



## COVID-19 FAQ for Parents

Q: Why did the district go to distance learning for the week of January 11-14, 2022?

A: The number of staff impacted by COVID was too high for the district to be able to maintain student safety at school or on the bus.

Q: There are so many people getting COVID that have been vaccinated. Do the vaccines not work?

A: The vaccines are still very effective at reducing illness in individuals to a mild level, and are keeping people from landing in the hospital with serious illness. However, a vaccine alone is not keeping the more contagious variants from spreading.

Q: If the vaccine doesn't keep the virus from spreading, what is the district doing to help stop the spread?

A: The latest data indicates that high quality masks are needed to keep the newest variants of the virus from spreading. The schools will be distributing N95 masks and making them available as soon as possible. While we do not anticipate having to go to full district distance learning, there may be more individual classroom closures to temporary distance learning, and if staff again becomes impacted to the point of jeopardizing student safety, we may be forced to go to distance learning with a larger population. That is never our first answer, we are doing everything in our power to avoid it.

Q: Since there are tests available at school now, can my child get tested if she or he gets sick with COVID-like symptoms at school?

A: We can test your child at school. You must register him/her at [https://my.primary.health/r/sierra-usd?registration\\_type=student](https://my.primary.health/r/sierra-usd?registration_type=student)

If the symptoms don't include a fever or cough, the child feels well enough to continue at school, and the test is negative, he/she may return to class. If the test is positive, you must come pick the child up immediately and follow the current protocols for a positive case of COVID.

Q: So what are the current protocols?

A: The Sierra Unified Updated Student Quarantine and Testing Guidelines are now published on the website. Please feel free to contact us if you have questions after reading them!

Q: I heard about California requiring vaccines for all school children. How is Sierra Unified going to handle this?

A: At this time, the Governor's announcement that he has directed the California Department of Public Health to add COVID-19 vaccination to mandatory school vaccine requirements for in-person school attendance does **not** require immediate action by families. The requirements do not have a specific implementation date but become effective at the start of the school term following full FDA approval of a COVID-19 vaccine for students. These requirements would be implemented first for grades 7-12 and then for K-6.

This requirement is established by regulation, not legislation, therefore must be subject to exemptions "for both medical reasons and personal beliefs." (HSC section 120338)

Individual counties and schools may accelerate vaccine requirements; however, Sierra Unified will NOT seek early implementation.

Q: Is a doctor's note required to obtain a mask exemption? Is parental or self-attestation permitted to obtain a mask exemption?

A: As per CDPH Guidance on Face Coverings, "persons with a medical condition, mental health condition, or disability that prevents wearing a mask" as well as "persons who are hearing impaired" are exempt from mask requirements.

Assessing an exemption due to a medical condition, mental health condition, disability that prevents wearing a mask, or hearing impairment is a medical determination and therefore must be made by a physician (M.D. or D.O.), nurse practitioner (N.P.), or physician assistant (P.A.). In this context, (1) "physician" refers specifically to an individual having a valid certificate or license to practice medicine and surgery issued by the Medical Board of California or the Osteopathic Medical Board of California; (2) "nurse practitioner" refers specifically to registered nurses who have a valid license to practice as a nurse practitioner (N.P) by the California Board of Registered Nursing; and (3) "physician assistant" refers specifically to an individual having a valid license to practice from the California Physician Assistant Board. Self-attestation and parental attestation for mask exemptions due to the aforementioned conditions do not constitute medical determinations.

Additionally, per [CDPH K-12 Guidance](#), "persons exempted from wearing a face covering due to a medical condition, must wear a non-restrictive alternative, such as a face shield with a drape on the bottom edge, as long as their condition permits it."

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[CDPH K-12 Schools Guidance 2021-2022 Questions and Answers](#)

Q: Are masks required for my child to attend school?

A: The District is required to comply with state and local health department requirements for student and staff face coverings, except for specific exceptions stated in the law. Masks are proving to be the best protection against the newest variants of COVID-19. Masks are required for all students and adults while indoors, and in addition, when outdoors and physical distance cannot be maintained.

Q: If there is a confirmed positive case of COVID-19 within any of my child's classrooms, what will happen?

A: Close contacts will be notified and school will follow the Updated Quarantine and Testing Guidelines. Other families of students that were present in the classroom at the time of exposure will be notified of the situation, and advised to watch closely for symptoms, and encouraged to register the student with the district's testing program. Those students that are unmasked or unreliably masked during an exposure are strongly encouraged to consider the situation as a close contact, given how much more contagious the newest variants are, and either have their student tested daily to catch a possible case before symptoms develop (we are finding that is happening quite often) or to quarantine at home.

Q: Do I need to quarantine for 10 days when I return from out-of-state or out of country travel?

A: California Department of Public Health no longer has a COVID-19 related travel advisory. However, you should follow the CDC guidance when traveling.

Q: I have a note from my doctor that states my child cannot wear a mask. What should I do?

A: Please obtain a Mask Exemption form from the school. It can be emailed or you can get a hard copy. Fill out the top three sections yourself, then have your medical doctor fill out the bottom section and sign it. Return the completed form to your school office.

Q: My child recovered from a COVID-19 infection and was recently exposed to another COVID-19 positive person, does he/she need to quarantine?

A: If the new exposure occurred within 90 days of the date of your child's positive test, then no, quarantine is not required. However, with the number of break-through cases, we encourage you to have your child join the testing program at his or her school.

Q: My child is vaccinated. Does he/she need to quarantine if there is an exposure?

A: If your child is eligible for a booster shot, but has not gotten it yet, then yes, he/she needs to follow the appropriate guidelines for the specific situation. If not booster eligible, or if he/she has gotten the booster, then no, no quarantine is required. Testing is encouraged.

Q: My child is exhibiting signs and symptoms of COVID-19. The child has taken a COVID-19 test, and the results are negative. When can he/she return to school?

A: If there has not been an exposure, and there is no other case of COVID-19 present in the home, you can return your child to school 24 hours after the symptoms have resolved and a negative test is collected after the symptoms have improved.

Q: A person who was in an SUSD classroom has tested positive for COVID-19. When can that classroom be used again?

A: The classroom can continue to be used. Every classroom is thoroughly cleaned and disinfected at the end of every school day.