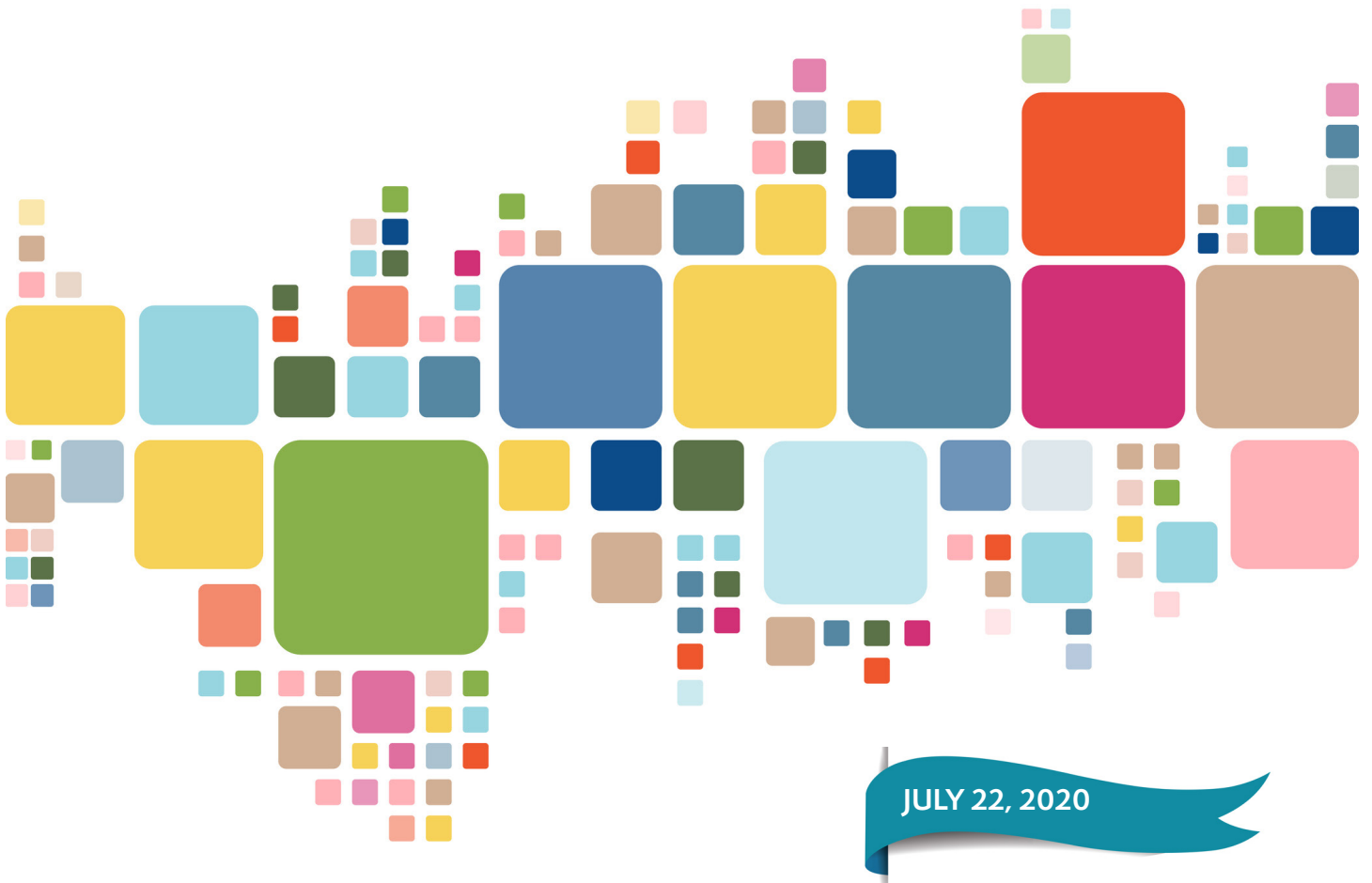


Pathway to Reopening Our Schools

COVID-19 Recovery Guidance



A collaborative resource created in partnership with Imperial County School Districts, the Imperial County Public Health Department and the California County Superintendents Educational Services Association (CCSESA).

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1. Introduction

The Imperial County Office of Education (ICOE) is committed to supporting Imperial County Schools and other county agencies throughout the emergency response to COVID-19 in California.

This document, provided by the Imperial County Office of Education, is a collaborative collection of information, guidance, considerations, and recommendations to support Imperial County school districts in developing district plans for re-opening schools for the 2020-21 school year. Imperial County schools are encouraged to be knowledgeable of current information and guidance released by public health and other agencies, and to work collaboratively with collective bargaining units and all stakeholders in the development and implementation of their individual reopening plans.



2. What do we know about COVID-19?

- ① There is currently no vaccine to prevent coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19).
- ② The best way to prevent illness is to avoid being exposed to this virus.
- ③ The virus is thought to spread mainly from person-to-person.
 - Between people who are in close contact with one another (within about 6 feet).
 - Through respiratory droplets produced when an infected person coughs, sneezes or talks.
 - By these droplets that can land in the mouths or noses of people who are nearby or possibly be inhaled into the lungs.
 - By people who are not showing symptoms as suggested in recent studies.

Source: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC)

3. California's Response to the COVID-19 Pandemic

Governor Gavin Newsom unveiled California's [Roadmap to Modify the Stay-at-Home Order](#) which outlined six indicators the state would consider in modifying the Stay-at-Home order issued on March 16, 2020.

On April 28, the Governor announced four [Resilience Roadmap Stages](#) California would use to gradually reopen; Safety and Emergency Preparedness, Lower Risk Workplaces, Higher Risk Workplaces, and End of Stay-at-home order.

On June 5, the Governor released industry guidance specifically addressing schools and school-based programs. On July 17, the Governor's office released an [amended version of the industry guidelines](#). The industry guidance contains guidelines and considerations intended to aid school and community leaders plan and prepare to resume in-person instruction. The guidance emphasizes local control and the value of ongoing collaboration with our local public health department.

