

# 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**

---

**June 18, 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, and access to essential protective equipment.
3. Training is provided to all staff and students reinforcing the importance of health and safety practices and protocols.
4. A single point of contact will be established and identified at each school site to direct questions or concerns around practices, protocols, or potential exposure. This person will also serve as a liaison to Public Health.
5. Plans are implemented for intensified cleaning and disinfecting, including training for 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 daily for symptoms and history of exposure (links: [Daily Health Screening for Students](#) and [Daily Health Screening for Staff](#), and [QR Code Check-In System Instructions](#)).
7. Staff and students who are sick are expected to stay home.
8. Schools and districts will cooperate with Public Health to support testing strategies to mitigate transmission of COVID-19, including testing for staff at the beginning of the school year, 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, answers yes to a health screening question or has a temp of 100.4 or above.
  - b. A family member or someone in close contact with a student or staff member test 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 any of the reasons scenarios a, b or c.
10. Where practicable, physical distancing of six feet is maintained between adults and students; four to six 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 schoolwide 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, strictly 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.

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 in classrooms or outside 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 TK-12th grade are required to wear face coverings while in the classroom and on campus, unless there is a medical or behavioral contraindication.
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 aides 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 and shared with all stakeholders and updated as state and local Public Health guidance dictates.

Resource Documents:

- [Marin County Public Health and Human Services](#)
- [Marin County Office of Education: Rethinking Schools](#)
- [California Department of Public Health COVID-19 Industry Guidance: Schools and School Based Programs](#)
- [Center for Disease Control - Schools Decision Tree](#)
- [California Department of Education - Stronger Together: A Guidebook for the Safe Reopening of California's Public Schools](#)