### Will staff be required to wear face coverings?

All staff must use face coverings in accordance with [CDPH guidelines](#) unless Cal/OSHA standards require respiratory protection.

- In limited situations where a face coverings cannot be used for pedagogical or developmental reasons, (i.e. communicating or assisting young children or those with special needs) a face shield with drape (per CDPH guidance) can be used instead of a cloth face covering while in the classroom as long as the wearer maintains physical distance from others, to the extent practicable. Staff must return to wearing a face covering outside of the classroom.
- Workers or other persons handling or serving food must use gloves in addition to face coverings. Employers should consider where disposable glove use may be helpful to supplement frequent handwashing or use of hand sanitizer; examples are for workers who are screening others for symptoms or handling commonly touched items.

### What supplies are needed (e.g., face coverings, thermometers, personal protective equipment) for each campus?

Schools should have a non-contact temporal or external thermometer to detect fever in students or staff who become ill after arriving at school. Handwashing stations with soap



and/or hand sanitizer that is fragrance-free and at least 60% ethyl alcohol should be made available in or near classrooms and other areas where staff/students are likely to be present. Children under age 9 should use hand sanitizer under adult supervision. Schools should provide and ensure staff and students use face coverings and all required protective equipment.

### **Physical Distancing & Limiting Contact**

**What are the physical distancing protocols in multiple settings: arrival/departure, in classrooms, hallways, common outdoor spaces?**

Depending on grade level, physical space, and class sizes, schools should implement the following strategies, to the greatest extent possible as appropriate:

- Minimize contact at school between students, staff, families and the community at the beginning and end of the school day. Prioritize minimizing contact between adults at all times.
- Maximize space between students and between students and the driver on school buses and open windows.
- To reduce possibilities for infection, students must remain in the same space and in small and consistent cohorts (classroom or group of students) as small and consistent as practicable, including for recess and lunch. Keep the same students and teacher or staff with each group.
- Minimize movement of students and teachers or staff. For example, keep teachers with one group of students for the whole day. In secondary schools or in situations where students have individualized schedules, plan for ways to reduce mixing among cohorts and to minimize contact.
- Stagger arrival and drop-off times and locations to reduce close contact between and gathering of students but keep schedules consistent to minimize challenges for families.
- Designate routes for entry and exit, using all entrances and exits.
- Implement health screenings of students and staff upon arrival at school (See page 14).
- Put in place other protocols to limit direct contact with others.
- Use privacy boards or clear screens to create barriers when 6-foot spacing is not achievable.
- Activities where there is increased likelihood for transmission from contaminated exhaled droplets such as band and choir practice and performances are not permitted.
- Activities that involve singing must only take place outdoors.
- Maximize space between seating and desks. Distance teacher and other staff desks at least six feet away from student desks.
- Arrange student seating to face forward.
- Space student seating as widely apart as possible.
- Consider additional ways to establish student's separation, such as by placing markings on classroom floors to promote

distancing or arranging desks in a way that minimizes face-to-face contact.

- Develop instructions to maximize spacing and minimize movement in both indoor and outdoor spaces that are easy for students to understand and are developmentally appropriate.
- Restrict entrance into schools by nonessential visitors and volunteers.
- When communal activities cannot be avoided, stagger use, properly space occupants, and disinfect in between uses.
- Expand classroom activities into nontraditional spaces for instruction, including use of outdoor space if it would improve physical distancing or provide more fresh air.
- Minimize gathering in and congregate movement through hallways.
- Serve meals in areas with sufficient space for proper physical distancing and provide supervision during this time. If possible, serve individually plated or bagged meals. Avoid sharing of foods and utensils and buffet or family-style meals.
- Hold recess in separated areas designated by class.
- Avoid all gatherings including assemblies and dances, that are not specifically needed for educational purposes.
- Implement procedures for turning in assignments to minimize contact.
- Keep each child's belongings separated and in individually labeled storage containers, cubbies, or areas. Ensure belongings are taken home each day to be cleaned.
- Ensure adequate supplies to minimize the sharing of high-touch materials (art supplies, equipment, etc.) or limit the use of supplies and equipment to one group of children at a time and clean and disinfect between uses.
- Avoid sharing electronic devices, clothing, toys, books, and other games or learning aids.

