DIRECTIVE OF THE HEALTH OFFICER No. 2020-33j

DIRECTIVE OF THE HEALTH OFFICER OF
THE CITY AND COUNTY OF SAN FRANCISCO REGARDING REQUIRED BEST
PRACTICES FOR SCHOOLS

(PUBLIC HEALTH DIRECTIVE)

DATE OF DIRECTIVE: February 4, 2022, updated February 12, 2022

By this Directive, the Health Officer of the City and County of San Francisco (the “Health Officer”) issues industry-specific direction that schools as described below must follow as part of the local response to the Coronavirus Disease 2019 (“COVID-19,” including SARS-CoV-2, the virus that causes the disease) pandemic. This Directive goes into effect immediately upon issuance, and remains in effect until suspended, superseded, or amended by the Health Officer.

UNDER THE AUTHORITY OF CALIFORNIA HEALTH AND SAFETY CODE SECTIONS 101040, 101085, AND 120175, THE HEALTH OFFICER DIRECTS AS FOLLOWS:

1. This Directive applies to all transitional kindergarten (TK)-12 schools in the City and County of San Francisco (“Schools”). All schools are permitted and encouraged to reopen for in-person, on-site instruction with advance written approval by the Health Officer. Schools that have not yet received approval from the Health Officer to reopen for in-person, on-site instruction should email the Schools Hub at schools-childcaresites@sfdph.org for information about the streamlined application process in place for the 2021-22 school year.

2. Attached as Exhibit A to this Directive is guidance from the Department of Public Health regarding reopening Schools for in-person, on-site instruction (“TK-12 Guidance”). All Schools offering in-person, on-site instruction must comply with all applicable requirements listed in the Guidance, including as it may be amended in the future.

3. Each School must make their health and safety plan available (a) online at a permanent URL and (b) in hard copy upon request to all personnel working on site and to the parent(s) and guardian(s) of students in the School. Also, each School must provide a copy of the Health and Safety Plan and evidence of its implementation to any authority enforcing this Directive upon demand.

4. Schools are strongly urged to immediately implement measures to require all adults based in a School facility, including but not limited to teachers, staff, paraprofessionals, contracted janitorial staff, security, therapists, aides, essential volunteers, interns, and student teachers (“School-Based Adults”) to be fully vaccinated with a vaccine authorized to prevent COVID-19 by the FDA, including by way of an emergency use authorization, or by the World Health Organization.
5. Schools must comply with the following requirements with respect to testing:

   a. Routine Asymptomatic Testing for School-Based Adults

      i. All school-based personnel who are not fully vaccinated must test at least once weekly.

         1. Testing may be with PCR, another nucleic acid amplification test, or an antigen test.
         2. School-based personnel include interns, volunteers, and student teachers.
         3. Each School must maintain a log of testing for all School-Based Adults who work or provide services onsite at the School (the “Testing Log”), including all of the information set forth in the Excel File for Testing Tracking available at https://www.sfdph.org/dph/files/ig/School-Testing-Log-Worksheet.xlsx. The log must be retained for 12 months and be made available to SFDPH upon request.

      ii. A School must not allow any School-Based Adult who is not fully vaccinated to come to work or otherwise enter the School’s premises if that person refuses to be tested as outlined in subsection (i) above or to provide test results to the School, unless expressly permitted in advance and in writing by the Health Officer or the Health Officer’s designee.

      iii. Schools must take all steps necessary to ensure the School receives the results of these tests promptly. Specifically, Schools must require School-Based Adults who are not fully vaccinated to either (1) sign a release of information (ROI) authorizing the testing lab or ordering provider to share the COVID-19 test result directly with the School or (2) commit to providing results to the School within one hour of receiving a positive or inconclusive result and 24 hours of receiving a negative result. A sample ROI is available online at https://www.sfdph.org/dph/covid-19/schools-education.asp. If a School-Based Adult chooses to report results to the School themselves, the person may make an initial verbal report of a positive or inconclusive result to facilitate rapid infection control measures, but must follow-up with documentation of any result within 48 hours whether it be a positive, inconclusive, or negative result.

      iv. Schools must immediately (within one hour of learning of the result) report any positive or inconclusive test result to the SFDPH Schools and Childcare Response Team: call 628-217-7499 or email cases.schools@sfdph.org (please put “SECURE” in the subject line).

      v. School-Based Adults who test positive for COVID-19 must not be allowed to return to the School until the relevant criteria set forth in SFDPH’s isolation
and quarantine guidelines are satisfied. See https://www.sfdph.org/directives and https://www.sfdph.org/dph/COVID-19/Isolation-and-Quarantine.asp. School-Based Adults who receive an inconclusive test result may get retested and use the new result. If they choose not to get retested, they must follow the isolation and quarantine guidelines as though they have a positive result.