<https://covid19.ca.gov>

The following twelve categories of guidance are included, including a specific section on when our schools can resume in-person instruction:



General Measures



Limit Sharing



**Promote Healthy
Hygiene Practices**



**Train All Staff and Educate
Families**



Face Coverings



Check for Sign and Symptoms



**Ensure Teacher
and Staff Safety**



**Plan for When a Staff Member,
Child, or Visitor Becomes Sick**



**Intensify Cleaning,
Disinfecting, and Ventilation**



**Maintain Healthy
Operations**



**Implementing Distancing Inside
and Outside the Classroom**



**Considerations for Reopening
and Partial or Total Closures**

4. Guidance from Imperial County Public Health Department

The County of Imperial published a [Roadmap to Recovery](#) that closely follows the State of California Resiliency Roadmap stages, with some additional clarification for Imperial Valley. The primary difference between the County and State roadmaps was a subdivision of stage two into lower and higher risk work places, and an affirmation that schools and school based programs could open upon progression to stage 2b. The amended July 17 industry guidance from the California Department of Public Health supersedes the stages in the County of Imperial Roadmap To Recovery and provides objective criteria for when our schools can transition to in-person instruction.

5. Closure Assumptions

- 1** The Imperial County Office of Education will collaborate with local officials regarding the safe reopening of schools.

Specifically, ICOE will:

- Help LEAs in the county synthesize federal, state and local guidelines into practices and procedures for reopening and operating local schools to support both education and public health goals.
- Encourage local districts and charters to use the same practices whenever possible so as to send consistent messages to students, parents, community members and staff.
- Communicate with parents and the community about these practices and procedures.



- 2** COVID-19 is expected to be a public health threat until a vaccine is developed and widely used. Development of a vaccine may take time. The earliest a vaccine could be in production is in the winter of 2020-21. If that happens, it will likely take until the end of the 20-21 school year to distribute enough vaccine to ensure adequate coverage.

- 3** Decisions to re-open schools will be based upon the:

- Ability to do case finding, contact tracing, isolation and quarantine
- Availability of testing
- Availability of personal protective equipment
- Availability of cleaning supplies and disinfectants
- Duration of decline or stability of cases
- Surge capacity in local hospitals

SCHOOLS DURING THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC - DECISION TREE

Source: CDC

The purpose of this tool is to assist administrators in making (re)opening decisions regarding K-12 schools during the COVID-19 pandemic. It is important to check with state and local health officials and other partners to determine the most appropriate actions while adjusting to meet the unique needs and circumstances of the local community.

Should you consider opening?

- ✓ Will reopening be consistent with applicable state and local orders?
- ✓ Is the school ready to protect children and employees at higher risk for severe illness?
- ✓ Are you able to screen students and employees upon arrival for symptoms and history of exposure?

ALL
YES



ANY
NO



DO NOT
OPEN

Are recommended health and safety actions in place?

- ✓ Promote healthy hygiene practices such as hand washing and employees wearing a cloth face covering, as feasible.
- ✓ Intensify cleaning, disinfection, and ventilation.
- ✓ Encourage social distancing through increased spacing, small groups and limited mixing between groups, if feasible.
- ✓ Train all employees on health and safety protocols.

ALL
YES



ANY
NO



MEET
SAFEGUARDS
FIRST

Is ongoing monitoring in place?

- ✓ Develop and implement procedures to check for signs and symptoms of students and employees daily upon arrival, as feasible.
- ✓ Encourage anyone who is sick to stay home.
- ✓ Plan for if students or employees get sick.
- ✓ Regularly communicate and monitor developments with local authorities, employees, and families regarding cases, exposures, and updates to policies and procedures.
- ✓ Monitor student and employee absences and have flexible leave policies and practices.
- ✓ Be ready to consult with the local health authorities if there are cases in the facility or an increase in cases in the local area.

ALL
YES



OPEN
AND
MONITOR

ANY
NO



MEET
SAFEGUARDS
FIRST

4 Safety of students and staff is paramount.

5 Counties, districts and schools across California will have different timelines and approaches for reopening due to local variations in the virus spread, rate of infection and local needs and resources.

6 Reductions in school funding are likely as state revenues decline due to the economic impact of the pandemic; the impact is likely to be long term as it may take time for the economy to recover. Issues that will be discussed in the development of the 2020-21 State Budget include adequate funding for increased costs associated with the response to the pandemic and alternative methods for funding (e.g. enrollment based rather than ADA based) while some to many students continue to use distance learning. CCSESA will track school funding issues, advocate per legislative priorities, and keep county superintendents and business officials informed of emerging legislative actions.

7 Schools that continue to use distance learning and/or a hybrid approach and schools with students on self-isolation due to their or a family member's exposure or illness will need to continue to provide students access to meals when they are not on campus.

8 In-person school attendance will likely be less than before the pandemic for a variety of reasons, including:

- 1) public health recommendations for children with chronic health issues (e.g. diabetes and asthma) to continue to shelter in place;
- 2) families may relocate due to unemployment and/or illness or death of one or more family member;
- 3) families may choose to enroll their children in schools that operate via distance learning;
- 4) COVID-19 infections may result in more school absences than in previous years.





9 Staff members who are 65 and over and children/staff with underlying health conditions (e.g. high blood pressure, chronic lung disease, diabetes, obesity, asthma, and those whose immune system is compromised) will continue to be especially vulnerable and may be advised or choose to continue to stay at home.

10 When schools are allowed to reopen, operations will need to be modified to address COVID-19 in areas such as, but not necessarily limited to:

- a. Development of criteria/plan for closing school again if necessary.
- b. Updated/accessible site-specific protection plan.
- c. Campus access.
- d. School cleaning/disinfecting and other health/safety practices.
- e. Personal protective equipment.
- f. Physical distancing.
- g. Staff and labor issues.
- h. Mental/emotional support for students/staff.
- i. Communications with parents/students, employees and the community.

11 Effects from COVID-19, including fear, isolation, and/or sorrow, may cause students and staff to need more social/emotional support than was provided prior to the pandemic.

12 Expectations regarding student learning outcomes in the 2019-20 year will need to be re-examined going into the 2020-21 school year and COEs will be involved in assisting their LEAs in addressing academic needs and identifying resources to meet those needs.

13 ICOE will support districts by advocating for waivers, funding, and/or state and federal policy changes needed to provide our schools with the resources, guidance and flexibility they need to meet educational goals while responding to the pandemic.

6. Governance Structure

Do Before School Opens

- Launch a Return to School Committee and name a leader with single-point accountability, meaning there is one person who is ultimately responsible.

- The Return to School Committee should include staff with oversight of the procedures detailed in this guidance (this may include representatives from Business, Maintenance and Operations, Human Resources, and Educational Services).

- The Return to School Committee should have a representative from each school in the district.

- Articulate a vision in line with local values and community needs relative to the Return to School Committee's work and communicate this vision with all district stakeholders.

- Define and assign roles and responsibilities of the Return to School Committee. This may include creating subcommittees relative to procedures in this guidance.

- Institute a regular virtual meeting schedule.

- Assess where additional capacity and support may be needed from external partners to support the Return to School Committee's work.

