

3-25-20

New FAQs for SCOE Website

## **Coronavirus Frequently Asked Questions**

March 25, 2020

The Sonoma County Office of Education, in partnership with the Sonoma County Department of Health Services and other state and regional agencies, continues to closely monitor and prepare for Coronavirus, officially known as COVID-19.

For the most up-to-date information from health officials, please visit [socoemergency.org](https://socoemergency.org).

### **Q: Why are in-person classes being suspended in Sonoma County?**

A: Sonoma County Office of Education (SCOE) on March 25 recommended that Sonoma County school districts plan to continue distance learning through at least May 1. This guidance was based on consultation with the Sonoma County public health officer and was made in consultation with the county superintendents in Napa, Marin, and Solano counties. These counties also advised that schools plan for in-person classes to be canceled through May 1.

Previously, Sonoma County school districts had announced that they would suspend in-person classes at least through the end of the Sonoma County public health officer's shelter in place order, which was set for April 7. Then Gov. Newsom called for individuals to stay at home state-wide and prohibited mass gatherings of more than 10 people indefinitely.

Following this order, and in consultation with the public health officer, schools are preparing for the possibility of conducting distance learning through May 1. SCOE and school district leaders will reconvene mid-April to reassess and determine a date to resume in-person classes.

*Should the governor's order end before the end of April, school districts will be flexible and consider resuming classes earlier.*

### **Q: Why were classes canceled when children have been shown not to be at high risk for Coronavirus?**

A: While children are not as susceptible to this illness as older individuals, they can spread the illness to older family members. Closing school is seen as an important part of the effort to slow the "community spread" of the illness. If the spread of Coronavirus is slowed, then health service providers have a better chance of serving those who are ill.

### **Q: Will students still receive instruction while classes are suspended?**

A: Yes. What this looks like will vary school district by school district. The intent is that students will remain home while staff may report to their school sites or departments and exercise social distancing as they continue to prepare remote learning opportunities and other support services for our students.

**Q: Who makes the decision to close school due to Coronavirus?**

A: The county public health officer decides when schools should close or suspend in-person classes, in collaboration with the affected school district. SCOE acts as a liaison between school districts and the public health officer. For this reason, SCOE is in close, regular communication with county health officials in order to provide up-to-date guidance and recommendations to school districts.

**Q: Who determines when classes will resume?**

A: Each district will need to set its own calendar and address distance learning activities for students. The decision to resume in-person classes will be made in collaboration with the public health officer, based on the latest information about the spread of Coronavirus in Sonoma County and California.

**Q: What "distance learning" or Independent Study protocols are being provided?**

A: SCOE is working closely with school districts to support remote learning options. What this looks like will vary district-by-district, depending on a range of factors. Some districts that have gone "1:1" with a laptop for every student may be able to provide virtual instruction. Other districts may need to provide paper packets for families. SCOE will continue working to support districts to strengthen their remote learning programs.

**Q: While in-person classes are suspended, will meals be provided to students who receive free and reduced lunch?**

A: Yes, many school districts already have plans in place to provide meals to families that qualify for free and reduced lunch. [Click here to see a map](#) of all the locations where students 18 and under can access free meals.

**Q: Do schools have an emergency response plan for Coronavirus?**

A: Yes, SCOE has created an infectious disease control plan that has been approved by the public health department. [It is available here.](#)

**Q: Once classes resume, will field trips and large events like sports and prom be canceled?**

A: This is a rapidly changing situation. There will likely be a need to cancel, postpone, or modify many field trips and large events.

**Q: Are additional sanitation procedures taking place in classrooms and offices?**

A: Districts are being encouraged to use flu-season cleaning protocols, which include frequent wipe-downs of commonly touched surfaces. SCOE has created a school site cleaning protocol that districts may use to guide their cleaning efforts.