b. Symptomatic Testing

i. If any School-Based Adult has symptoms of COVID-19, the School must send that person home in compliance with the procedures set forth in the TK-12 Guidance. The person must not be allowed to return to the School until the relevant criteria set forth in SFDPH’s isolation and quarantine guidelines are satisfied. See https://www.sfdph.org/directives and https://www.sfdph.org/dph/COVID-19/Isolation-and-Quarantine.asp. It is strongly recommended that the person be tested as soon as possible for COVID-19. Schools must take all steps necessary to ensure the School receives the results of these tests promptly. Schools must immediately (within one hour of learning of the result) report any positive or inconclusive test result to the SFDPH Schools and Childcare Response Team: call 628-217-7499 or email cases.schools@sfdph.org (please put “SECURE” in the subject line).

ii. If any student has symptoms of COVID-19, the School must send that student home in compliance with the procedures set forth in the TK-12 Guidance. The student must not be allowed to return to the School until the relevant criteria set forth at https://www.sfdph.org/dph/COVID-19/Schools-Returning.asp are satisfied. It is strongly recommended that the student be tested as soon as possible for COVID-19. Schools must require parents or guardians to inform the School immediately (within one hour of learning of the test result) if their child tests positive or has an inconclusive test result and to provide documentation of the positive or inconclusive result within 48 hours. Schools must immediately (within one hour of learning of the test result) report any positive or inconclusive test result to the SFDPH Schools and Childcare Response Team: call 628-217-7499 and email cases.schools@sfdph.org.

c. General Requirements

i. The School must share information about testing with SFDPH as required by this Directive and as requested by SFDPH at any time while this Directive is in effect. Such information may include and is not limited to information about attendance, contact information, health information, employment information (for School-Based Adults), and any other information related to
this Directive required by SFDPH. The disclosure of any confidential information under this subsection is limited to the minimum necessary for public health purposes as determined by SFDPH, and any such information that is confidential must be protected by SFDPH as required by law.

ii. All Testing must be done using tests that are authorized by the United States Food and Drug Administration or by the California Department of Public Health.

iii. Testing results, including but not limited to the Testing Log, are considered confidential health information of staff and students, and must be handled accordingly. For example, Schools can consider the following measures:
   - If test results are to be faxed to the School, the fax machine must be placed in a private, secure area;
   - Hard copy documentation must be kept in a secure location, such as a locked file cabinet behind a locked door, and must not be left unsecured while unattended;
   - Electronic information must be stored on password-protected computers; and
   - Any electronically-stored information must not be maintained in a cloud-based system that is located outside the United States.

iv. The School must maintain the confidentiality of information about testing results of School-Based Adults and students, and may only share such information as allowed or required by law.

v. In relation to reporting test results for School-Based Adults or students, the School must provide all information requested by SFDPH.

vi. The School must comply with SFDPH requirements regarding reporting of metrics as stated in “SFDPH Reporting Metrics” (available at https://www.sfdph.org/dph/covid-19/schools-education.asp).

6. Each School must cooperate with SFDPH by working and collaborating with SFDPH, and otherwise following the direction of SFDPH, in relation to the School and the subject matter of this Directive. Such cooperation includes, but is not limited to, all of the following:
   - Promptly taking and responding to telephone calls, emails, and other inquiries and requests by representatives of SFDPH;
   - Allowing SFDPH personnel on-site without advance notice;
   - Responding to all SFDPH requests for information in a timely manner;
City and County of San Francisco

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- Communicating with School-Based Adults, students, and their parent(s) or guardian(s) as directed by SFDPH; and

- Taking immediate action as required by SFDPH in the event of an outbreak or other time-sensitive situation that poses a risk to the health and safety of students, School-Based Adults, or the community.

7. Schools must advise all students and School-Based Adults that, unless they meet criteria set forth in SFDPH’s “COVID-19 Infections, Symptoms, and Exposures” (https://www.sfdph.org/dph/covid-19/schools-isolation-and-quarantine.asp) to be exempted from quarantine (see subsection “Quarantine exceptions and special situations”), they must notify the school and stay home if any household member or other close contact has a positive or inconclusive COVID-19 test or was otherwise diagnosed with COVID-19 by a healthcare provider. School-Based Adults and students may return to school when the relevant criteria set forth at https://www.sfdph.org/dph/COVID-19/Schools-Returning.asp are satisfied. It is strongly recommended that unvaccinated individuals get tested for COVID-19 on or after five days after their last close contact with the person with COVID-19.

8. This Directive may be revised by the Health Officer, through revision of this Directive or another future directive or order, as conditions relating to COVID-19 require, in the discretion of the Health Officer. All Schools must stay updated regarding any changes to this Directive by checking the Department of Public Health website (www.sfdph.org/healthorders; www.sfdph.org/directives) regularly.