- Meet with or survey key stakeholders to understand their expectations for return to school across issue areas (e.g., associations and parents).

Do When Schools are Open and Operating

- Continue to revise procedures with the Return to School Committee based on community input, successes, and challenges.

- Provide consistent updates on the Return to School Committee's work/progress with district stakeholders.

- Conduct an assessment of the Committee's work and make recommendations for future improvement.

7. Procedures to Promote the Safety of Staff and Students in School

Consistent with state and local public health guidelines, as schools reopen, they will do so with new practices in place to decrease the spread of the disease.

In planning for reopening schools, counties, districts and schools will need to address:

- A. Criteria/plan for closing school again if necessary
- B. Site-specific protection plans
- C. Campus access
- D. School cleaning/disinfecting and other health/safety practices
- E. Protective equipment
- F. Physical distancing
- G. Staff and labor issues
- H. Mental/emotional support for students/staff
- I. Communication with parents/students, employees and the community

A. Criteria/Plan for Closing School Again if Necessary

Development of defined criteria and/or a plan for closing one or more schools again if certain conditions are met will facilitate prompt action should the virus surge or cause a second wave of cases. The criteria/plan should also address the conditions and scenarios under which a classroom will be sent home for isolation and/or what happens if family member(s) of a student or staff member tests positive. This criteria should be developed in conjunction with the local health jurisdiction.

When a student, teacher or staff member tests positive for COVID-19 and had exposed others at the school, refer to the [CDPH Framework for K-12 Schools](#), and implement the following steps:

- In consultation with the local public health department, the appropriate school official may decide whether school closure is warranted, including the length of time necessary, based on the risk level within the specific community as determined by the local public health officer.
- Given standard guidance for isolation at home for at least 14 days after close contact.
- Additional close contacts at school outside of a classroom should also isolate at home.
- Close off the classroom or office where the patient was based and do not use these areas until after cleaning and disinfection.



Wait at least 24 hours before cleaning and disinfecting. If 24 hours is not feasible, wait as long as possible.

- Additional areas of the school visited by the COVID-19 positive individual may also need to be closed temporarily for cleaning and disinfection.
- Implement communication plans for school closure to include outreach to students, parents, teachers, staff and the community.
- Include information for staff regarding labor laws, information regarding Disability Insurance, Paid Family Leave and Unemployment Insurance, as applicable for public local educational agencies. See additional [information on government programs supporting sick leave and worker's compensation for COVID 19](#), including worker's sick leave rights under the [Families First Coronavirus Response Act](#) and employee's right to workers' compensation benefits and presumption of the work-relatedness of COVID 19 pursuant to the [Governor's Executive Order N-62-20](#), while that order is in effect.

- Provide guidance to parents, teachers and staff reminding them of the importance of community physical distancing measures while a school

is closed, including discouraging students or staff from gathering elsewhere.

- Develop a plan for continuity of education. Consider in that plan how to also continue nutrition and other services provided in the regular school setting to establish alternate mechanisms for these services to continue.
- Maintain regular communications with the local public health department.



B. Site-Specific Protection Plan

Prior to reopening, schools will need to:

- 1 Conduct a work-site risk assessment following requirements described in the [Cal/OSHA Guidance](#).**
- 2 Update their site-based safety and/or injury and illness prevention plan in consultation with the site's local risk management advisor to address issues specific to COVID-19 and steps that will be taken to prevent the spread of the virus, including:**
 - a. Plans for training for students, staff and parents on behaviors that reduce the virus spread, including:**

- i. Staying home when they/their children are sick, test positive for COVID-19, or had close contact with someone with COVID-19
 - ii. Frequent handwashing
 - iii. Coughing and sneezing etiquette
 - iv. Keeping hands away from the face
 - v. Using of face coverings
 - vi. Following [CDC guidelines](#) on Quarantine and Isolation when to return to school if they/their children were sick or in close contact with someone with COVID-19
- b. Develop a plan to further support students with access and functional needs who may be at increased risk of becoming infected or having unrecognized illness due to COVID-19.**

For example, review existing student health plans to identify students who may need additional accommodations, develop a process for engaging families for potentially unknown concerns that may need to be accommodated or identify additional preparations for classroom and non-classroom environments as needed. Groups that might be at increased risk of becoming infected or having unrecognized illness include the following:

- i. Individuals who have limited mobility or require prolonged and close contact with others, such as direct support providers and family members;
 - ii. Individuals who have trouble understanding information or practicing preventive measures, such as hand washing and physical distancing; and
 - iii. Individuals who may not be able to communicate symptoms of illness.
- c. The role the school will play in alerting the local health department of COVID-19 cases in collaboration with the local health department.**

3 Make the plan accessible to parents and employees.

Involving staff, parents and the community in the development of the updated plan, including new procedures to prevent the spread of the virus, can help develop understanding of and support for the plan and any new procedures. As with developing district plans, the local health jurisdiction can assist with developing site-specific plans.

C. Campus Access

Measures to prevent the spread of the virus will include developing policies regarding access to school campuses and district/county facilities. Best practice is to establish policies and practices that primarily restrict access to students and staff who are required to be on campus that day and to plan how access points to enter and leave school will be used to limit student and staff exposure to large groups of people.

Encourage potential visitors to use virtual means for business with the school whenever possible.

Establish protocols to address how and when parents and other individuals (e.g. office delivery and/or warehouse staff) will have access and continue to use a single point of entry for these visitors.

D. School Cleaning/Disinfecting and Other Health/Safety Practices



Clear and effective policies and procedures for reducing the spread of COVID-19 will help ease parent and community concerns, and include:

- Requiring anyone (students and staff) with COVID-19 symptoms to stay home and to remain at home while following care instructions from their healthcare provider and local health department until they are advised they may return to school. LEAs may want to

consider developing policies that encourage sick employees and students to stay home when sick without fear of reprisal, including considering not having perfect attendance awards and providing virtual learning and telework options if feasible.



Use of the campus for community events will likely be governed by state and/or local orders prohibiting large gatherings. Once applicable order(s) are relaxed, determine when and how facilities will be made available for joint use and/or rentals by community groups. Consider cleaning/disinfecting that will need to be completed before students and staff can use the facilities following their joint use or rental.

- Encouraging all students, families, and staff to take preventive actions:

- Use "respiratory etiquette."

▶ Cover cough with a tissue or sleeve. See CDC's [Healthy Habits to Prevent Flu](#) page for multilingual posters and flyers posted at the bottom of the webpage.

