



DIRECTIVE OF THE HEALTH OFFICER No. 2020-33i (updated)

**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: August 10, 2021, updated September 10

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 This Directive goes into effect immediately upon issuance, and remains in effect until suspended, superseded, or amended by the Health Officer.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.**



Health Officer Directive No. 2020-33i

- 5. Schools must comply with the following requirements with respect to testing:**
- a. Routine Asymptomatic Testing for School-Based Adults**
 - i. When community transmission is substantial or high, as defined by the CDC, all School-Based Adults who are not fully vaccinated with a vaccine authorized to prevent COVID-19 must be tested for COVID-19 as follows:**
 - 1. Testing must be done using either a nucleic acid (including polymerase chain reaction (PCR)) or antigen test. Any lab that processes tests must also submit all results (not just positive results) via the State of California’s California Reportable Disease Information Exchange (“CalREDIE”) system or any replacement to that system adopted by the State of California.**
 - 2. Each School-Based Adult who is not fully vaccinated must be tested at least once a week with a nucleic acid test, or twice a week with an antigen test, every week that they are providing on-site work.**
 - 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 SFPDH 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**



Health Officer Directive No. 2020-33i

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 a positive antigen test are encouraged to get a confirmatory PCR test and use the new result. Unless and until they obtain a negative PCR test, they must follow the isolation and quarantine guidelines as though they have a positive result. 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



Health Officer Directive No. 2020-33i

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.**



Health Officer Directive No. 2020-33i

- vi. The School must comply with SFPDH requirements regarding reporting of metrics as stated in “SFPDH Reporting Metrics” (available at <https://www.sfdph.org/dph/covid-19/schools-education.asp>).
6. Each School must cooperate with SFPDH by working and collaborating with SFPDH, and otherwise following the direction of SFPDH, in relation to the School and the subject matter of this Directive. Such cooperation includes, but is not limited to, all of the following:
- Submitting a “List of Close Contacts of a Positive Covid-19 Case” (available at <http://www.sfdph.org/dph/files/ig/TEMPLATE-School-Contact-Tracing.docx>) to the SFPDH Schools and Childcare Hub via email (cases.schools@sfdph.org) *within 24 hours* of learning of a positive COVID-19 case;
 - Promptly taking and responding to telephone calls, emails, and other inquiries and requests by representatives of SFPDH;
 - Allowing SFPDH personnel on-site without advance notice;
 - Responding to all SFPDH requests for information in a timely manner;
 - Communicating with School-Based Adults, students, and their parent(s) or guardian(s) as directed by SFPDH; and
 - Taking immediate action as required by SFPDH 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 SFPDH’s “Quick Guide for Schools, Childcares, and Programs for Children and Youth” to be exempted from quarantine, 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 six 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,



**City and County of
San Francisco**

**Department of Public Health
Health Officer Directive**

Health Officer Directive No. 2020-33i

constitutes a public nuisance, and is a misdemeanor punishable by fine, imprisonment, or both.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Susan Philip".

Susan Philip, MD, MPH,
Health Officer of the
City and County of San Francisco

Dated: September 10, 2021



Guidance for TK-12 Schools for School Year 2021-2022

September 10, 2021

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 the 8/11/2021 Version

Major revisions are highlighted throughout the document in **blue color**.

- Added a list of activities that are exempted from masks indoors, and a section on required testing for these activities.
- Medical exemptions to masks require documentation by a licensed medical professional. Self-attestation or parent attestation is not allowed.
- Guidance for sports, dance, wind instruments, singing and other higher-risk activities added.
- If on-site rapid antigen testing is available, students and staff with symptoms who test negative do not have to be sent home. Confirmation by PCR/NAAT is not needed.

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. In addition, the California Department of Public Health (CDPH) will determine no later than November 1, 2021, whether to update face mask requirements.

Contents

Key Messages.....	3
Procedures and Protocols.....	3
Apply to Reopen	3
Establish COVID-19 health and safety protocols	3
Required Signs	4
Strategies to prevent the spread of COVID-19	4
Promote COVID-19 vaccination.	4
Wear face masks indoors.....	4
Improve ventilation and use outdoor spaces.	5
Stay home when sick.	6
Testing.....	7
Hand hygiene: Follow pre-COVID protocols.	8
Cleaning and disinfection: Follow pre-COVID protocols unless there is a COVID-19 case.....	9
Cohorting is not required.....	9
Physical distancing is not required.	9
Sports, dance, wind instruments, singing, and related activities.....	10
Required testing for indoor activities exempted from face masks	10
Reporting and notification of COVID-19 cases	10
Additional steps to reduce the risk of COVID-19 with higher-risk activities	10
Specific Situations.....	12
Transportation	12
Meals and snacks	13
Students receiving special services.....	13
Frequently Asked Questions: What’s allowed.....	13
What to do when someone has COVID-19 symptoms, infection or exposure	14
When staff or students become sick at school.....	14
When someone reports a positive test, symptoms, or exposure to COVID-19	14
Returning to school after COVID-19 symptoms, exposure, or a positive test.....	14
Resources.....	15

Key Messages

- **Vaccination 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.** Vaccinated adults and eligible students also protect younger children who are not yet eligible for vaccination. [As of September 6, 2021, 80% of eligible San Franciscans were fully vaccinated.](#)
- **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.
- **The risk of transmission in schools remains low.** Schools provide layers of prevention, in a structured, supervised setting where everyone must follow COVID-19 precautions. As a result, the risk of COVID-19 in schools is often lower than outside of school. During the past school year, San Francisco had [seven](#) cases of COVID transmission with in-person learning among 48,000 students and teachers, including during the height of the winter COVID-19 surge. [As of September 8, 2021, no school outbreaks have occurred.](#) SFPDH recommends that families with concerns consult with their child's doctor before deciding not to send their child to school.