### **What is the recommended number of students in a class based on student age and room size?**

The number of students per classroom will depend on room size and furniture configuration. Schools should assess their physical spaces and determine capacity accordingly.

### **Do schools need to close or limit access to common outdoor spaces?**

Common outdoor spaces present less risk of transmission than indoor spaces; students and adults must still maintain at least 6-foot of physical distancing. Schools should stagger recesses and/or outdoor time so that smaller groups are using shared spaces at one time. When using outdoor spaces, cohorts should be maintained whenever possible.

## **Transportation**

### **What safety measures will need to be in place for bus drivers and students?**

To lower the risk of exposure, districts should implement the following:

- Physical distancing when waiting for or getting on/off the bus is required.
- Open windows and maximize space between students and between students and the driver on school buses where practicable.

- Staff and students will wear face coverings. ([See FAQ's, pages 15-16](#)).
- Siblings will be encouraged to sit together.
- Symptomatic students or staff may not ride buses.
- Buses should be thoroughly cleaned and disinfected daily and after transporting any individual who exhibits symptoms of COVID-19.
- Students and staff should wash their hands for 20 seconds with soap, rubbing thoroughly after application. Soap products marketed as “antimicrobial” are not necessary or recommended.
- Students and staff should use fragrance-free hand sanitizer when handwashing is not practicable. Sanitizer must be rubbed into hands until completely dry. Hand sanitizers should have at least 60% ethyl alcohol. Note: handwashing is more effective than the use of hand sanitizers.

### Healthy Hygiene Practices



#### How will healthy hygiene practices be supported at schools?

Schools should teach and reinforce healthy hygiene practices among students and staff, such as washing hands; avoiding contact with one's eyes, nose and mouth; and covering coughs and sneezes. Methods to promote healthy hygiene include the following:

- Teach students to use tissue to wipe their noses and to cough/sneeze inside tissues or their elbows.
- Students and staff should wash their hands frequently throughout the day, including before and after eating; after coughing or sneezing; after classes where they handle shared items, such as outside recreation, art, or shop; and before and after using the restroom.
- Hand sanitizer provided by the school must be fragrance-free.
- Do not use hand sanitizers that may contain methanol which can be hazardous when ingested or absorbed.
- Children under age 9 should only use hand sanitizer under adult supervision. Call Poison Control if consumed: 1-800-222-1222.
- Staff should model and practice frequent handwashing.
- Consider placing portable handwashing stations throughout a site and near classrooms to minimize movement and congregations in bathrooms to the extent practicable.
- Develop routines enabling students and staff to regularly wash their hands at staggered intervals.



- Ensure adequate supplies to support healthy hygiene behaviors, including soap, tissues, no-touch trash cans, face coverings (if students or staff forget to bring their own), and fragrance-free hand sanitizer.
- Information contained in the [CDPH Guidance for the Use of Face Coverings](#) should be provided to staff and families, which discusses the circumstances in which face coverings must be worn and the exemptions, as well as any policies, work rules, and practices the employer has adopted to ensure the use of face coverings.
- Schools must provide and ensure staff use face coverings and all required protective equipment (in accordance with CDPH guidelines).
- The California Governor's Office of Emergency Services (CalOES) and the Department of Public Health (CDPH) are and will be working to support procurement and distribution of face coverings and personal protective equipment. Additional information can be found [here](#).
- Strongly recommend that all students and staff be immunized each autumn against influenza unless contraindicated by personal medical conditions, to help protect the school community; reduce demands on health care facilities; decrease illnesses that cannot be readily distinguished from COVID-19; and to reduce the risk of triggering extensive measures from the school and public health authorities.