Where a conflict exists between this Directive and any state, local, or federal public health order related to the COVID-19 pandemic, the most restrictive provision controls. Failure to carry out this Directive constitutes an imminent threat and menace to public health, constitutes a public nuisance, and is a misdemeanor punishable by fine, imprisonment, or both.

Susan Philip, MD, MPH, Dated: February 12, 2022
Health Officer of the
City and County of San Francisco
Guidance for TK-12 Schools for School Year 2021-2022

February 11, 2022

This guidance was developed by the San Francisco Department of Public Health (SFDPH) for local use. It will be posted at https://sfcdcp.org/school.

Summary of changes since 2/3/2022

- Clarified guidance about face masks outdoors, specifically that masks are not required since the risk of transmission is low in most outdoor settings
- Clarified that unvaccinated individuals who have had COVID-19 in the last 90 days and are required to undergo weekly asymptomatic screening testing for certain situations are exempt from the asymptomatic screening testing for 90 days from the date of infection. They should resume screening testing after 90 days.

Summary of Changes Since the 12/30/2021 Version

- Reinstated indoor mask exemption for stable cohorts of youth athletes who are “up to date” on their vaccination status when certain conditions are met
- Updated, where appropriate, language to reflect “up to date” on vaccination in place of “fully vaccinated”
- Updated timing of positive case reporting requirements to SFDPH from within 1 hr to 24hr

(update in green)

AUDIENCE: Public, private, and parochial TK-12 schools in San Francisco. Transitional kindergarten (TK) programs that are not part of an elementary school should refer to SFDPH’s Guidance for Programs for Children and Youth.

PURPOSE: To help TK-12 schools understand health and safety practices needed to prevent the spread of COVID-19 for in-person instruction.

BACKGROUND: Given the important health and education benefits of in-person learning and the knowledge gained since the start of the COVID-19 epidemic, our priority must be to ensure continued safe in-person learning for all students in San Francisco. By layering effective prevention strategies, schools can reduce the risk of COVID-19 and provide in-person instruction safely for staff and students.

These recommendations are based on the science available at this time. They are subject to change as new knowledge emerges, local transmission changes, or as COVID-19 vaccination rates change.
Key Messages

- **Vaccination and boosters of staff, eligible students, and household members for COVID-19 is one of the most effective ways to decrease the risk of COVID-19 in schools.** Up-to-date vaccinated adults and eligible students also provide protection to younger children who are not yet eligible for vaccination.

- **In-person attendance is crucial** to students’ physical and mental health as well as their learning, Measures to prevent the spread of COVID-19 must consider and prioritize students’ access to safe and full in-person instruction, keeping them in school as much as possible and limiting unnecessary missed days at school.

Procedures and Protocols

Apply to Reopen.

*Schools must apply and be approved by SFDPH to reopen.*

- For information on how to apply, email schools-childcaresites@sfdph.org.

Establish COVID-19 health and safety protocols.

- **Designate a COVID-19 staff or liaison** to be the single point of contact at each site for questions, concerns, or exposures. This person will also serve as a liaison to SFDPH.

- **Create a plan** describing what your school will do to follow the requirements in this guidance and any relevant Health Directives or Orders, including Health Directive No. 2020-33, “Required Best Practices for Schools”, at [https://www.sfdph.org/dph/alerts/coronavirus-health-directives.asp](https://www.sfdph.org/dph/alerts/coronavirus-health-directives.asp)
  - Update your plan regularly to reflect changes in COVID-19 guidance and local transmission.
  - **Share your plan** on your website and with staff, families, and other members of your community.

- **Establish written protocols** for what your school will do if someone at school is exposed to COVID-19, has symptoms of COVID-19, and/or tests positive for COVID-19.


- Do not exclude children and youth because of medical conditions that may increase their risk of severe COVID-19. Let the child’s medical team and family decide if it’s safe for them to attend.

Required Signs.

Programs must post the following signs, available [here](https://www.sfdph.org/dph/alerts/coronavirus-health-directives.asp) in different sizes and colors:

- Post at all public entrances: **Best practices for COVID-19 prevention**

- Post in staff break rooms and other staff areas: **Get Vaccinated, SF!**

Signs are available in different sizes and colors at [sf.gov/outreach-toolkit-coronavirus-covid-19](https://www.sf.gov/outreach-toolkit-coronavirus-covid-19). The toolkit also has a variety of signs, posters and fact sheets on COVID-19.
Strategies to prevent the spread of COVID-19

Promote COVID-19 vaccination.

- Encourage COVID-19 vaccination for staff, volunteers, students old enough to be vaccinated, and family members.
- Limit non-essential visitors who are not fully vaccinated, including volunteers and activities involving external groups, as required by CDPH.