- **Wash hands frequently following CDC Guidelines.**

Encourage thorough hand washing by students and staff through:

- ▶ Educating staff, students and parents on the importance of handwashing.
- ▶ Establishing a routine for handwashing and/or using hand sanitizer (e.g. every time they enter a room or return to their workstation, after using the restroom, after touching surfaces touched by many people), and
- ▶ Providing adequate supplies (e.g. soap, paper towels and/or hand sanitizer with at least 60% alcohol).



> Students and staff should use fragrance-free hand sanitizer when handwashing is not practicable. Sanitizer must be rubbed into hands until completely dry. Note: frequent handwashing is more effective than the use of hand sanitizers.

> *Ethyl alcohol-based* hand sanitizers are preferred and should be used when there is the potential of unsupervised use by children.

> *Isopropyl* hand sanitizers are more toxic when ingested or absorbed through the skin.

> Do not use hand sanitizers that may **contain methanol** which can be hazardous when ingested or absorbed.

> **Children under age 9 should use hand sanitizer under adult supervision.**

Call Poison Control if consumed: 1-800-222-1222.

- Enhancing cleaning procedures consistent with state requirements and CDC guidance (see [Environmental Cleaning and Disinfection Recommendations](#)). Establish a daily cleaning schedule at all school sites and district offices to ensure frequent cleaning and regular disinfecting of surfaces.
- Considering the assignment of restrooms to specific classes.
- Discourage sharing of instructional items that are difficult to clean or disinfect. Acquire adequate supplies to minimize sharing of high-touch materials and objects (e.g. art supplies, books, learning aids.)
- Limit use of shared playground equipment in favor of physical activities that require less contact with surfaces.
- Limit sharing of objects and equipment, such as electronic devices, clothing, toys, and games to the extent practicable. But where allowed, clean and disinfect between uses.
- Keep each child's belongings separated and in individually labeled storage containers, cubbies or areas. Ensure belongings are taken home each day to be cleaned.
- Consider suspending or modifying use of site resources that necessitate sharing or touching items. For example, consider suspending use of drinking fountains and instead encourage the use of reusable water bottles.
- Implement some form of screening for illness/infection control for students and staff before they enter the school, class, halls, and/or upon entry onto buses. Although these practices may vary across the county depending upon local infection rates and conditions, local communities will benefit when school districts in the same cities and in neighboring communities implement consistent procedures.
 - Schools may use examples of screening methods in the [Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's \(CDC\) supplemental Guidance for Child Care Programs that Remain Open](#) as a guide for screening children or one of two screening methods suggested by the California Department of Education to use as students arrive on campus:
 - ▶ **Passive Screening:** Instruct parents to screen students before leaving for school (check temperature to ensure temperatures below 100.4 degrees Fahrenheit, observe for symptoms outlined by public

health officials) and to keep students at home if they have symptoms consistent with COVID-19 or if they have had close contact with a person diagnosed with COVID-19.

► **Active Screening:** Engage in symptom screening as students enter campus and buses, consistent with public health guidance, which includes visual wellness checks and temperature checks with no-touch thermometers (check temperature to ensure temperatures below 100.4 degrees Fahrenheit), and ask all students about COVID-19 symptoms within the last 24 hours and whether anyone in their home has had COVID-19 symptoms or a positive test. If a thermometer requiring a touch method (under the tongue or arm, forehead, etc.) is the only type available, it should only be used when a fever is suspected and caution is taken by temperature screeners, such as by wearing gloves, eye protection, and a mask.

> Thermometers must be properly cleaned and disinfected after each use.

> All students must wash or sanitize hands as they enter campuses and buses.

◦ Use [CDC's General Business FAQs](#) for screening staff or use one of two screening methods suggested by the California Department of Education:

► **Passive Screening:** Instruct staff to self-screen before leaving for work (check temperature to ensure temperatures below 100.4 degrees Fahrenheit, check for symptoms outlined by public health officials) and to stay home if they have symptoms consistent with COVID-19 or if they have had close contact with a person diagnosed with COVID-19.

► **Active Screening:** Engage in symptom screening as staff enter worksites, consistent with public health guidance, which includes visual wellness checks and temperature checks with no-touch thermometers (check temperature to ensure temperatures below 100.4 degrees Fahrenheit), and ask all staff about COVID-19 symptoms within the last 24 hours and whether anyone in their home has had COVID-19 symptoms or a positive test.

> If a thermometer requiring a touch method (under the tongue or arm, forehead, etc.) is the only type available, it should only be

used when a fever is suspected.

>Thermometers must be properly cleaned and disinfected after each use.

- If screenings will be done, determine how, when and where the checks/screenings will occur, and who will do the checks/screenings.

- If transportation drivers conduct temperature screenings, ensure emergency communication contact numbers are available to reach parents or guardians.

- Policies should not penalize students and families for missing class. Further, prevent discrimination against students who (or whose families were or are diagnosed with COVID-19.

- School nurses and other healthcare providers should use CDC's [Standard- and Transmission-Based Precautions](#) when caring for sick people.

- Schools should establish procedures for safely transporting anyone who is sick (this may include parent/guardian pick up, calling ambulance, or transportation by staff member). COVID-19 symptoms may include: fever, cough, shortness of breath or difficulty breathing, chills, repeated shaking with chills, muscle pain, headache, sore throat, and/or new loss of taste or smell.



Refer to [CDC Guidance for Administrators of K-12 Schools and Child Care Programs](#) for additional information.

- Schools should notify local health officials, staff, and families immediately of a possible case while maintaining confidentiality as required by applicable state and federal statutes (e.g. Family and Medical Leave Act, the Americans with Disabilities Act.

- Schools should close off areas used by a sick person (if applicable and identifiable) and do not use it again before cleaning and disinfection.

Prior to reopening:

- Inspect all buildings, facilities, equipment, materials, etc. and determine status and needs for resuming and maintaining operations. Maintain records on what needs to be done prior to occupancy and the ongoing maintenance that is done after reopening.

- Consider acquiring handwashing stations for distribution across various campus locations (e.g. playground and common areas) to provide easy access without students and staff having to wait in long lines to wash their hands and/or touchless soap dispensers for all sinks to be used for handwashing, touchless or foot pedal trash cans if they are not already in use, touchless hand sanitizer dispensers, and no-contact thermometers.
- Obtain the necessary cleaning supplies, hand sanitizers with at least 60% alcohol, and face covering. Identify new vendors for these supplies if necessary. Use cleaning products approved for use against COVID-19 on the [Environmental Protection Agency \(EPA\)-approved list](#) and carefully follow product instructions and Cal/OSHA requirements.

- To reduce the risk of asthma related to disinfecting, programs should aim to select disinfectant products on list N with asthma-safer ingredients (hydrogen peroxide, citric acid or lactic acid).



