

Marin County School Guidelines

A Public Health Guided Return to Site-Based Classroom Instruction

**Dr. Matt Willis, Marin County Public Health Officer and
Mary Jane Burke, Marin County Superintendent of Schools**

Issued June 18, 2020 / Revised August 12, 2020

The purpose of this document is to provide guidelines to Marin County educational institutions — including public, private, independent and parochial TK-12 schools—to facilitate and return to site-based classroom instruction for the Fall 2020-2021 school year. The evolving nature of the COVID-19 pandemic requires the need to rethink common protocols and practices in the classroom setting with the understanding that these guidelines could change as the situation evolves.

1. All activities are consistent with and will adjust to changing applicable state and local Public Health orders.
2. Health and safety practices and protocols are in place, including hand washing, appropriate face coverings, access to essential protective equipment, and up to date student and staff attendance tracking.
3. Training is provided to all staff, students and families reinforcing the importance of health and safety practices and protocols.
4. A primary and secondary point of contact are established, identified and trained at each school site to direct questions or concerns around practices, protocols, or potential exposure. These points of contact will serve as liaisons to Public Health, and contact information is identified in the School Site-Specific Protection Plan.
5. Plans are implemented for intensified cleaning and disinfecting, including training for all staff and access to cleaning supplies and essential protective equipment, and regular disinfecting of frequently touched surfaces.
6. Health screening for students and staff are conducted as advised and updated by Public Health. On July 23, 2020 the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) provided updated guidance on screening K-12 students emphasizing that parents and caregivers must monitor their children for signs of infectious illness every day at home, and universal symptom screening for K-12 students is not required. Staff should conduct daily health screening self-assessment, which may be completed through an online survey. ([Sample MCOE Staff Daily Health Screening](#))

7. Staff and students who are sick are expected to stay home, and an isolation area is identified for students who begin to exhibit symptoms during the school day, until they can be picked up.
8. Schools and districts will cooperate with Public Health to support testing strategies to mitigate transmission of COVID-19, including testing of staff who have regular daily contact with students before site-based classroom instruction is resumed, and then no less than once every two months. This may include testing of students with appropriate parental permissions obtained in advance.
9. Protocols, actions and template communications are in place for the following COVID-19 related scenarios (link: [Marin County Public Health Protocols & Communication Templates for each scenario.](#))
 - a. A student or staff member either exhibits COVID-19 symptoms or has a temperature of 100.4 or above.
 - b. A family member or someone in close contact with a student or staff member tests positive for COVID-19.
 - c. A student or staff member tests positive for COVID-19.
 - d. A student or staff member tests negative for COVID-19 after symptoms or confirmed close contact.
10. Where practicable, physical distancing of six feet is maintained between adults and between adults and students; four feet distance is permissible between students within a classroom or instructional area where requirements herein are in practice.
11. For elementary schools, stable classroom cohorts (up to standard class size at each respective grade level) are maintained throughout each school day, and through each quarter or semester, with an assigned primary cohort teacher, and systems are in place to prevent the mixing of classroom cohorts.
12. For middle and high schools, larger cohorts made up of students from more than one classroom may be arranged as long as accurate attendance data for students and adults is maintained on a daily basis while avoiding school wide mixing of students and staff.
13. Where practicable, desks are arranged facing forward to minimize face to face proximity between students.
14. School staff are permitted to visit and instruct more than one classroom cohort, following physical distancing and face covering protocols, and must document/record visits to classrooms that are not identified as their primary classroom cohort.

15. Routes for entry and exit to the campus will be designated for each classroom cohort, using as many entrances/exits as feasible.
16. Schedules for arrivals, recess and lunch will be strategically coordinated to prevent mixing of classroom cohorts.
17. Congregate movement through hallways will be minimized as much as practicable.
18. Large gatherings (i.e., school assemblies) are currently prohibited.
19. The use of outdoor space for instructional purposes is maximized, shared, and coordinated to ensure students remain in their cohort. Efforts should also be made to maximize fresh air flow in classrooms through existing ventilation systems, and opening of windows and doors as much as possible.
20. Use of shared playground equipment will be limited in favor of physical activities that require less contact with surfaces, and shared equipment will be cleaned between uses.
21. Use of non-classroom space for instruction such as gymnasiums and multi-use rooms should be considered to support physical distancing with cleaning between uses.
22. Meals will be served outside as much as possible or in classrooms instead of cafeterias or dining rooms with individually plated or bagged meals as much as practicable.
23. Routines and schedules will be developed to enable students and staff to regularly wash their hands at staggered intervals.
24. All staff as well as all students in grades 3 - 12 are required to wear face coverings while in the classroom and on campus, unless there is a medical or behavioral contraindication. Students from grades TK - 2 are strongly encouraged to wear face coverings and should be supported and taught how to wear them properly.
25. Training will be provided for staff and students on proper use of face coverings which will include instruction to minimize touching of face coverings.
26. Sharing of supplies, manipulatives, toys, sports equipment, and other learning and recreational materials will be limited and each student will have separate individually labeled boxes or cubbies.

27. Sharing of electronic devices, clothing, books and other games or learning aids will be avoided as much as practicable.
28. Use of privacy boards or clear screens will be considered as much as practicable.
29. Non-essential visitors, including parent volunteers will be limited and essential workers will be required to adhere to all health and safety guidelines.
30. A [School Site-Specific Protection Plan](#)** outlining the above measures is completed, posted on school or district website and shared with all staff and families and will be updated as state and local Public Health guidance dictates.

****Please submit to SSSPP@marinschools.org. Completed plans will be forwarded to Public Health for review.**

** **Note:** Based on updated guidance from the California Department of Public Health (CDPH), Governor Newsom, and Marin County Public Health, site-based classroom instruction cannot resume until a waiver is granted by Public Health, which, if granted would apply to grades TK-6 only, or Marin County has been off of the state monitoring list for 14 days. During this time, teachers / staff may meet small cohorts of students (15 or fewer) onsite to onboard students to virtual learning and provide safety instruction to prepare for return to school (e.g., meet their teacher, obtain learning materials, receive hygiene instruction), and/or to participate in academic and emotional assessments. Students and staff must adhere to face covering, and physical distancing requirements described in these guidelines. While Marin remains on the CDPH county watch list, 6th grade students in schools who are granted waivers will be considered elementary school students during the waiver period.*

Resource Documents:

- [August 3, 2020 California Health Officials Release Guidance on Youth Sports and Elementary School Waivers](#)
- [July 15, 2020 News Release regarding Marin County Public Health Recommendations and Guidance to Delay In-Classroom Learning](#)
- [July 17, 2020 Guidance from Governor Newsom and the California Department of Public Health](#)
- [Updated August 3, 2020: California Department of Public Health COVID-19 Industry Guidance: Schools and School Based Programs](#)
- [July 23, 2020 Centers for Disease Control and Prevention Screening K-12 Students for Symptoms of COVID-19: Limitations and Considerations](#)
- [Marin County Health and Human Services COVID-19 Surveillance Data](#)
- [Marin County Health and Human Services COVID-19 Indicators](#)
- [Marin County Office of Education: Rethinking Schools](#)
- [California Department of Education - Stronger Together: A Guidebook for the Safe Reopening of California's Public Schools](#)