



Coronavirus Frequently Asked Questions

April 1, 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.

Q: What is the current status of schools in Sonoma County?

A: On April 1, following guidance from Governor Gavin Newsom, State Superintendent Tony Thurmond, and the Sonoma County Health Officer, SCOE announced that Sonoma County school districts will likely need to continue distance learning through the end of the 2019-20 school year.

Previously, Sonoma County school districts had announced that they would suspend in-person classes at least through the beginning of May in compliance with county and state shelter in place orders.

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, but schools around Sonoma County are hard at work building distance learning programs to provide high-quality education to children remotely. Many schools are having to build these programs from the



ground up. We are thankful to parents and students for their patience as educators work hard to get programs up and running.

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

A: Each school district, in collaboration with the county public health officer, decides when schools should close or suspend in-person classes, during a pandemic. SCOE serves a coordinating role 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: 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. At this point, school districts are planning to continue distance learning through the end of the 2019-20 year.

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. Some will use a combination. 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: What will happen with graduation ceremonies?

A: This is a particularly difficult time for high school seniors. School districts are working hard to determine the best way to recognize this important milestone. Many are considering postponing ceremonies until later in the summer so that they may still be held in person. Others may use virtual options. Check with your individual school district for more information.

Q: How will this situation impact seniors' eligibility for college?



Thankfully, California's UC and CSU systems recognize the challenges that seniors face. On Wednesday, April 1, they loosened certain entrance requirements. Among other things, students hoping to attend UCs and CSUs won't have to meet minimum grade requirements for core classes affected by the crisis, and they won't be penalized for missing the deadline to hand over transcripts. UC has also suspended the SAT/ACT requirement for those applying for fall of 2021, and CSU is considering a similar move.

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.](#)