

School Reopening Options



Governor Newsom and the California Department of Public Health (CDPH) have released guidance related to reopening schools for the 2020-21 school year. Below are four options for schools to consider.

COVID-19
COLOR CODE

SCHOOL STATUS

OPERATIONAL PRACTICES

ELEMENTARY WAIVER

[Click HERE for complete guidance](#)

Schools may reopen for instruction under a County Health waiver for TK-6. The California Department of Public Health recommends against granting waivers when the case rate per 100,000 is 200 or higher. The waiver request will be considered once the county has reached the benchmark rate set by Sonoma County Department of Health Services (SCDHS) after consulting and confirming with California Department of Public Health, based on local epidemiology data.

- All public health criteria listed for hybrid and traditional reopening need to be in place. (See below)
- School superintendent must submit to Sonoma County Public Health evidence of (1) consultation with labor and parent organizations and (2) publication of the elementary school reopening plans on the school website.
- Waiver application and supporting documents must be submitted directly to Sonoma County Public Health at least 14 days prior to the school's desired opening date.
- Must include plans for testing students and staff for COVID-19.

SPECIAL NEEDS

SMALL COHORTS EXEMPTION

[Click HERE for complete guidance](#)

Counties in the state's "Purple Tier," are permitted to offer in-person instruction and services to small cohorts of students with special needs (e.g, students with disabilities, English learners, homeless youth, foster youth, etc.).

This guidance is not a substitute for reopening schools.

Does not require approval from SCDHS. (Local school board decision)

- Must maintain proper physical distancing, masking, cleaning and other safety measures.
- A school's cohorting site plan should be available on the school's public website.
- Students with disabilities should be prioritized.
- Cohorts cannot exceed 16 students and adults combined.
- The number of students on a given school site should generally not exceed 25% of the school's student enrollment.
- Individuals in cohorts cannot be mixed. However, one-to-one specialized services can be provided to a child by a support service provider that is not part of the child's cohort.

HYBRID REOPENING

WITH SMALL COHORTS TO REOPEN

*Small Cohorts: 6 ft social distancing between students and teachers within a classroom.

Schools may re-open for in-person instruction when Sonoma County has been in the state's "Red Tier" for at least two weeks. The Red Tier is California's second highest risk level and is defined by a county having a positivity rate of less than 8% and between 4-7 daily cases per 100K county residents.

Does not require approval from SCDHS. (Local school board decision)

- Daily health screenings of students and staff. Contact tracing protocol with trained staff needs to be in place.
- Face coverings are required for all staff and all students in grades 3-12; encouraged for students in grades TK-2.
- Those who present COVID symptoms are isolated and sent home.
- Staff members must maintain 6ft distance from each other and students. Students must maintain 6ft distance as practicable.
- Enhanced cleaning.
- Periodic surveillance testing of students/staff recommended.
- Public Health works with COVID-19 Liaison to conduct contact tracing and notify exposed children/staff following FERPA protocol for student information.
- Public Health determines whether quarantine and testing is necessary based on length of exposure, number of people exposed, closeness to contact.

TRADITIONAL REOPENING

WITH MODIFIED COHORTS TO REOPEN

*Modified Cohorts: reduced social distancing between students may be permitted (to be determined by public health officials). 6ft between teachers and students within a classroom.

[Click HERE for complete guidance](#)

Does not require approval from SCDHS. (Local school board decision)

PURPLE TIER

RED TIER

ORANGE TIER