



**TULARE COUNTY  
HEALTH & HUMAN SERVICES AGENCY**

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Educational Partners of Tulare County:

Tulare County Public Health continues to work collaboratively with school districts by providing technical guidance for schools to implement safety protocols that can reduce the risk of exposure and transmission of COVID-19. Wearing face coverings, washing hands, and maintaining social distance are key components of staying healthy. And while it is not possible to eliminate all risk of furthering the spread of COVID19, there are many steps that schools can take to reduce risks to students, teachers, staff, and families.

The school waiver process is critical to ensuring that schools have the proper safety plans and mitigation strategies in place to resume in-person learning. At this time, and until further notice, schools that have already re-opened and received approval from Tulare County Public Health and the California Department of Public Health may remain open. Those schools who have received approval from Tulare County but have not yet opened may proceed but should consider delaying the start of in person learning until the first of the year.

Schools that have not re-opened or have not received an approved waiver, may provide in-person instruction if school officials decide to conduct in-person instruction for a limited set of students in small cohorts under the State's School Cohorts Guidance. Although there is no requirement for approval of cohorts, the Public Health Department is available to answer questions and provide assistance with safety measures and guidance.

Schools who have not returned to in person learning should continue pursuing and applying for school waivers by engaging with Tulare County Public Health on recommendations and safety precautions as we navigate through the coming weeks. While rates are elevated applications may only be considered for TK-2 and when rates stabilize the entire TK-6 can be considered. Please note that if rates continue to elevate, it may be necessary to put all applications on hold.

Schools who decide to remain open while infection rates are elevated should proceed with caution and do everything feasible to keep students, staff, and our communities safe. Tulare County Public Health Department recommends that schools maintain ongoing surveillance of staff by adhering to the recommendation of 25% of staff testing every other week or 50% of staff testing every month.

A strategy that can be deployed is conducting distance learning between the Holiday breaks in effort to allow for sufficient quarantine time and avoid any potential COVID-19 exposures that may have occurred during family gatherings. Also, school staff and the students' families should be aware of the recent State guidance regarding out of State travel and be prepared to quarantine for two weeks upon returning to California if they travel out of State.

The Public Health Department has identified key areas that all schools should be well prepared for when resuming in person learning. The critical areas are; Screenings, Symptomatic Staff and Students, Face Coverings, Quarantine and Isolation, Contact Tracing, Surveillance Testing, Block Scheduling, Lunch and Recess, and Bus protocols. These items, along with the entire set of waiver requirements, can be found with a more thorough overview on our website.

In effort to offer continued support to our school leaders, we are asking that you take a short survey by clicking the following link: <https://forms.gle/KAwSyT6ai53xJdXSA>.