



**TULARE COUNTY  
HEALTH & HUMAN SERVICES AGENCY**

Timothy W. Lutz, MBA  
Agency Director

Karen M. Elliott, MBA • Director • Public Health Branch Director  
Karen Haught, MD, MPH • County Health Officer

August 10, 2020

Dear Educational Partners of Tulare County:

While our communities continue to deal with the COVID-19 outbreak, the Tulare County Health Department is assisting schools by providing guidance, resources, and information to schools as they develop their back-to-school plans.

On July 17, Governor Gavin Newsom announced that if a county has been on the County Data Monitoring (CDM) 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. Unfortunately, Tulare County has been on the CDM list since early June due to an excess of COVID-19 cases per 100,000 in population

In preparation for the 2020-2021 school year, CDPH has released guidance which allows elementary schools on the CDM list, grades TK- 6, to request a waiver from the local health department to open for in-person instruction. The state also indicated, however, that counties with case rates at or above 200 cases per 100,000 residents should not extend waivers for the reopening of classroom instruction.

Until Tulare County has transmission rates (and other metrics as set by the State) under control, the risk of returning to school for in-person learning outweighs the benefits therefore we will not currently be accepting waivers. We need to ensure the health and safety of our children, school personnel, and all of their families. This decision will be reconsidered when Tulare County's COVID-19 rate is steadily less than 200 per 100,000 in conjunction with improvement of other epidemiologic data.

The Tulare County Public Health Department will be monitoring the status of our counties epidemiological data and will continue to keep our educational partners informed of any updates or changes that could impact their ability to resume in-person learning. In addition, we will continue to work with all of our partners across the County to implement the infection control strategies we know effectively reduce community transmission and case rates so that schools can re-open for in-person instruction as soon as the epidemiological data indicates that it's safe to do so.

In effort to prepare for the return of in-person instruction, Tulare County recommends that schools develop a plan that meets the State and Tulare County requirements.



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Prior to applying for a waiver, the superintendent (or equivalent for charter or private schools) must consult with labor, parent, and community organizations and must develop and publish an elementary school reopening plan on their website 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. Tulare County Public Health has developed an application process and form for elementary school waiver requests. To apply for a waiver, an elementary school must submit the following documents:

- Confirmation that the elementary school reopening plans have been published on the website of the local educational agency (or equivalent). Reopening plans must address the components in the CDPH guidance for schools and school-based programs.
- Completed Application Cover Form for Elementary School Reopening Waiver.
- Verification of approval by the school governing board or agency of waiver request.
- 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.

While waivers are not being approved, Tulare County Public Health will be working with schools to develop them for the eventual reopening. Applications and all supporting documents should be submitted at least two weeks before the desired reopening date to [TCCovidSchools@tularehhsa.org](mailto:TCCovidSchools@tularehhsa.org).

Sincerely,

Staci Chastain  
Deputy Director Public Health Operations



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**Waiver Application Cover Form**

(for use by a Local Education Agency or equivalent)

Please submit one application for each local educational agency or equivalent. If applying on behalf of a school district please submit one application for elementary schools in the district that are seeking to reopen for in-person instruction. If applying for an independent, private, faith-based, or charter school, please submit an application for each school.

Name of Applicant (Local Educational Agency or Equivalent): \_\_\_\_\_

School Type:

\_\_\_\_\_ Traditional Public School

\_\_\_\_\_ Charter School

\_\_\_\_\_ Private, Independent, or Faith-Based School

Number of schools: \_\_\_\_\_ Enrollment/ADA: \_\_\_\_\_

Superintendent (or equivalent) Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Grades of Students Proposed to be Reopened:

TK K 1st 2nd 3rd 4th 5th 6th

Date of Proposed Reopening: \_\_\_\_\_

Name of Person Completing Application:

Phone Number: \_\_\_\_\_ Email: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_



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**Waiver Criteria**

- please reference your reopening plan by page number for each item below. -.

**I. Consultation**

Please confirm consultation with the following groups:

Labor Organization

Name of Organization(s) and Date(s) Consulted:

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Parent and Community Organizations

Name of Organization(s) and Date(s) Consulted:

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If no labor organization represents staff at the school, please describe the process for consultation with school staff:

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**II. Elementary School Reopening Plans**

Please confirm that elementary school reopening plan(s) addressing the following, consistent with guidance from the California Department of Public Health and the local health department, have been published on the website of the local educational agency (or equivalent):



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**Cleaning and Disinfection:** How shared surfaces will be regularly cleaned and disinfected and how use of shared items will be minimized.

**Cohorting:** How students will be kept in small, stable, groups with fixed membership that stay together for all activities (e.g., instruction, lunch, recess) and minimize/avoid contact with other groups or individuals who are not part of the cohort.

**Entrance, Egress, and Movement Within the School:** How movement of students, staff, and parents will be managed to avoid close contact and/or mixing of cohorts.

**Face Coverings and Other Essential Protective Gear:** How CDPH's face covering requirements will be satisfied and enforced.

**Health Screenings for Students and Staff:** How students and staff will be screened for symptoms of COVID-19 and how ill students or staff will be separated from others and sent home immediately.

**Healthy Hygiene Practices:** The availability of handwashing stations and hand sanitizer, and how their use will be promoted and incorporated into routines.

**Identification and Tracing of Contacts:** Actions that staff will take when there is a confirmed case. Confirm that the school(s) have designated staff persons to support contact tracing, such as creation and submission of lists of exposed students and staff to the local health department and notification of exposed persons. Each school must designate a person for the local health department to contact about COVID-19.

**Physical Distancing:** How space and routines will be arranged to allow for adequate physical distancing of students and staff.

**Staff Training and Family Education:** How staff will be trained and families will be educated on the application and enforcement of the plan.

**Testing of Students and Staff:** How school officials will ensure that students and staff who have symptoms of COVID-19 or have been exposed to someone with COVID-19 will be rapidly tested and what instructions they will be given while waiting for test results. Describe how staff will be tested periodically to detect asymptomatic infections.



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Triggers for Switching to Distance Learning: The criteria the superintendent will use to determine when to physically close the school and prohibit in-person instruction.

Communication Plans: How the superintendent will communicate with students, staff, and parents about cases and exposures at the school, consistent with privacy requirements such as FERPA and HIPAA.

#### Resources for Completing Your Plan

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>