- Avoid products that mix these ingredients with peroxyacetic (paracetic) acid, sodium hypochlorite (bleach) or quaternary ammonium compounds, which can cause asthma.

- Use disinfectants labeled to be effective against emerging viral pathogens, following label directions for appropriate dilution rates and contact times. Provide employees training on manufacturer's directions, on Cal/OSHA requirements for safe use and as required by the Healthy Schools Act, as applicable.

- Custodial staff with the responsibility of cleaning and disinfecting the school site must be equipped with proper protective equipment, including gloves, eye protection, respiratory protection and other appropriate protective equipment as required by the product instructions. All products must be kept out of children's reach and stored in a space with restricted access.

- Establish a cleaning and disinfecting schedule in order to avoid both under- and over-use of cleaning products.

- Ensure safe and correct application of disinfectant and keep products away from students.

- Clean facility per [CDC guidelines](#).
- Change air conditioning/heater filters filters ([Guidance for Building Operations During the COVID-19 Pandemic](#)). Thoroughly ventilate the facility.
- In accordance with CDC guidance, ensure that ventilation systems and fans operate properly and increase circulation of outdoor air as much as possible by opening windows and doors and other methods. Do not open windows and doors if doing so poses a safety or health risk to children using the facility (for example, allowing pollen in or exacerbating asthma symptoms). Maximize central air filtration for heating, ventilation, and air conditioning (HVAC) systems (targeted filter rating of at least MERV 13).
- Consider installing portable high-efficiency air cleaners, upgrading the building's air filters to the highest efficiency possible, and making other modifications to increase the quantity of outside air and ventilation in classrooms, offices and other spaces.
- Take steps to ensure that all water systems and features (for example, drinking fountains and decorative fountains) are safe to use

after a prolonged facility shutdown to minimize the risk of [Legionnaires' disease](#) and other diseases associated with water.

- Consider posting CDC posters (on [hand washing](#), and [cover while sneezing/coughing](#)) in classrooms and common areas.
- Consider installing sneeze guards in high traffic areas, especially school offices, the cafeteria and the nurse's office.
- Consider installing plastic flexible screens between bathroom sinks, especially when they are not six feet apart.
- Prepare an isolation area within the school or district building for use in the event a student or staff member becomes ill while at school.
- Inspect and clean buses.

After reopening:

- Modify maintenance staff cleaning routines to provide for disinfecting of surfaces touched by multiple people during the day (work areas, counters, restrooms, doorknobs, desks, tables, chairs, light switches, and stair railings and other "high-touch" surfaces) several times a day.

- Clean classrooms, restrooms, hallways, common areas, and the outside of lockers daily per [CDC guidelines](#).

- Ensure restrooms stay functional and stocked with soap and other supplies.

- Leave doors open or ajar so that students and staff do not have to touch doorknobs when feasible and safe to do so.

- Implement routines for handwashing/using hand sanitizer at regular intervals.

- Provide hand sanitizer in each classroom that does not have access to soap and water.

- Discontinue use of shared food and beverage equipment in employee breakrooms.

- Provide adequate supplies within easy reach, including tissues and no-touch trash cans.

- Increase circulation of outdoor air as much as possible by opening windows and doors when safe to do so.

- If students or staff become ill at school, have the individual use the isolation area until

transportation can be arranged. Have a supply of masks available and require the ill person to use the mask while present.

- Advise sick staff members and students not to return until they have met CDC criteria to discontinue [home isolation](#), including 3 days with no fever, symptoms have improved and 10 days since symptoms first appeared.

- If the local health jurisdiction is conducting contact tracing, identify possible contacts and notify the local health jurisdiction.

- Close off areas used by any sick person and do not use before cleaning and disinfection. To reduce risk of exposure, wait 24 hours before you [clean and disinfect](#). If it is not possible to wait 24 hours, wait as long as practicable. Ensure a [safe and correct application](#) of disinfectants using personal protective equipment and ventilation recommended for cleaning. Keep disinfectant products away from students.

- Buses/vehicles should be thoroughly cleaned and disinfected daily and after transporting any individual who is exhibiting symptoms of COVID-19.



Drivers should be provided disinfectant wipes and disposable gloves to support disinfection of frequently touched surfaces during the day.

- Update protocols as needed to prevent further cases. See the CDPH guidelines, [Responding to COVID-19 in the Workplace](#), which are incorporated into this guidance and contain detailed recommendations for establishing a plan to identify cases, communicating with workers and other exposed persons, and conducting and assisting with contact tracing.

- [Clean and disinfect buses after each route.](#)

E. Personal Protective Equipment

- Provide guidance as to when staff and students are required or encouraged to [wear face coverings](#), masks, or face shields. Face coverings are most essential when physical distancing is not practicable.

- Information should be provided to all staff and families in the school community on [proper use, removal and washing of cloth face coverings](#).

- Students and staff should be frequently reminded not to touch the face covering and to [wash their hands frequently](#).

- Face coverings are not recommended for anyone who has trouble breathing or is unconscious, incapacitated, or otherwise unable to remove the covering without assistance. LEAs should make reasonable accommodations such as a face shield with a cloth drape for those who are unable to wear face coverings for medical reasons. Per Cal/OSHA, considerations for face shields should include a cloth drape attached across the bottom and tucked into shirt.

- Cloth face coverings are meant to protect other people in case the wearer is unknowingly infected (many people carry COVID-19 but do not have symptoms). Cloth face coverings are not surgical masks, respirators, or personal protective equipment.

- **Staff:**

- ▶ All staff should use cloth face coverings in accordance with [CDPH Guidelines](#) unless Cal/OSHA standards require respiratory protection.

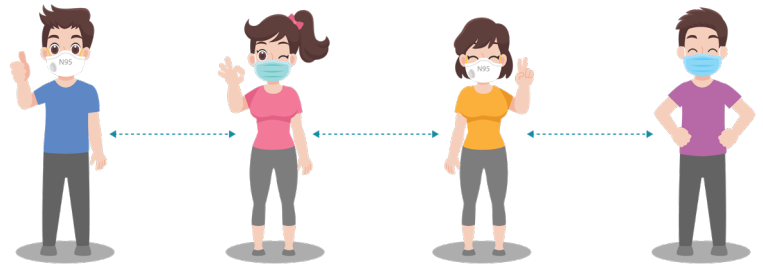
- ▶ In limited situations where a face coverings cannot be used for pedagogical or

developmental reasons, (i.e. communicating or assisting young children or those with special needs) a face shield can be used instead of a cloth face covering while in the classroom as long as the wearer maintains physical distance from others, to the extent practicable. Staff must return to wearing a face covering outside of the classroom.

