



Pandemic Recovery Framework for Schools

Executive Summary

After conducting school remotely during the COVID-19 Shelter-in-Place, San Mateo County schools are planning and preparing for the return of students to school campuses for modified in-person learning for the 2020–21 school year. San Mateo County education and health leaders partnered to develop the **Pandemic Recovery Framework for Schools** to help guide those efforts. This document provides a summary of the Framework.

Based on Science and Best Practices

The Pandemic Recovery Framework for Schools is based on science, best practices, and was developed in direct consultation with San Mateo County’s Health Officer and reflects the current health situation.

The Framework identifies conditions and provides recommendations on cleaning routines and supplies needed for a safe return to on-campus learning. The Framework also provides school leaders with sample instructional models that allow for a range of learning settings, including on-campus, at-home, or a blend of both on-campus and at-home formats to support the educational needs of all children and families.

Aligned with State and Local Guidelines

The Framework was developed in consultation with San Mateo County Health and reflects guidance included in the California Department of Education’s *Stronger Together, a Guidebook for the Safe Reopening of California’s Public Schools* as well as the California Department of Public Health’s **COVID-19 Industry Guidance: Schools and School-Based Programs**.

Focus on Equity

The COVID-19 pandemic has been especially difficult for students from families with limited financial resources, students with special learning needs, including students with disabilities, and students who are working below grade level or who are behind in credits. The Framework calls on schools to shape their return-to-school planning around their students with the most urgent learning needs and developing the instructional model out from there.

Health and Safety Considerations for Staff

Although evidence indicates that children and young adults have less risk of COVID-19 infection, there remains some measure of risk for all adults as they return to community interactions, including work. The Framework addresses the need for practices that keep all school employees as safe as possible.

Four Pillars for a Safe Return to School

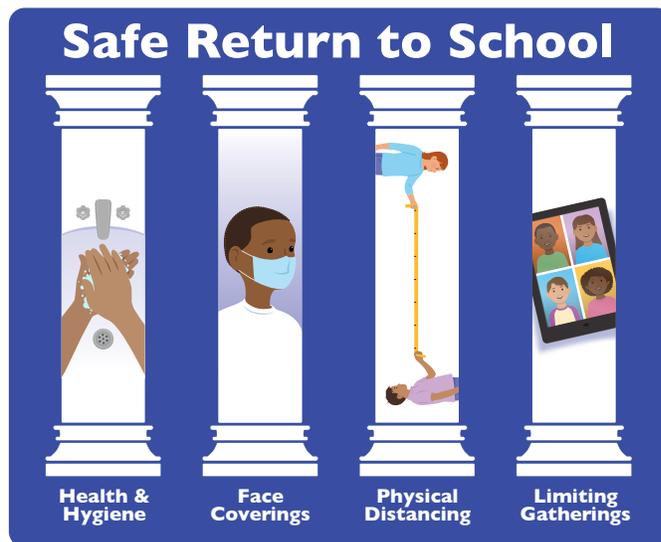
The Framework is based on Four Pillars that describe what is essential in creating and sustaining the safest, most healthy environment for students and staff and to prevent the spread of communicable disease. In order to ensure a safe return to school, education leaders must implement protocols to address the Four Pillars, which include:

- **Health and Hygiene** – practicing daily hygiene routines, conducting daily health screenings, including temperature taking, providing essential protective equipment (EPE), and conducting effective cleaning routines.

- **Face Coverings** – based on extensive research, face coverings are essential to stem the spread of COVID-19 and are required for everyone on campus from kindergarten students to staff, except those, who for medical reasons, cannot wear one. Schools will provide information and guidelines on face coverings.

- **Physical Distancing** – is another critical element to limiting the spread of contagious disease, including COVID-19. Schools will employ strategies for limiting the number of people in any space, which may include alternative schedules for students, rearranging classrooms, using outdoor spaces for classrooms, and limiting use of common areas on campus.

- **Limiting Gatherings** – addresses the need to limit meetings and group events that occur outside of the instructional setting. Teachers and students convening for learning is an essential activity and does not constitute a gathering. Activities outside of the instructional setting should be conducted remotely, postponed, or otherwise restructured.



Testing and Communicating about Cases of COVID-19

County and school leaders are working together to develop a standard protocol for testing and contact tracing. Once confirmed, these protocols will be outlined in the Framework. A communication system is already in place between County Health and the San Mateo County Office of Education and local schools in the event of a confirmed case of COVID-19 in a school community.

Continuum of Learning

To meet all of the requirements of the Four Pillars, schools must balance how many students are on campus for in-person learning at any one time, with additional programming and support for days when students may be engaging in distance learning. Since the county could experience a second wave of COVID-19, schools are also preparing to pivot to full-scale distance learning should conditions require.

Childcare

Childcare before, during, and after school hours is critical to a successful return to campus. A companion document to the Framework is being developed to provide additional guidance for childcare and out-of-school operations. Meanwhile, county, school, and childcare operators are working together to develop solutions to address this essential need.

More Information

A copy of the Pandemic Recovery Framework for Schools and additional resources can be found on the San Mateo County Office of Education's [website](#).