## Teacher and Staff Safety

### What protocols will be implemented to protect teachers and staff?

- Ensuring staff maintain physical distancing from each other is critical to reducing transmission between adults.
- Ensure that all staff use face coverings in accordance with CDPH guidelines and Cal/ OSHA standards.
- Support staff who are at higher risk for severe illness or who cannot safely distance from household contacts at higher risk, by providing options such as telework, where appropriate, or teaching in a virtual learning or independent study context.
- Conduct all staff meetings, professional development training and education, and other activities involving staff virtually. If virtual attendance is not possible for some or all attendees, those attending in person must abide by physical distancing and face-covering guidelines..
- Minimize the use of and congregation of adults in staff rooms, break rooms, and other settings.
- Implement procedures for daily symptom monitoring for staff.

## Reporting, Health Protocols, and Communication

### What is the protocol for handling students or staff exhibiting symptoms?

Work with school administrators, nurses and other healthcare providers to identify an isolation room or area to separate anyone who exhibits symptoms of COVID-19. Any students or staff exhibiting symptoms should keep their face covering(s) in place continuously, even if they are maintaining 6-foot minimum distancing, and be required to wait in an isolation area until they can be transported home or to a healthcare facility, as soon as practicable. Procedures should be established to arrange for safe transport home or to a healthcare facility, as appropriate, when an individual is exhibiting COVID-19 symptoms: fever, cough, shortness of breath or difficulty breathing, chills, repeated shaking with chills, fatigue, muscle pain, headache, sore throat, congestion or runny nose, nausea or vomiting, diarrhea, or new loss of taste or smell. Follow the protocol: [EDC COVID-19 Potential Response Scenarios in a School Setting](#).

For serious injury or illness, staff will call 911 without delay and seek medical attention if COVID-19 symptoms become severe, including persistent pain or pressure in the chest, confusion, or bluish lips or face. Updates and further details are available on [CDC's webpage](#).

### What are the expected reporting procedures with El Dorado County Public Health? What are the procedures for referring, tracing, and isolating students and staff with symptoms or diagnosis?

If a school learns (from someone other than staff at EDC Public Health) of a diagnosed case or exposure to COVID-19, follow Scenario 2 or 3 of [EDC COVID-19 Potential Response Scenarios in a School Setting](#) and notify exposed staff and families of any students who were determined to have had close contact with a person with known or suspected COVID-19, (Follow link provided in Scenario 2 of [EDC COVID-19 Potential Response Scenarios in a School Setting](#) for definition of 'close contact') while maintaining confidentiality as required by state and federal laws. Additional guidance can be found [here](#). For positive cases in the school (Scenario 3), also contact EDC Public Health.

EDC Public Health has procedures in place to confirm case reports and to conduct case investigations and contact tracing. If EDC Public Health staff identifies people in schools as being close contacts, EDC Public Health may contact them individually. If multiple persons at a school have been identified, EDC Public Health staff may request information such as classroom rosters or wish to interview school personnel and coordinate with school officials to complete the assessment of risk and offer guidance.

If at least 6-foot physical distancing and other protections have been practiced, that may reduce the numbers of people affected by a case of COVID-19 in a school. Keeping students cohorted and monitoring their movements can help reduce the probability of an entire classroom being directed by EDC Public Health staff to quarantine (which would equate to a 14-day disruption from in-class schooling).

### **What are the communication guidelines when a positive case is confirmed?**

Communication recommendations will vary depending on the specific circumstances of a case in a school community.

Notify EDC Public Health if any student is reported to have tested positive or to have been exposed to an active case of COVID-19. EDC Public Health will confirm test results and communicate with school staff, if necessary, to determine whether any staff or students have been exposed. Just as schools must maintain confidentiality, as required under FERPA and state law related to privacy of educational records, EDC Public Health must maintain confidentiality with regard to medical records (HIPAA) and will not disclose additional health information to schools about named students unless there is a public-health reason to do so. To avoid inadvertently disclosing protected health information, school staff should not disclose information about any known or suspected cases to other staff, students, or parents unless asked by EDC Public Health to do so, or directed by FERPA law.

Media is handled in coordination between the school public information officer and the County's or EDC Public Health's public information officer.

### **When can staff or students return to school after they have been diagnosed with COVID-19 or have been in close contact with a person with COVID-19?**

EDC Public Health will make the formal determination, by following the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) guidelines of when a person who was recently in close contact with a person with COVID-19

or a person infected with COVID-19 can return to work or school.