- Prioritize the provision and use of gloves and face masks to staff based upon risks associated with tasks being completed (e.g. custodians cleaning restrooms and/or maintaining plumbing, nurses, cafeteria workers).

- Consistent with public health guidelines, develop job-specific guidance/requirements for glove use, protective eyewear, and gowns, such as requiring maintenance staff to wear gloves when cleaning or repairing restrooms, and requiring glove use, protective eyewear and gowns when assisting those who become ill while at school.

- Employers should provide and ensure staff use face coverings and all required protective equipment.



o Students:

- Cloth face coverings are most essential in settings where physical distancing cannot easily be maintained, such as school buses or other settings where space may be insufficient.

- At a minimum, face coverings should be worn:

- > While waiting to enter the school campus.
- > While on school grounds.
- > While leaving school.
- > While on a school bus

- Below is a table that shows age requirements:

Age	Face Covering Requirement
Under 2 Years Old	No
2 Years Old – 2nd Grade	Strongly Encouraged**
3rd Grade – High School	Yes, Unless Exempt

***Face coverings are strongly encouraged for young children between two years old and second grade, if they can be worn properly. A face shield is an acceptable alternative for children in this cohort who cannot wear them properly.*

Persons younger than two years old, anyone who has trouble breathing, anyone who is unconscious or incapacitated, and anyone who is otherwise unable to remove the face covering without assistance are exempt from wearing a face covering.

► A cloth face covering or face shield should be removed for meals, snacks, naptime, or outdoor recreation, or when it needs to be replaced. When a cloth face covering is temporarily removed, it should be placed in a clean paper bag (marked with the student's name and date) until it needs to be put on again.

► In order to comply with this guidance, schools must exclude students from campus if they are not exempt from wearing a face covering under CDPH guidelines and refuse to wear one provided by the

school. Schools should develop protocols to provide a face covering to students who inadvertently fail to bring a face covering to school to prevent unnecessary exclusions. Schools should offer alternative educational opportunities for students who are excluded from campus.

► If an LEA requires students to wear face coverings, then the LEA must provide face coverings to be used.

- The California Governor's Office of Emergency Services (CalOES) and the Department of Public Health (CDPH) are and will be working to support procurement and distribution of personal protective equipment. Additional information can be found [here](#).

- Use [PPE Burn Rate Calculator](#) to calculate the average PPE consumption rate or "burn rate."

F. Practices for Physical Distancing

Implementing physical distancing in schools will require advance planning as it will involve examining every setting, transition, and activity in the school day to determine what restructuring is needed

and how that will be done to maintain six feet of separation. It will also involve teaching students to maintain physical distancing and developing effective ways to remind students and gain their compliance. Physical distancing options at school include:

- Re-arranging desks/tables in classrooms to be at least six feet apart, facing the same direction and assigning only one student per desk/table.
- Holding classes in larger rooms such as the gym, library or cafeteria and space students at least six feet apart. If these areas are not used as individual classrooms, consider them off-limits for regular use unless they can be sanitized between groups.
- Placing markers on the pavement to show where students should stand to maintain a distance of six feet in a single line and where lines form so that lines are at least six feet apart in all locations where students need to line up.
- Consider using privacy boards or clear screens to increase and enforce separation between staff and students.
- Implementing changes in the daily/weekly school schedules (see [Scheduling Concepts](#)

[for Hybrid Learning from the LACOE](#)) to decrease class size so that students and the teacher can maintain a physical distance of six feet at all times.

Examples include:

- Limiting the number of students on campus to 50% of normal:
 - ▶ Divide all classes into two equal groups: one would come to school on Monday and Wednesday, the other on Tuesday and Thursday.
 - ▶ Provide each group with two days of direct instruction and support from teachers and three days of assignments to complete at home each week.
 - ▶ Implement a block schedule for secondary schools to reduce passing periods and lower the frequency of touches in each classroom.
 - ▶ Provide take-home meals for each eligible student before they leave each day.
- Limiting the number of students on campus to 25% of normal:
 - ▶ All classes are divided into four equal groups: one for each day Monday through Thursday.

- ▶ All teachers provide each group with one day of direct instruction and support, and four days of assignments to complete at home.
- ▶ Provide take-home meals for each eligible student before they leave each day.
- ▶ Use Friday for professional development for teachers or to prepare packets for the following week.
- Having students attend school in shifts, such as an early and a late shift (Note: If this option is under consideration, be sure to consider the time that will be needed between shifts to provide sufficient time to clean/disinfect after each shift. Consider staggering student exit and entry times, and screen incoming students as appropriate).
- Having some grades attend school in person and other grades attend via [distance learning](#).
- Having certain students (e.g. students who do not have access to distance learning from home, [English Learners](#), or struggling students) attend school on campus and have the remaining students attend via [distance learning](#).
- Having students attend classes that cannot be conducted remotely, such as some career technical education courses.
- Having students with underlying conditions and those whose parents prefer to keep their children at home attend school via [distance learning](#).
- Other Scheduling Considerations:
 - Providing students from higher transmission areas and/or who are at higher risk for severe illness opportunities for virtual learning, independent study and other options as feasible to reduce travel to schools in lower transmission areas and vice versa.
 - Returning students to in-person school by grade with younger students starting first to allow for social distancing. Elementary students will return to school first, for a week. Middle school students would report the second week and high school students would report the third week. Middle and high school students will continue distance learning while waiting to phase back into school.
 - Maintaining [extended school](#) days. In the afternoon, the student school day is extended

beyond the normal school dismissal schedule. Open schools earlier in the mornings – student school day is extended by including an earlier start time.

- **Looping** to allow teachers to keep their 2019-20 students during the 2020-21 school year. This configuration takes advantage of teachers' familiarity with students, which may be especially beneficial in the current situation, particularly if there is limited assessment data available to teachers.

- Postponing high-contact activities/classes (e.g. certain PE activities, field trips, choir, high-contact after school activities such as football) and restructure athletic, performing arts, and club activities to keep students engaged while physically distant.

- Modifying bell schedules to manage traditional, block, and flexible configurations (see [**A Practical Guide to Common Bell Schedules**](#)).

To limit student exposure to many individuals during the day, consider:

- Staggering arrival and drop off-times and locations as consistently as practicable as to minimize scheduling challenges for families.

- Designating routes for entry and exit, using as many entrances as feasible. Put in place other protocols to limit direct contact with others as much as practicable.

- Staggering times when students and staff are moving outside their classrooms/work areas to reduce the number of potential contacts and require students to stay six feet apart when transitioning from one space to another.