Procedures and Protocols

Apply to Reopen.

Schools must apply and be approved by SFPDH 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 SFPDH.
- **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>
 - 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.
- Employers must follow Cal/OSHA COVID-19 Prevention Emergency Temporary Standards, at <https://www.dir.ca.gov/dosh/coronavirus/ETS.html>
- 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](#) 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. 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.

What does it mean to be [fully vaccinated](#) for COVID-19?

A person is fully vaccinated if it's been at least 2 weeks since they got the 2nd dose of the Pfizer-BioNTech or Moderna COVID-19 vaccine, or one dose of the Johnson & Johnson vaccine.

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. **Staff and volunteers must wear a face mask even when children and youth are not present.**
- [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. They are recommended outdoors when distancing between people in different households is not possible, for example, for athletes on the sidelines during games 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.
- 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 due to the risk of suffocation or choking. Participants must wear masks when not actively engaged in a match.
 - 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), modified face masks (slit masks with an opening for the mouthpiece) and bell covers may be used.
- 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](#).

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.
- To be considered an outdoor space, structures should meet SFDPH ventilation guidelines for outdoor structures, at <https://www.sfdph.org/dph/files/ig/Guidance-Shared-Outdoor-Spaces.pdf>.

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 [SFDPH Ventilation Guidance](#). 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:

- www.sfdcp.org/COVID-ventilation
- <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/schools-childcare/ventilation.html>
- <https://www.cdph.ca.gov/Programs/CID/DCDC/Pages/COVID-19/Interim-Guidance-for-Ventilation-Filtration-and-Air-Quality-in-Indoor-Environments.aspx>

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](#), at sfdcp.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](#), as recommended by the CDC.

- SFDPH recommends, but does not require, staff and students to follow CDC recommendations for travel at <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/travelers/travel-during-covid19.html>
- 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.

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 testing of the following groups:
 - **On-site school personnel who are not fully vaccinated for COVID-19, including volunteers, interns, and student teachers.**
 - **Participants and personnel not fully vaccinated for COVID-19 in high-contact indoor sports where SFDPH allows mask exemptions for safety reasons.** These sports are: water polo, wrestling, and certain martial arts with sparring. See [mask exemptions](#).
 - Testing must be weekly with PCR or other nucleic acid amplification test (NAAT), or twice-weekly with 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.
- CDPH also requires weekly testing of K-12 students in indoor school-based activities where masks cannot be worn, regardless of vaccination status. **This requirement 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](#). For a list of activities where students may be unmasked indoors, see [mask exemptions](#).
- 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). Do not accept self-reported results.
- Schools and programs for children and youth must be in compliance with testing requirements for indoor activities with mask exemptions no later than **September 27, 2021**.

Summary Chart of combined CDPH/SFDPH testing requirements for activities with mask exemptions

Activity	Required testing
Indoor low- or moderate-contact: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Swimming and diving; • Competitive cheer or gymnastics if done unmasked; • Wind instruments if no slit mask/bell covers and 6 foot distancing. 	All participants must be tested once a week (NAAT or antigen).
Indoor high contact: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Water polo; • Wrestling, if done unmasked; • Certain martial arts with sparring, if done unmasked. 	<u>Un</u> vaccinated participants, staff and volunteers must be tested once a week (NAAT) or twice a week, at least 3 days apart (antigen). Participants who are fully vaccinated for COVID-19 must be tested once a week (NAAT or antigen).

- SFDPH recommends testing for the following groups:
 - People with symptoms of COVID-19 or close contact to COVID-19, even if they have been fully 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.**
 - Fully 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.

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 playgrounds 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.

For more information, see <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/disinfecting-building-facility.html>

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.

Cohorting is no longer required. SFPDPH 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 SFPDPH 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:
 - Modified masks and bell covers AND 6-foot physical distancing, 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 1 hour, 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**, within 1 business day.
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 performance, as well as practices/physical conditioning, in accordance with the [CDPH Guidance for the Use of Face Coverings](#) and [San Francisco Health Orders](#).
- Masks are recommended outdoors when distancing between households is not practical or possible, for example, for athletes on the sidelines or spectators in the stands.

Strongly encourage or require COVID-19 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 fully vaccinated 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 fully 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 fully vaccinated for COVID-19.
- When transmission is high, consider cancelling high-risk sports and extracurricular activities unless all participants are fully vaccinated, 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 fully 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 fully 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.

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:
 - 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.
 - 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:
 - Staff must inform their supervisor and leave work as soon as they can.
 - 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 a parent or guardian arrives to pick up a student, have the student walk outside to meet them, if possible, instead of allowing the parent or guardian into the building. The parent or guardian may also have COVID-19, since children are most often infected by an unvaccinated adult in their home.

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 COVID19 consultation and guidance (628) 2177499 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/outreacht toolkitcoronavirusCOVID19>

California Department of Public Health (CDPH)

- State of California Safe Schools for All Hub <https://schools.covid19.ca.gov/>
- COVID-19 Public Health Guidance for K-12 Schools, 2021-22 School Year (updated 9/1/2021) <https://www.cdph.ca.gov/Programs/CID/DCDC/Pages/COVID-19/K-12-Guidance-2021-22-School-Year.aspx>
- K-12 School-Based COVID-19 Testing Strategies for School Year 2021-22 (updated 7/12/2021) <https://testing.covid19.ca.gov/wp-content/uploads/sites/332/2021/07/School-Testing-Considerations.pdf>
- 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 (updated 8/5/2021) <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/schools-childcare/k-12-guidance.html>
- Schools and Child Care Programs <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/schools-childcare/index.html>