



COUNTY OF SAN LUIS OBISPO HEALTH AGENCY

PUBLIC HEALTH DEPARTMENT

Michael Hill *Health Agency Director*

Penny Borenstein, MD, MPH *Health Officer/Public Health Director*

Dear School Leaders in San Luis Obispo County:

San Luis Obispo County has been on the California Department of Public Health (CDPH) County Data Monitoring (CDM) List since July 16, 2020 due to an exceedance of the number of 100 cases of COVID-19 per 100,000 population. On July 17, Governor Gavin Newsom announced that if a county has been on the monitoring list within the last 14 days, a school must conduct distance learning only, until the county has been off the monitoring list for at least 14 days.

In counties on the CDM list, CDPH guidance allows elementary schools to request a waiver from the local health officer to open for in-person instruction. To receive a waiver, the superintendent (or equivalent for charter or private schools) must consult with labor, parent, and community organizations before submitting each school's waiver application. The local health officer then reviews the application, along with local community epidemiological data, and consults with CDPH about the request.

The justification for such waivers is based on the current best available scientific evidence which shows that COVID-19 related risks in schools serving elementary age students are lower than and different from the risks to staff and students in schools serving older students. In particular, there appears to be lower risk of child-to-child or child-to-adult transmission in children under 12, and the risk of infection and serious illness in elementary school children is particularly low. By contrast, the health-related risks for elementary age children who are not provided in-person instruction are significant, including lower rates of immunizations, higher rates of undetected child abuse and neglect, and other indicators of public health and wellbeing.

Moreover, in-person instruction is academically and socially critical for younger students, in alignment with State standards. Students from socio-economically disadvantaged backgrounds are particularly harmed by a lack of access to in-person instruction. Schools serving elementary school students are also in a better position to put into place effective risk-reduction strategies to protect both teachers and students, including creation of small, stable classroom cohorts. Further, elementary school students without access to in-person school are far more likely than older students to require alternative group childcare arrangements when schools are closed, and as such, closure of elementary schools is less likely to significantly reduce transmission.

County of San Luis Obispo Public Health has developed an application process and form for elementary school reopening waiver requests. To apply for a waiver, an elementary school must submit the following documents:

- Completed Application Cover Form for Elementary School Reopening Waiver
- Elementary School Reopening Plan
- Verification of approval by the school governing board or agency of waiver request

Public Health Department

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www.slopublichealth.org

- Documentation of consultation with the following stakeholder groups – labor, parents, community
- If a school district is applying for a waiver for multiple elementary schools, please indicate all school names on the application and address any site-specific components in the plan.

Applications and all supporting documents should be submitted at least two weeks before the desired reopening date to EOC-Schools@co.slo.ca.us

Sincerely,



Penny Borenstein, MD, MPH
Health Officer and Public Health Director
County of San Luis Obispo

Application Cover Form for Elementary School Reopening Waiver

School Name(s):

Address:

Date of Planned Reopening:

Check all grades included in reopening plan and include total number of students in each grade

	TK	K	1st	2nd	3rd	4th	5th	6th	
Grades									Total
# Students									

School District (if applicable):

Superintendent or Director Name:

Contact Information:

Name and Title of Person Completing Application:

Contact Information:

Signature:

Date submitted:

Elementary School Reopening Plan

The plan must be consistent with the latest [guidance for schools from the California Department of Public Health \(CDPH\)](#), the [California Department of Education](#), and address the components listed below.

Please reference your school reopening plan by page number for each item below.

1. Healthy Hygiene Practices - describe the availability of handwashing stations and hand sanitizer, and how their use will be promoted and incorporated into student and staff routines.
2. Face Coverings - describe how CDPH's face covering requirements for students and staff will be met and enforced.
3. Cleaning and Disinfection - describe how shared surfaces, including on buses, will be regularly cleaned and disinfected and how use of shared items will be minimized.
4. Ventilation and Use of Outdoor Spaces - describe how you will maximize ventilation through filtration and exposure to outdoor air.
5. Distancing - describe plans for maximizing space between students and staff and families at arrival and departure, in classrooms and in non-classroom spaces.
6. Sharing of Objects - describe plans for minimizing shared use of electronic devices, school supplies, student belongings and other items.
7. Cohorting - describe how students will be kept in stable groups with fixed membership that stay together for all activities (such as lunch, recess, etc.) and avoid contact with other groups or individuals who are not part of the cohort.
8. Teacher and Other Staff Safety - describe how you will support higher risk staff through virtual work options and the conduct of staff to staff interactions.
9. Training Staff and Educating Families - describe how staff will be trained and families will be educated on health hygiene practices and sanitation, physical distancing, face coverings, health screenings and identifying COVID-19 symptoms.
10. Health Screening and Isolation - describe how students and staff will be screened every day before school for symptoms of COVID-19 and how ill students or staff will be separated from others and sent home immediately.
11. Managing Cases - describe how you will work with the Public Health Department in support of case investigation and contact tracing such as creation and submission of line lists of exposed students and staff, rigorous attendance monitoring and communication with staff and families.
12. Testing - describe how you will support the need for rapid testing of students and staff when there is a confirmed case of COVID-19 in a school.
13. Identifying a Point of Contact - provide the name for each school of a designated person to serve as the point of contact for Public Health related to COVID-19.

14. Widespread Flu Vaccination – describe how the school will encourage seasonal flu vaccination in the fall among staff, students, and family.
15. Triggers for Switching to Distance Learning – describe the criteria the superintendent or equivalent will use to determine when to physically close the school and prohibit in-person instruction. *(Added 8/6/20)*
16. Communication Plans – describe how the superintendent will communicate with students, staff, and parents about cases and exposures at the school, consistent with FERPA and state and federal privacy requirements. *(Added 8/6/20)*

Supporting Documents

- Verification of approval by the school governing board or agency of waiver application and plan. Examples of documentation include meeting minutes, emails, or letters. Not applicable for those private schools without a governing board or agency.
- Documentation of consultation with the following stakeholder groups – labor, parents, community. Examples of documentation include meeting minutes, emails, letters, or surveys.
- The approved school reopening plan must be published on the school's website. *(Added 8/6/20)*

Resources for Completing Your Plan

- Various resources available at ReadySLO Schools page
<https://www.emergencyslo.org/en/schools.aspx?mid=517>
- CDPH and Cal/OSHA Guidance for Schools and School-Based Programs
<https://files.covid19.ca.gov/pdf/guidance-schools.pdf>
- California Department of Education Stronger Together: A Guidebook for the Safe Reopening of California's Public Schools
<https://www.cde.ca.gov/ls/he/hn/strongertogether.asp>
- CDPH COVID-19 and Reopening In-Person Learning Framework for K-12 Schools in California, 2020-2021 School Year
<https://www.cdph.ca.gov/Programs/CID/DCDC/CDPH%20Document%20Library/COVID-19/Schools%20Reopening%20Recommendations.pdf>