EDC Public Health will refer to the latest CDC guidelines (<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/hcp/disposition-in-home-patients.html>), adapted for local conditions if necessary. If needed, EDC Public Health will provide clearance letters for students, teachers, or staff to return to school.

## **Facilities - Safety & Sanitation Considerations**

### **What supplies should be included in every classroom and general area (e.g., office, cafeteria, bathroom) for use by students and staff?**

Schools should ensure adequate supplies to support healthy hygiene behaviors, including soap, tissues, no-touch trash cans, face coverings, and hand sanitizer. All sinks should have soap. Handwashing stations with soap and/or hand sanitizer that is fragrance free and at least 60% ethyl alcohol should be made available in or near classrooms.

### **How might the county office and districts coordinate the procurement of supplies across the county?**

EDCOE is working closely with the state to coordinate the procurement and distribution of supplies to districts. In the long-term, districts may consider direct procurement from state-contracted vendors and are exploring other options if needed.

### **Where might physical barriers need to be installed at school sites and district offices to ensure student and staff safety?**



Schools may want to consider installing clear plexi-glass barriers at front counters where physical distancing is not possible, similar to how many retailers have done so at check-out counters. Staff work stations should be arranged so that staff can physically distance.

**What accommodations will be needed for students and staff who are vulnerable and/or at higher risk of contracting the virus? What safety measures will need to be in place for students in special education programs, who are medically fragile, and/or cannot wear masks?**

It is important to make sure that there are adequate accommodations for medically fragile students. If physical distancing and hand hygiene are not possible, please work with your district school nurse and special education department. Staff who are vulnerable should work with their local district. Accommodations should be made so that those who are exempt from wearing face coverings do not put others at increased risk of exposure to infection.

**What is the recommendation for heating, ventilation, and air conditioning (HVAC) systems to identify optimal working conditions to support health and safety?**

Districts and schools should work with their engineers to ensure that HVAC systems are functioning properly, maximize air exchanges per hour, maximize outdoor air, and are maintained according to the manufacturer's recommendations.

**What are the guidelines for cleaning and sanitation?**

Schools will follow disinfection guidelines for classrooms, offices, and outdoor spaces that

include the following:

- Consider suspending or modifying the use of site resources that necessitate sharing or touching items.
- Staff should clean and disinfect frequently high-touched surfaces within the school and on school buses at least daily and, as practicable, frequently throughout the day.
- Buses should be thoroughly cleaned and disinfected daily, and after transporting any individual who is exhibiting symptoms of COVID-19.
- Limit the use of shared playground equipment where allowed, clean and disinfect between uses..
- Limit the sharing of objects and equipment, such as toys, games, and art supplies, to the extent practicable. Where allowed, clean and disinfect between uses.
- Establish a cleaning and disinfecting schedule.
- Ensure proper ventilation during cleaning and disinfecting.

**Will extensive classroom cleaning need to be performed if a student or teacher is diagnosed with COVID-19? What are the guidelines for this?**

Yes. Districts will follow the established guidelines put forward by El Dorado County Environmental Health, which are the same procedures used after a norovirus outbreak and including the following:

- Close off areas used by any individual suspected of being infected with the virus that causes COVID-19 and do not use before cleaning and disinfection. To reduce risk of exposure, wait 24 hours before you

[clean and disinfect](#). If it is not possible to wait 24 hours, wait as long as practicable. Ensure a safe and correct application of disinfectants using personal protective equipment and ventilation recommended for cleaning. Keep disinfectant products away from students.

### **What else needs to occur when a positive case is identified in a student or staff member who was at school while infectious?**

- Advise sick staff members and students not to return until they have met CDC criteria to discontinue [home isolation](#), including at least 24 hours with no fever, symptoms have improved and at least 10 days since symptoms first appeared.
- Ensure that students, including students with disabilities, have access to instruction when out of class, as required by federal and state law.
- Implement the necessary processes and protocols when a school has an outbreak, in accordance with [CDPH guidelines](#).
- Investigate the COVID-19 illness and exposures and determine if any work-related factors could have contributed to risk of infection. Update protocols as needed to prevent further cases.
- Update protocols as needed to prevent further cases. See the CDPH guidelines, Responding to COVID-19 in the Workplace, which are incorporated into this guidance and contain detailed recommendations for establishing a plan to identify cases, communicating with workers and other exposed persons, and conducting and assisting with contact tracing.