- Using block schedules or rotating teachers through the classroom rather than having students change classrooms.

- Minimizing congregate movement through hallways as much as practicable. For example, establish more ways to enter and exit a campus, and staggered passing times when necessary or when students cannot stay in one room.

Modify food service practices to limit exposure when distributing food and when students are eating.

- Consider strategies to limit physical interaction during meal preparation and meal service (e.g., serving meals in classrooms, increasing meal service access points, staggering cafeteria use).

- Where cafeterias or group dining rooms must be used, keep students together in their cohort groups, ensure physical distancing, and consider assigned seating. Serve individually plated or bagged meals. Avoid sharing of foods and utensils and buffet or family-style meals.
- Suspend use of share tables and self-service buffets for food and condiments.
- Install physical barriers, such as sneeze guards and partitions, at point of sale and other areas where maintaining physical distance of 6 feet is difficult.
- With an approved National School Lunch Program waiver, offer meal delivery for students quarantined or in a home-based cohort.
- If providing meal service in classrooms, plan for cleaning and trash removal.

Supervise boarding and seating in buses to ensure physical distancing. Physical distancing options on school buses involves decreasing the number of students on individual buses so that students maintain a distance of six feet. To keep physical distancing on buses and bus stops, consider the following guidelines:

- Determine maximum capacity for students of each vehicle while meeting 6-foot physical distancing objectives.
- Create a plan for seating based on maximum capacity determined above, and develop a plan for bus routes that accommodates the capacity limitations. Mark or block seats that must be left vacant. Sample seating options:
 - **Option 1:** Seat one student to a bench on both sides of the bus, skipping every other row.
 - **Option 2:** Seat one student to a bench, alternating rows on each side to create a zigzag pattern on the bus.
- Instruct students and parents to maintain 6-foot distancing at bus stops and while loading and unloading.
- Seat students from the rear of the bus forward to prevent students from walking past each other. To prevent students from walking past one another, afternoon runs should be boarded based on the order in which students will be dropped off. (Students who get off first should board last and sit in the front.)
- Students and staff should wear face coverings at bus stops and on buses.

Determine how adequate space and facilities will be utilized to maintain health and safety of staff, especially when tending to individual student medical or personal needs.

- Develop a plan that ensures physical distancing among staff in their work environment to reduce spread of the virus that includes:
- Avoiding staff congregation in work environments, break rooms, staff rooms, and bathrooms.
- Avoiding grouping staff together for training or staff development. Consider conducting the training virtually or, if in-person, ensure distancing is maintained.
- Adjust staff schedules (through negotiations) to accommodate new student schedules and physical distancing strategies.
- In accordance with Cal/OSHA regulations and guidance, evaluate all workspaces to ensure that employees can maintain physical distancing to the extent possible. Where possible, rearrange workspaces to incorporate a minimum of 6 feet between employees and students.
- If physical distancing between workspaces or



between employees and students and visitors is not possible, add physical barriers that cannot be moved to separate workspaces.

G. Staff and Labor Issues

Having staff able and ready to safely return to work is a prerequisite for reopening schools. Schools need continuous and ongoing communication with staff and bargaining units to facilitate schools reopening and to respond to employee questions, concerns and/or suggestions.

Collaboration with bargaining units in the development of Memorandum of Understandings (MOU) to address changes in the work environment as a result of COVID-19 can help explore and resolve areas needing attention.

It is critical that employees needing to self-isolate because of COVID-19 are encouraged to stay at home to prevent further infection. Information on government programs supporting employee sick leave and workers compensation is available at <https://www.dir.ca.gov/dlse/Comparison-COVID-19-Paid-Leave.html>.

Schools may choose to use a predetermined Fitness for Duty checklist to determine if an employee is safe to return to work and under what conditions.

Finding substitutes may be a challenge for schools as some substitutes may no longer be available to work. Human Resources (HR) staff may find it beneficial to collaborate with other HR staff on what procedures will be used when there are insufficient substitutes to meet the need in the event many staff members are home sick or quarantined at home because of a recent exposure.

Develop and provide staff training or utilize state-provided training on:

- Disinfecting frequency and tools and chemicals used in accordance with the [Healthy Schools Act](#), [CDPR guidance](#), and Cal/OSHA regulations.

For staff who use hazardous chemicals for cleaning, specialized training is required.

- Physical distancing of staff and students.
- Symptom screening, including temperature checks.
- Updates to the Injury and Illness Prevention Program (IIPP).
 - State and local health standards and recommendations, including, but not limited to, the following: Proper use of protective equipment, including information on limitations of some face coverings that do not protect the wearer and are not PPE but can help protect people near the wearer. Face coverings do not replace the need for physical distancing and frequent handwashing. Cloth face coverings are most essential when physical distancing is not possible. Also include training on removal and washing of cloth face coverings.
 - Cough and sneeze etiquette.
 - Keeping one's hands away from one's face.
 - Frequent handwashing and proper technique.
 - Confidentiality around health recording and reporting.

- Training for school health staff on clinical manifestations of COVID-19, pediatric presentations, and [CDC transmission-based precautions](#).

- Trauma-informed practices and suicide prevention.

Reasonable Accommodations for staff:

- Protect and support staff who are at higher risk for severe illness ([medical conditions that the CDC says may have increased risks](#)) or who cannot safely distance from household contacts at higher risk by providing options such as telework or negotiated change in classification or duties.
- If reasonable accommodations are not practicable, the LEA should work with the employee to develop a flexible leave plan that endeavors to avoid exhausting the employee's earned leave.

H. Mental/Emotional Support

Schools will need to determine how they will address and support the mental/emotional well-being of students and staff (see "[Helping Children with Traumatic Separation or Traumatic Grief Related to COVID 19](#)").



Some students and/or staff may be anxious about their risk when going back to school. Others may have experienced trauma during the time school was closed, such as the loss of one or more family or friends, domestic violence, child abuse, etc. In addition, some families may have experienced job loss and be anxious about their future.

Mental/emotional support during re-entry can help staff and students, especially those who are struggling to adjust to being back at school.

Schools are encouraged to:

- Plan for a positive, supportive re-entry to school focused on helping students with the transition and adjusting to changes in the school structure/schedule.
- Notify teachers, staff, students, and parents about support services available.