Wear face masks indoors.

*Face masks can keep infection from spreading, by trapping respiratory droplets and aerosols before they can travel through the air. They are an essential prevention strategy in indoor spaces.*

For this guidance, face masks includes cloth face coverings that cover the mouth and nose. Face masks must not have an exhalation valve.

- Face masks are required indoors for everyone 24 months and older, even if they have been fully vaccinated for COVID-19 with the exemptions noted below for specific sports and extracurricular activities. When there are no students present on campus, staff may follow Cal/OSHA Emergency Temporary Standards (ETS) on face masks.
- Masks must be well-fitted and cover the mouth and nose. Scarves and other loose face coverings are not allowed.
- Keep a supply of face masks for people who forget to bring their own.
- Schools must develop protocols to enforce face mask requirements. Schools should offer alternative educational opportunities for students who are excluded from campus because they will not wear a face mask. Schools are not required by CDPH to exclude students who refuse to wear face masks.
- Face masks are not required outdoors as the risk of transmission is low in most outdoor settings. They may be considered when people are stationary and in crowded situations like on the sidelines of a game or spectators in the stands.

Exemptions to face masks.

- Children under 24 months old must not wear face masks, due to the risk of suffocation.
- People who are unconscious, asleep, or unable to remove a face mask independently.
- Individuals while participating in the following activities:
  - Water sports, such as swimming, water polo, or diving, while participants are in the water. Participants must wear face masks when not in the water.
  - Wrestling or certain martial arts if masks cannot be worn during matches. Participants must wear masks when not actively engaged in a match.

What does it mean to be “up-to-date” for COVID-19?

To be “up-to-date” you are either (a) two weeks past completing the full initial course of vaccines—either two doses of Moderna or Pfizer or one dose of a Johnson & Johnson vaccine AND (b) one week after receiving a Booster of any type once a person is eligible for a Booster. Until a person is eligible for a Booster, they are considered Up-to-Date on Vaccination two weeks after
Competitive cheer or gymnastics during activities like tumbling or flying, where a mask might obstruct vision. Participants must wear face masks at other times.

For wind instruments (woodwind, brass), bell covers may be used with or without modified face masks (slit masks with an opening for the mouthpiece). Whenever possible, it is recommended to maintain at least 3 feet distance between musicians.

For all other indoor sports not mentioned above, players who are “up to date”, may also remove their masks at practice during active play or heavy exertion if:

- The group is a stable cohort of individuals who meet regularly over the course of a season (this does not include single day events/programs or tryouts) AND
- There are no guests, spectators, or other users in the space during the practice or class.
- There are no children <5 years old
- If the stable group of individuals has any members who are not “up to date”, well-fitting masks must be worn by those individuals at all times unless specifically exempted above.
- Masks must be worn when not actively exercising, like when on the sidelines or taking water breaks.
- Masks must be worn during competitions with other teams or groups.
- Vaccination statuses of all individuals must be verified, recorded and made available to SFDPH upon request.

Medical exemptions to face masks require a note or other documentation from a physician, nurse practitioner, or other licensed medical professional practicing under the license of a physician. Self-attestation and parental attestation for mask exemptions are not allowed.

Persons with medical exemptions to face masks must wear a face shield with a drape on the bottom, or other non-restrictive alternative, if their condition permits it.

In limited situations where a face mask cannot be used for pedagogical or developmental reasons (e.g., communicating with young children or those with special needs), a face shield with a drape can be used instead of a face mask, if the wearer maintains physical distance from others. A face mask must be worn at other times.

For more information on exemptions to face masks, see CDPH Face Mask guidance, CDPH TK-12 guidance, CDPH Schools Questions and Answers, and San Francisco Health Order C19-07.

Testing.

Testing is most useful when people are more likely to be infected, for example, after close contact to someone with COVID-19, with higher-risk activities like indoor sports, and when community levels of COVID-19 are high. Testing is less useful when the chance of infection is low, for example, for people who are fully vaccinated for COVID-19, with low-risk activities like classroom instruction, and when community levels of COVID-19 are low.

- SFDPH requires** regular once weekly testing of the following groups:
  - On-site school personnel who are not vaccinated for COVID-19, including volunteers, interns, and student teachers.

San Francisco Department of Public Health
- Participants and personnel **not vaccinated** for COVID-19 in indoor sports where SFDPH allows mask exemptions
- Testing must be at least once weekly with PCR, other nucleic acid amplification test (NAAT), or an antigen test.
- If participants decline testing, they may not participate in the sport.
- If personnel decline testing, the school must not allow them on campus.
- Unvaccinated personnel must either sign a release of information for test results to be shared with the school or commit to notifying the school within 1 hour of a positive or inconclusive result, and within 24 hours of a negative result.
- Unvaccinated individuals who have a documented COVID-19 infection (for example either with a doctor's note or a confirmed test) in the previous 90 days may be exempted from testing for 90 days from the date of infection. They should resume screening testing after 90 days.

