

JOINT PRESS RELEASE

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**Sonoma County**  
Office of Education

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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

Date: Feb. 10, 2021

**Revised state guidance allows Sonoma County TK-6 grade levels to apply for in-person learning with approved safety plan**

**SANTA ROSA, CA** – The County of Sonoma and Sonoma County Office of Education today announced that recent guidance under [California's Safe Schools for All Plan](#) allows Sonoma County schools serving grade levels from transitional kindergarten to sixth grade to be eligible to return to in-person learning with an approved COVID-19 Safety Plan, based on the County's adjusted daily case rate of less than 25 per 100,000 residents for five consecutive days.

Sonoma County remains in the most restrictive purple tier under the state's [Blueprint for a Safer Economy](#). All other grade levels are restricted from returning to in-person learning until Sonoma County moves into the red tier.

"We're encouraged by the revised state guidance and want to acknowledge this important milestone in our collective effort to reduce the case rate and get our children back in the classroom," Sonoma County Health Officer, Dr. Sundari Mase said. "The review process for reopening is comprehensive and takes time, but we will be working diligently to complete these reviews as quickly as possible. In the meantime, we will continue to work closely with education officials to ensure that teachers, students, and families have the confidence to reopen safely when they do return to in-person learning."

"Thanks to our community's efforts to slow the spread of the virus, schools are a step closer in a multi-step process toward reopening," said Dr. Steve Herrington, Sonoma County Superintendent of Schools. "Schools and school districts have been working hard to prepare their campuses for reopening and must now complete the COVID-19 Safety Plans newly required by the state. We are working closely with the county health department to help schools complete and have these plans approved." He added that the safety plan review process could take several weeks to finalize."

Before reopening for in-person instruction, eligible schools serving grades TK-6 are required to submit their COVID-19 Safety Plan to state and local health officials for review and approval, and to make the approved plan available online. These plans address in detail the safety precautions that a district and individual school sites will take to ensure the safety of students and staff including: detailed testing protocols, how contact tracing will be handled, the logistics of student dropoff, room spacing, air ventilation, and much more.

Upon approval of the safety plan, schools may reopen as long as the County has a case rate below 25 per 100,000 residents for five consecutive days for grades TK-6. Once the County moves into the red tier for five consecutive days, schools serving any grade level (TK-12) can reopen.

COVID-19 Safety Plans must be posted online for at least five consecutive days prior to reopening. The new safety plan review process only applies to schools who have not reopened under the waiver process, although all schools are required to have a COVID-19 Safety Plan posted online if they have reopened. County health officials will prioritize review of COVID-19 Safety Plans for schools serving TK-6 grade levels that seek to reopen in the purple tier.

For the latest information about COVID-19 in Sonoma County, including testing and vaccination sites, call 2-1-1, text your zip code to 898-211, or visit [www.socoemergency.org](http://www.socoemergency.org).

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