- Post information on school district website and on social media for parents regarding ways to help children cope with the virus and any tragedies or loss resulting from it.
- Help principals and teachers understand how to
 - Quickly identify students, families or staff members experiencing problems adjusting.
 - Provide personal supports to those struggling with minor adjustment problems.
 - Provide specialized assistance and referrals to those who experience major trauma when necessary.
- Activate their mental health/student support service team (school counselor, community Mental Health Partners, Community School Community Treatment (CSCT) staff members) to develop a [School Emergency Operations Plan](#) for students and staff, in conjunction with local mental health services staff, including post-traumatic stress syndrome counseling.
- Share information about the availability of counseling services with staff and families. For example, HR could provide staff with



information about access to Employee Assistance Programs that can provide virtual counseling services.

Students who have experienced loss or trauma during the COVID-19 pandemic may need

access to counseling services with follow-up care.

Schools may have site-based counseling services for students who have experienced loss or trauma or be able to provide information about community-based counseling services.

I. Communications with Parents/Students, Employees and the Community

Proactive communication with all stakeholders that shares information about reopening schools and identifies and addresses concerns, can help prepare staff (see [CDC Checklist for Teachers](#)), students, and their families (see [CDC Checklist for Parents](#)) for return to school.

Children may worry about themselves, their family, and friends getting ill with COVID-19.

Parents, family members, school staff, and other trusted adults can play an important role in helping children make sense of what they hear in a way that is honest, accurate, and minimizes anxiety or fear (see [CDC Tips for talking to children](#).)

Provide educational materials to families in the following areas:

- Enhanced sanitation practices in accordance with the [Healthy Schools Act](#), [CDPR Guidance](#), and Cal/OSHA regulations.
- Physical distancing guidelines and their importance
- Screening practices, including temperature checks
- COVID-19 specific [symptom](#) identification
- State and local health standards and recommendations, including, but not limited to, the following:
 - Proper use of protective equipment, including information on limitations of some face coverings that do not protect the wearer and are not PPE but can help protect people near the wearer. Face coverings do not replace the need for physical distancing and frequent handwashing. Cloth face coverings are most essential when physical distancing is not possible. Also include training on removal and washing of cloth face coverings.

- Cough and sneeze etiquette.
- Keeping one's hands away from one's face.
- Frequent handwashing and proper technique.
- Confidentiality around health recording and reporting.
- Trauma-informed practices and suicide prevention.

Consider conducting the training and education virtually, or, if in-person, ensure distancing is maintained.

Schools should designate a staff liaison or liaisons to be responsible for responding to COVID-19 concerns and provide their school communities with their contact information. Employees should know who they are and how to contact them. The liaison should be trained to coordinate the documentation and tracking of possible exposure, in order to notify local health officials, staff and families in a prompt and responsible manner.

Liaisons should also help maintain communication systems that allow staff and families to self-report symptoms and receive prompt notifications of exposures and closures, while maintaining confidentiality, as required by FERPA and

state law related to privacy of educational records.

Create a communications plan for if a school has a positive COVID-19 case.

- Address the school's role in documenting, reporting, tracking, and tracing infections in coordination with public health officials.
- Notify staff and families immediately of any possible cases of COVID-19. Review legal responsibilities and privacy rights for communicating about cases of the virus.
- Provide guidance to parents, teachers, and staff reminding them of the importance of community physical distancing measures while a school is closed, including discouraging students or staff from gathering elsewhere.
- Provide information to parents regarding labor laws, Disability Insurance, Paid Family Leave, and Unemployment Insurance.
- Advise sick staff members and children not to return until they have met [CDC criteria to discontinue home isolation](#).
- Inform those who have had [close contact](#) with

a person diagnosed with COVID-19 to stay home and self-monitor for symptoms and to follow [CDC guidance](#) if symptoms develop. If a person does not have symptoms, follow appropriate CDC guidance for [home isolation](#).

ICOE will assist schools with the coordination among local emergency management agencies, the local public health department, and other local officials (e.g. mental health, Fire Marshal, law enforcement, public transportation, etc.) to identify and develop communication structures related to COVID-19 and schools.



Appendix A: Resources

Federal COVID-19 Guidelines

Guidelines: Opening Up American Again:

<https://www.whitehouse.gov/openingamerica/#criteria>

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

Guidance for Schools and Child Care:

Guidance for Child Care, Schools, and Youth Sports:

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/schools-childcare/index.html>

Interim Guidance for Schools and Day Camps:

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/downloads/php/CDC-Activities-Initiatives-for-COVID-19-Response.pdf#page=45>

FAQ's for Administrators, Teachers, and Parents:

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/schools-childcare/schools-faq.html>

Health Considerations and Decision-Making Tools for Reopening:

Considerations for Schools:

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/schools-childcare/schools.html>

Schools Decision Tool:

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/schools-childcare/schools-decision-tool.html>

Guidance for Cleaning and Disinfecting Tool:

https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/pdf/ReOpening_America_Cleaning_Disinfection_Decision_Tool.pdf

State of California Resources

COVID-19 Response Main Page:

<https://covid19.ca.gov/>

Resilience Roadmap:

<https://covid19.ca.gov/roadmap/>

California Department of Public Health

<https://www.cdph.ca.gov/Programs/CID/DCDC/Pages/Guidance.aspx>

COVID-19 Industry Guidance: Schools and School-Based Programs (July 17, 2020)

<https://files.covid19.ca.gov/pdf/guidance-schools.pdf>

State Guidance for Offices:

<https://covid19.ca.gov/pdf/guidance-office-workspaces.pdf>

Emotional Health resources:

<https://covid19.ca.gov/resources-for-emotional-support-and-well-being/>

Cal/OSHA Guidance on Requirements to Protect Workers from Coronavirus:

<https://www.dir.ca.gov/dosh/coronavirus/Health-Care-General-Industry.html>

California Department of Education

California Department of Education COVID page:

<https://www.cde.ca.gov/ls/he/hn/coronavirus.asp>

California Association of School Counselors

COVID-19 K12 Counseling:

<https://covid19k12counseling.org/>

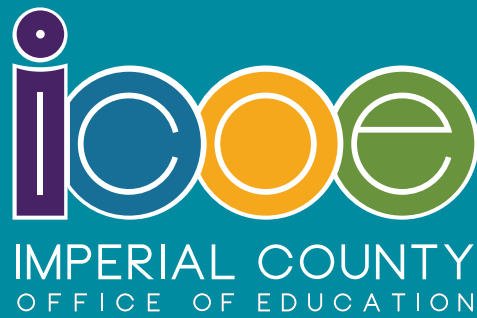
County of Imperial Public Health Department

County of Imperial Public Health Department COVID 19:

<http://www.icphd.org/health-information-and-resources/healthy-facts/covid-19/>

Imperial County's Roadmap to Recovery:

<http://www.icphd.org/health-information-and-resources/healthy-facts/covid-19/roadmap-to-recovery/>



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