



Superintendent's UPDATE

Thursday, May 5, 2022

COVID-19 School and Vaccination Update

Dear San Mateo County Education and Child Care Community,

Although I had planned to send this letter out once a month, the uptick in cases in San Mateo County and the many events planned for spring, including graduations, warranted my sending out a quick update.

COVID Situation in San Mateo County and Schools

Cases of COVID-19 are up in San Mateo County. According to [CDC's website](#), the COVID-19 community level is moderate, up from low a couple of weeks ago. This rating reflects a case rate above 200 per 100,000 in population, and other metrics related to hospitalizations. Meanwhile in schools, we have also seen an uptick in cases and outbreaks, which have been tied back to social events and gatherings such as proms.

Strong Finish to 2021-22 School Year

We have learned a lot in the last year about COVID, how it operates, and what we can do to keep our selves, families, and schools safe. Given our shared hope for finishing the school year strong and healthy amid increases in COVID case numbers, we should put that knowledge to good use. The San Mateo County Office of Education and San Mateo County Health (SMCH) have prepared some safety tips for families and schools. These tips, which are taken from [California Department of Public Health](#) (CDPH) and [CDC guidance](#), including the following:

Strategies for Organizing Safe Events

- Hold events outside, if possible. It is less risky.
- Plan smaller events when possible, which also reduces risk.
- If your event is indoors, keep doors and windows open. Good ventilation helps keep COVID particles from accumulating.
- If your event is indoors, consider asking guests to wear a mask. Have masks available for those who may want to wear one.
- If your event is indoors, plan to serve food outdoors, if possible.
- Ask attendees to show a photo of a negative COVID-19 test before they attend. If you have time, consider offering testing onsite before the event begins.
- Encourage everyone to monitor their own health and stay home if they aren't feeling well or have symptoms.

- Encourage attendees to register for [CA Notify](#), which will notify them if they are exposed to someone with COVID.
- Keep a list of names and contact information of all attendees in case there is an exposure and you need to notify them.

Strategies for Keeping Yourself Safe When Attending Events

- Get vaccinated and boosted, including the second booster if eligible. This is the best way to protect yourself.
- If you're not feeling well, stay home and take a COVID test.
- Keep rapid antigen tests on hand to test as needed.
- Carry a mask with you wherever you go; slip it on if you are in a crowded space or indoors.
- Know where you're going – are there safety measures in place? When hosts aren't requiring testing, for example, the risk is greater.
- If the event is large and/or indoors, attending could be riskier.
- Avoid poorly ventilated spaces and crowds. If appropriate, ask the host to open windows and doors to increase ventilation.
- Consider others in your household – are they unvaccinated or at risk for severe illness if they get COVID? If so, wear a mask, maintain distance, or consider not attending.
- Sign up for [CA Notify](#), which will notify you if you are exposed to someone with COVID.

Vaccination Numbers and Opportunities

As of this week, 63.1 percent of children ages 5-11 have received two doses of vaccine, up from 62.7 percent two weeks ago. The vaccination rate for youth ages 12-15 was up slightly from 82.6 to 82.7 percent. The booster rate for this age group climbed from 42.1 to 42.8 percent. These are incremental increases which might be improved with continued and consistent messaging about the safety and effectiveness of vaccines.

Vaccination Opportunities for Youth

If you are looking for fun ideas to promote vaccinations for youth, the CDPH has created [toolkits](#) to support your efforts. Information on vaccination clinics in San Mateo County can be found on the [SMCH website](#).

Thank you all for your work to support our students and schools.



Nancy Magee
San Mateo County Superintendent of Schools

Please note: A copy of this letter in Spanish will be [posted here](#) shortly.