- Schools must keep a log of all test results. For tests not done by the school, verify results (i.e., by viewing an electronic or paper copy of the negative result or note from the test site or clinic, with the person's name and date tested).

- Schools and programs for children and youth must follow testing requirements for indoor activities with mask exemptions no later than **September 27, 2021**.

**CDPH also recommends** weekly testing of K-12 students in indoor school-based activities where masks cannot be worn, regardless of vaccination status. This recommendation applies to all activities that are organized or supervised by a school or take place at a school site. For more information, see [CDPH K-12 Schools Guidance](https://sfcdcp.org/school). For a list of activities where students may be unmasked indoors, see [mask exemptions](https://sfcdcp.org/school).
Summary chart of SFDPH testing requirements for activities with mask exemptions.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>Testing</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Indoor low- or moderate-contact:</td>
<td>All participants, staff, and volunteers who are <strong>not yet vaccinated</strong> must be tested at least once a week (PCR/NAAT or antigen)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Swimming and diving;</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Competitive cheer or gymnastics if done unmasked;</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Wind instruments if no slit mask/bell covers and 3-foot distancing.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Indoor high contact:</td>
<td>All participants, staff, and volunteers who are <strong>not yet vaccinated</strong> must be tested at least once a week (PCR/NAAT or antigen).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Water polo;</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>• Wrestling, if done unmasked;</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Certain martial arts with sparring, if done unmasked.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- SFDPH recommends testing for the following groups:
  - People with symptoms of COVID-19 or close contact to COVID-19, even if they have been vaccinated for COVID-19.
- SFDPH does not recommend routine testing of the following groups:
  - Students without COVID-19 symptoms or known exposures who do not participate in high-risk activities.
  - Vaccinated staff without COVID-19 symptoms or known exposures.
  - Staff and students who had COVID-19 in the last 3 months, confirmed by a lab test, who do not have symptoms.

**Improve ventilation and use outdoor spaces.**

*Increasing indoor air circulation lowers the risk of infection by “diluting” any infectious respiratory droplets with outdoor air. Being outside is even lower risk.*

**Outdoor spaces**

- Do as many activities outside as possible, especially snacks/meals and exercise.
Indoor spaces

*Good ventilation decreases the number of respiratory droplets in the air by replacing indoor air with fresh, uncontaminated air and/or filtering infectious droplets out of the air. It is another important measure to prevent COVID-19 transmission indoors.*

During wildfires or other times when air quality is poor, prioritize maintaining healthy air quality indoors. Your school can stay open even if you need to close your windows or decrease outdoor air intake by your ventilation system during these times. Continue other precautions, especially wearing face masks. Portable air cleaners (HEPA filters) can be helpful.

Review [CDPH Ventilation Guidance](https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/schools-childcare/ventilation.html). General recommendations include:

- Open windows to increase natural ventilation with outdoor air when health and safety allow. When possible, consider also leaving room doors slightly open to promote flow of outdoor air through the indoor space.
- If open windows pose a risk of falls for children, use window locks to keep windows from opening more than 4 inches, or other safety devices to prevent falls.
- Do not prop or wedge open fire doors. Continue to follow fire and building safety requirements.
- If your building has an HVAC system (also called mechanical ventilation, forced air, or central air):
  - Have your HVAC system checked by a professional to make sure that it is working properly.
  - Open outdoor air dampers and close recirculation dampers (“economizers”). This will maximize the amount of outdoor air that the HVAC system takes in and minimize the amount of indoor air that is recirculated.
  - If you can use higher-efficiency air filters without reducing airflow or damaging your HVAC system, use air filters rated MERV13 or better.
  - Disable “demand-control ventilation controls” so fans keep running even when a room doesn’t need to be heated or cooled.
  - If your HVAC system has a timer, set it to run at least 1-2 hours before the building opens until 2-3 hours after everyone has left the building, including custodial staff.
- If your school uses fans, adjust the direction of fans to so that air does not blow from one person’s space to another’s space.
- Consider portable air cleaners (“HEPA filters”).

For more information, see:


Stay home when sick.

*Asking people about symptoms after they arrive is not very effective in keeping COVID-19 out of programs. It is more important to tell people to stay home if they are sick.*

Make sure that staff, volunteers, students, and families know the symptoms of COVID-19. **Tell people to stay home if they have symptoms.**
• Give a list of COVID-19 symptoms to staff, volunteers, students, and families. Make sure they know to stay home if they have symptoms. **Schools do not have to confirm that people have reviewed the list each day.**

SFDPH has created a sample handout for families, [For Parents and Guardians: COVID-19 Symptom and Exposure Check](https://sfcdcp.org/school), at sfcdcp.org/school

• Encourage family members of students and staff to get tested promptly if they have symptoms of COVID-19. This will lower the risk of infection spreading to people in your school.