### **How can we help students who are at higher risk for or whose household members are at higher risk for serious COVID-19 illness?**

Schools should offer distance learning based on the unique circumstances of each student who would be put at-risk by an in-person instructional model. For example, students with a health condition, students with family members with a health condition, students who cohabitate or regularly interact with high-risk individuals, or are otherwise identified as “at-risk” by the parents or guardian, are students whose circumstances merit offering distances learning.

### **Is the use of hand dryers in restrooms recommended?**

EDC Public Health does not have specific concerns about hand dryers at this time.

## **General Safety Concerns**

### **Will campuses be required to close again?**

Although meticulously following measures to prevent COVID-19 transmission will go far in reducing the likelihood that entire classrooms or schools will need to be dismissed or closed, schools and districts should develop plans for the possibility of one-time or repeated closures of classes, groups, or entire facilities. Decisions about closures or dismissals of entire classrooms or larger and the durations of such should be made in collaboration with school nurses and in consultation with EDC Public Health. ([See page 27](#) - Considerations for Reopening and Partial or Total Closures and the [COVID-19 and Reopening Framework for K-12 Schools in California](#).)

Individual school closure may be indicated based on the number of cases, the percentage of the teacher/students/staff that are positive for COVID-19, and following consultation with the EDC Public Health Officer. For example, individual school closure may be appropriate when there are multiple cases in multiple

cohorts at a school or when at least 5 percent of the total number of teachers/student/staff are cases within a 14-day period, depending on the size and physical layout of the school.

The EDC Public Health Officer may also determine school closure is warranted for other reasons, including results from a public health investigation or other local epidemiological data.

### **If a school is closed for in-person learning, when may it reopen?**

Schools may typically reopen after 14 days and the following have occurred:

- Cleaning and disinfection
- Public health investigation
- Consultation with EDC Public Health.

### **What are the criteria for closing a school district?**

A superintendent should consider closing a school district if 25% or more of schools in a district have closed due to COVID-19 within 14 days, and in consultation with the local public health department.

### **If a school district is closed, when may it reopen?**

El Dorado County schools and school districts may reopen for in-person instruction at any time if El Dorado County has not been on the county monitoring list within the prior 14 days. If the El Dorado County has been on the monitoring list within the last 14 days, the school must conduct distance learning only, until the County has been off the monitoring list for at least 14 days.

### **What if a school or school district reopens to in-person instruction, but the county is later placed on the county monitoring list?**

Schools should begin testing staff, or increase frequency of staff testing but are not required to close.

For specific details, see [COVID-19 and Reopening In-Person Learning Framework for K-12 Schools](#).

### **What are other measures to maintain a healthy organization?**

Continued training, communication, and support can help maintain a healthy organization and community.

Recommendations include the following:

- Monitor staff absenteeism and have a restore of trained back-up staff where available. Consult EDC Public Health if there are concerns about interpreting cause.
- Consider that during late fall and winter influenza season will likely confound the COVID-19 picture. Ensuring that staff and students stay home when ill from any cause will be critical this school year.
- Monitor the types of illnesses and symptoms among your students and staff to help isolate them promptly.
- Designate a staff liaison or liaisons to be responsible for responding to COVID-19 concerns. Workers should know who they are and how to contact them. The liaison should be trained to coordinate the documentation and tracking of possible exposure, in order to notify local health officials, staff and families in a prompt and responsible manner.
- Maintain communication systems that allow staff and families to self-report symptoms and receive prompt notifications of exposures and closures,



while maintaining confidentiality, as required by FERPA and state law related to privacy of educational records. Additional guidance can be found [here](#).

