



Pandemic Recovery Framework Frequently-Asked Questions

Updated July 31, 2020

State Reopening to In-Person Learning Requirements

Can schools in San Mateo County reopen for in-person instruction in the Fall?

Schools may open for in-person instruction if San Mateo County *has not* been on the [State's monitoring list](#) for 14 days prior to the opening date. If the county *has* been placed on the monitoring list, middle and high schools must conduct distance learning, and in-person instruction cannot resume until the county has been off the monitoring list for at least 14 consecutive days. Elementary schools may open for in-person learning if they receive a waiver from San Mateo County Health. [CDPH, p. 1.](#)

Does the restriction on opening apply to private schools?

Yes - all K-12 schools.

Does the restriction on opening apply to preschools?

No.

How does our school apply for a waiver?

If/when San Mateo County is on the monitoring list, San Mateo County Health will develop and share a process for applying for waivers. We do not have information on what that process looks like at this time.

Will schools be testing teachers if/when schools reopen to in-person learning?

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

What is surveillance testing?

Surveillance testing is when you test someone who doesn't have symptoms - you're looking for cases. This compares with active testing, which is done when someone has symptoms and/or is a possible case.

Once a school opens to in-person instruction, do they have to close if the county is later placed on the county monitoring list?

No, the school is not required to close. However, schools should begin testing staff, or increase frequency of staff testing. [CDPH, p. 2.](#)

What are the criteria for closing a school?

Individual school closure is recommended based on the number of cases, the percentage of the teacher/students/staff that are positive for COVID-19, and following consultation with the Local Health Officer.

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 Local Health Officer may also determine school closure is warranted for other reasons, including results from public health investigation or other local epidemiological data. [CDPH, p. 4.](#)

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 the local public health department

What are the criteria for closing a school district?

A superintendent should close a school district if 25 percent 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. [CDPH, p. 5.](#)

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

Districts may typically reopen after 14 days, in consultation with the local public health department.

Four Pillars

If a student arrives without a face covering and refuses to wear one, are we allowed to exclude that student until they can wear one?

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. [CDPH, p. 8](#)

Can a teacher or child wear a face shield instead of a face covering?

Yes, if needed. For greatest safety to all in the room, the shield should have a drape attached to the bottom that is tucked into the shirt.

In a bubble cohort, are the adults restricted from seeing any other adults at the school, such as on breaks or after school?

Yes, adults must not physically interact with school staff outside of their bubble cohort.

Should students or staff wear gloves?

Washing hands is preferred. School staff should wear gloves for certain activities, such as serving food and for certain tasks in some special education classrooms.

Is the priority to wash hands with water and soap or hand sanitizer?

Washing hands with soap and water is preferred over hand sanitizer.

How often should students wash hands?

Transition times are good times to wash hands: before entering school, before and after meals, when entering new spaces.