• SFDPH does not recommend temperature checks.

Encourage staff and students who are not fully vaccinated for COVID-19 to [quarantine and test after travel](https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/travelers/travel-during-covid19.html), as recommended by the CDC.


• Schools can require staff and students who are not fully vaccinated for COVID-19 to wait for the end of the CDC-recommended quarantine period before returning to school after travel.

**Hand hygiene: Follow pre-COVID protocols.**

• Teach and reinforce the importance of washing hands, avoiding contact with one’s eyes, nose, and mouth, and covering coughs and sneezes among students and staff.

• Promote hand washing throughout the day, especially before and after eating, after using the toilet, and after handling garbage, or removing gloves.

• Make sure that people have supplies to clean their hands, including soap, paper towels, and hand sanitizer with at least 60 percent ethyl alcohol for staff and children who can safely use hand sanitizer.

**Cleaning and disinfection: Follow pre-COVID protocols unless there is a COVID-19 case.**

*Routine disinfection to prevent COVID-19 is no longer recommended for schools. Surfaces are not a significant route of transmission.***

• Cleaning once a day is usually enough to remove potential virus that may be on surfaces.

• Paper-based materials like books and magazines do not need cleaning between uses.

• Outdoor play grounds do not need cleaning and disinfection between groups.

• Additional disinfection is recommended only if a person with COVID-19 was present within the last 24 hours; clean AND disinfect spaces occupied by that person during that time.


**Cohorting is not required.**

*A cohort is a small, stable group with the same staff and children each day. Keeping people in cohorts lowers their exposure risk by limiting the number of people they interact with. It is less important when community transmission is low.*

San Francisco Department of Public Health
*Updated 2/11/2022. [https://sfcdcp.org/school](https://sfcdcp.org/school)*
**Cohorting is no longer required.** SFDPH does not recommend cohorting if it will limit full enrollment for in-person learning. Schools should prioritize full enrollment over strict cohorting.

- Staff and volunteers may work with more than one class or group.
- There is no maximum group or class size.
- Schools may consider assigned seating, documenting who sits next to each other during meals and snacks, and other ways of tracking who is within 6 feet of others each day.

**Physical distancing is not required.**

*Physical distancing decreases the risk of COVID-19 from respiratory droplets. It is less important in settings where people wear face masks, vaccination rates are high, and spread of COVID-19 is low.*

**Physical distancing is no longer required, except for wind instruments indoors** (unless students are tested weekly). Because of the importance of in-person learning, CDC, CDPH, and SFDPH do not recommend physical distancing if it will limit full enrollment. Schools that opt to use physical distancing to further reduce COVID-19 risk should:

- Prioritize full enrollment over physical distancing.
- Balance distancing with students’ developmental and socio-emotional needs.
- Consider strategic use of physical distancing for higher-risk activities, for example:
  - During dance, exercise, or singing.
  - When unvaccinated children are not wearing masks, for example, during meals.
- In many cases, moving higher-risk activities outside will reduce COVID-19 risk more than distancing indoors.

**Sports, dance, wind instruments, singing, and related activities**

*Sports, dance and activities involving singing, chanting, shouting, and playing wind instruments are higher risk for COVID-19 because people breathe more air and breathe out more forcefully when doing these activities. The risk is much higher indoors than outdoors, and higher without face masks.*

- These activities are allowed outdoors.
- As for other school activities, face masks must be worn indoors, except for activities specified under [mask exemptions](#) above.

**Required testing for indoor activities exempted from face masks.**

- Indoor activities that are exempted from the masking requirement are now allowed indoors but require regular COVID-19 testing (See [Testing](#)).
- Wind instruments can be played indoors with one of the following:
  - Bell covers AND 3-foot physical distancing (with or without modified masks), or
  - COVID-19 testing of all participants (See [Testing](#)).
Reporting and notification of COVID-19 cases.
Schools, programs, and event organizers must:

1. Inform SFDPH of positive tests within 24 hours, whether detected during on-site testing or communicated to the team or organizer.

2. Identify and notify individuals with close contact to a COVID-19 case, including other teams or referees.

3. If informed by another team of a positive case, identify and notify close contacts on the team, and notify SFDPH of the exposure at cases.schools@sfdph.org.

4. Leagues and tournaments/multi-team events should establish procedures for notifying other teams and referees of a positive COVID-19 case that occurs during competition.

Additional steps to reduce the risk of COVID-19 with higher-risk activities.
Enforce indoor masking.