- Consult with EDC Public Health if routine testing is being considered by a local educational agency. The role of providing routine systematic testing of staff or students for COVID-19 (e.g., PCR swab testing for acute infection, or presence of antibodies in serum after infection) is currently unclear.
- Support staff who are at higher risk for severe illness or who cannot safely distance from household contacts who are at higher risk by providing options such as virtual learning or independent study.

### **Train All Staff and Educate Families**

#### **What are the recommended health education topics schools should provide?**

Train all staff and provide educational materials to families in the following safety actions:

- Enhanced sanitation practices
- Physical distancing guidelines and their importance
- [Proper use, removal, and washing of face coverings](#)
- The importance of following sanitation, distancing, and face covering practices all the time and everywhere in the community. (If COVID-19 spreads to student or school staff family members through other routes, it will affect the ability of students to be in school even if they are practiced perfectly in school.)

- Screening practices
- How COVID-19 is spread
- COVID-19 specific [symptom](#) identification
- Preventing the spread of COVID-19 if you are sick, including the importance of not coming to work if staff members have symptoms, or if they or someone they live with has been diagnosed with COVID-19.
- For workers, COVID-19 specific [symptom](#) identification and when to seek medical attention
- The employer's plan and procedures to follow when children or adults become sick at school. See protocols on [EDC COVID-19 Potential Response Scenarios in a School Setting](#).
- The employer's plan and procedures to protect workers from COVID-19 illness.
- Consider conducting the training and education virtually, or, if in-person, ensure a minimum of six-foot distancing is maintained.

#### **Will El Dorado County Public Health assist with the development of health education training, guidelines, and materials for students and families?**

EDC Public Health, in collaboration with EDCOE, typically provides information on several health topics before the start of each school year. We will include information on COVID-19 this year and can provide additional information on an ongoing basis, as needed. Questions and suggestions on topics may be sent by EDCOE to EDC Public Health to fulfill these needs.

# Considerations for Reopening and Partial or Total Closures

California schools have been closed for in-person instruction since mid-March 2020 due to the COVID-19 pandemic. School closures to in-person instruction were part of a broader set of recommendations intended to reduce transmission of SARS-CoV-2, the virus that causes COVID-19. For more detailed direction on measures to be taken when a student, teacher, or staff member has symptoms or is diagnosed with COVID-19, please see the [COVID-19 and Reopening Framework for K-12 Schools in California](#).

- Check State and local orders and health department notices daily about transmission in the area or closures and adjust operations accordingly.
- When a student, teacher or staff member tests positive for COVID-19 and had exposed others at the school, refer to the [CDPH Framework for K-12 Schools](#), and implement the following steps:
  - In consultation with EDC Public Health, the appropriate school official may decide whether school closure versus cleaning and quarantine of exposed persons or other intervention is warranted, including the length of time necessary, based on the risk level within the specific community as determined by the local public health officer.
  - Close off the classroom or office where the patient was based and do not use these areas until after cleaning and disinfection. Wait at least 24 hours before cleaning and disinfecting. If 24 hours is not feasible, wait as long as possible.
  - Additional areas of the school visited by the COVID-19 positive individual may also need to be closed temporarily for cleaning and disinfection.
  - Implement communication plans for exposure at school and potential school closures to include outreach to students, parents, teachers, staff and the community.
  - Include information for staff regarding labor laws, information regarding Disability Insurance, Paid Family Leave and Unemployment Insurance, as applicable to schools. See additional [information on government programs supporting sick leave and worker's compensation for COVID-19](#), including worker's sick leave rights under the [Families First Coronavirus Response Act](#) and employee's rights to workers' compensation benefits and presumption of the work-relatedness of COVID-19 pursuant to the [Governor's Executive Order N-62-20](#), while that Order is in effect.
  - Provide guidance to parents, teachers and staff reminding them of the importance of community physical distancing measures while a school is closed, including discouraging students or staff from gathering elsewhere.
  - Develop a plan for continuity of education. Consider in that plan how to also continue nutrition and other services provided in the regular school setting to establish alternate mechanisms for these services to continue.
  - Maintain regular communications with EDC Public Health.



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