- Enforce mask requirements for volunteers and spectators as well as participants and staff.
- Masks must be worn indoors for indoor competition and performances, in accordance with the CDPH Guidance for the Use of Face Coverings and San Francisco Health Orders.
- Masks are not required outdoors as the risk of transmission is low in most outdoor settings. Masking outdoors may be considered when people are stationary and distancing is not possible, for example, for athletes on the sidelines during games or spectators in the stands.

Strongly encourage or require COVID-19 up-to-date vaccination.

COVID-19 vaccination is strongly recommended for all participants who are old enough to be eligible for vaccination, as well as coaches, staff and volunteers.

Having everyone in your league up to date on vaccination will greatly decrease the risk of transmission of the virus among teammates and between teams, and will protect teams against severe illness, hospitalization, and death. It will also decrease disruption in team activities, since vaccinated individuals are not required to quarantine if they are close contacts to a case of COVID-19.

- Leagues, teams, and tournaments/events are encouraged to require that all eligible participants and personnel be up to date on vaccination for COVID-19.
- When transmission is high, consider cancelling high-risk sports and extracurricular activities unless all participants are up to date on vaccination, as recommended by CDC Guidance for COVID-19 Prevention in Schools.

Move higher-risk activities outdoors, when practical.

- Exercise, physical conditioning and training, including practices and games.
- Cheer, stunt, drill team, etc.
- Wind instruments.
- Choir, or any singing.
- Drama and dance.
Prevent spread of COVID-19 off the field.

- Remind participants and families that COVID-19 often spreads off-the-field, especially in situations when groups let their guard down and eat or socialize together with their masks off (post-game parties, locker rooms, carpools).
- Locker rooms are high-risk because they are often crowded and poorly ventilated.
  - Have players arrive dressed to play as much as possible.
  - Use locker rooms only to change or use the restroom. Don’t use the locker room for coaching or pregame, halftime or postgame talks.
  - Avoid having different teams use a locker room at the same time.
  - Ensure mask use in locker rooms.
  - Consider closing showers, since masks cannot be worn while showering, and to decrease time spent in locker rooms.
- Follow guidance below for shared transportation.

Travel.

- When traveling overnight, team members not from the same household should sleep in separate rooms or in consistent groups when feasible. Keep masks on whenever visiting other members’ hotel rooms.
- Socializing with other teams is strongly discouraged.
- Teams that travel out-of-state or outside the Bay Area are encouraged to follow CDC recommendations for quarantine after travel.

Specific Situations

Transportation.

Since vehicles are small, enclosed spaces that do not allow physical distancing, they are higher risk of COVID-19 transmission. Biking and walking are lower risk than shared vehicles.

- Carpools and shared rides
  - Tell staff and families to try to carpool with the same stable group of people.
  - Open windows. Turn the fan on high, set to outdoor air.
  - Treat the vehicle as an indoor space: everyone in the vehicle should wear a face mask.
- Buses and Vans
  - Face masks are required for everyone riding the bus, including drivers. Bus drivers should carry a supply of face coverings in case a student forgets theirs.
  - Maximize space between people from different households who have not been vaccinated for COVID-19.
  - Keep vehicle windows open when weather and safety permit.
  - Turn the fan on high, set to outdoor air.
If more than one vehicle is used, for example, for a sports team, have the same people ride together each time, and try to assign groups that already interact with each other to the same vehicle (ex. varsity vs JV, offense vs defense).

Disinfection for COVID-19 not needed unless someone with COVID-19 has used the bus within the last 24 hours.

You do not have to ask riders about symptoms and exposures before they board.

- **Walking School Buses**
  - Prioritize pedestrian safety.
  - Keep a record of staff and students on the walking school bus each day.
  - Outdoor equipment such as walking ropes do not need additional cleaning. Instead, have children and staff wash or sanitize their hands before touching the equipment.

- **Public transit**
  - Everyone must wear face masks while riding public transit or in transit stations (train stations, subway stations), even if they are vaccinated, as required by San Francisco’s Safer Return Together order, CDPH and CDC.

**Meals and snacks.**

*Eating together is higher-risk for COVID-19 transmission because people must remove their face masks to eat. Children often eat with their hands and people often touch their mouths with their hands while eating. In addition, meals are usually considered time for talking together, which further increases risk, especially if people must speak loudly to be heard.*

- Eat outdoors when space and weather allow.
- Space unvaccinated students out when eating. Consider assigned seating during meals to keep track of close contacts during unmasked periods.
- Meals do not need to be individually plated or bagged.
- Consider asking students and staff to wear face coverings between bites and sips.
- Consider starting lunch with silent eating time, followed by conversation time, to discourage talking while face coverings are off.
- For food service such as cafeterias, clean frequently touched surfaces. Surfaces that come in contact with food should be washed, rinsed, and sanitized before and after meals.

**Students receiving special services.**

- Do not exclude students because of medical conditions that may increase their risk of severe COVID-19. Let the student’s medical team and family decide if it’s safe for them to attend.
- Do not limit access to essential staff that are not school employees, such as direct service providers, occupational therapists or physical therapists. Schools can ensure compliance with school visitor policies.
- Provide accommodations and related services for special education, learning disabilities and medical conditions.
• Additional accommodations may be needed for students to safely attend class. For example, students may need additional supervision and support around face masks or handwashing.

• When students are unable to attend school due to COVID-19 infection or exposure, consider remote video sessions for therapy.

Frequently Asked Questions: What’s allowed

• Parents and caregivers may enter the building for pick-up and drop-off, even if they are not vaccinated for COVID-19.

• Therapists who are not employees but provide direct services to children onsite, such as ABA providers, occupational therapists, and physical therapists should be allowed to provide services. Providers should also be allowed on-site for vision, hearing, and dental screening.

• Festivals, performances, and other events that involve families; tours; and open houses are allowed. Keep a log of all persons who attend. This will be helpful if someone at an event, tour or open house later tests positive for COVID-19.

• Drinking fountains can be used.

• Students can share toys, computers, books, games, play areas, and area rugs.

• All restrictions on field trips have been removed. You can go on field trips to outdoor or indoor destinations. You may use shared vehicles or public transportation following the guidance outlined in this document. Students, staff and volunteers must wear masks indoors and in shared vehicles while on field trips.

• You may resume fire drills.

• You may hold large events like assemblies and dances as long as they follow city guidelines. If hosting large events, please follow CDPH recommendations for how to minimize risk of transmission; for example, by requiring vaccinations for all eligible attendees, holding events outdoors whenever possible, making a plan for how to identify close contacts, and so on.

What to do when someone has COVID-19 symptoms, infection or exposure

When staff or students become sick at school.

• If rapid antigen testing is available on-site, test the staff or student:
  o If the test is negative, the staff or student may remain at school if they feel well enough. A PCR/NAAT is not needed to confirm the result.
  o If the test is positive, follow the instructions in the Guide to COVID-19 Infections, Symptoms and Exposures at Schools and Programs for Children.

• If rapid antigen testing is not available at school:
  o Staff must inform their supervisor and leave work as soon as they can.
  o Send sick students home. Keep students who are waiting to be picked up in a designated isolation space. Make sure that they keep their face masks on.
When someone reports a positive test, symptoms, or exposure to COVID-19.

- See the Guide to COVID-19 Infections, Symptoms and Exposures at Schools and Programs for Children for what to do if someone at school tests positive for COVID-19, has symptoms of COVID-19, or has close contact to someone with COVID-19.

- Schools must report COVID-19 cases to SFDPH at cases.schools@sfdph.org, per AB 86 (2021) and California Code Title 17, section 2500, schools. SFDPH staff will work with schools on case management and provide input on next steps, including isolation, quarantine, and outbreak management.

Returning to school after COVID-19 symptoms, exposure, or a positive test.

Refer to the Guide to Isolation and Quarantine for Schools and Programs for Children.

**Resources**

**San Francisco Department of Public Health (SFDPH)**

- **SFDPH Schools and Childcare Hub** for COVID-19 consultation and guidance (628) 217-7499 or cases.schools@sfdph.org
- **COVID-19 guidance for the public, including employers** https://www.sfcdcp.org/covid19
- **COVID-19 guidance for schools** at https://sfcdcp.org/school
  - “Guide to COVID-19 Infections, Symptoms and Exposures at Schools and Programs for Children”
  - “Parent Handout: Symptom and Exposure Check/Returning to School after Symptoms”
- **Outreach Toolkit for Coronavirus.** https://sf.gov/outreachtoolkitcoronavirusCOVID19

**California Department of Public Health (CDPH).**

- **State of California Safe Schools for All Hub** https://schools.covid19.ca.gov/
- **K-12 Schools Guidance FAQ** (updated 11/15/2021) https://www.cdph.ca.gov/Programs/CID/DCDC/Pages/COVID-19/Schools-FAQ.aspx
- **Evidence Summary: TK-6 Schools and COVID-19 Transmission** (updated 4/16/2021) https://www.cdph.ca.gov/Programs/CID/DCDC/Pages/COVID-19/Safe-Schools-for-All-Plan-Science.aspx
• Guidance for the Use of Face Coverings (updated 7/28/2021)
  https://www.cdph.ca.gov/Programs/CID/DCDC/Pages/COVID-19/guidance-for-face-coverings.aspx

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC).
• Guidance for COVID-19 Prevention in K-12 Schools

• Schools and Child Care Programs