



### **Introduction**

On August 25, 2020 California Department of Public Health issued Guidance for Small Cohorts/Groups of Children and Youth and then updated that guidance on [September 4, 2020](#). In this guidance the CDPH outlined how schools in counties that are otherwise prohibited from reopening schools could provide targeted support services and facilitation of distance learning in small group environments for a specified subset of children including students with disabilities.

Further guidance was provided in a September 4th supplemental [FAQ](#) to answer specific questions about small stable cohorts. The supplemental guidance indicated conditions for small stable cohorts to open. [Also indicating that the LEA and WSCC in this case would make the determination on which students can be safely served in cohorts during school closures.](#) The Sonoma County SELPA stepped in to support districts and families county-wide in making those choices by providing a [rubric](#) weighing risk factors and response to Distance Learning.

On September 9th the Council of Superintendents for the West Sonoma County Consortium agreed to explore the issue of small stable cohorts. Staff and families were surveyed. On October 14th the Council agreed to move forward with a planning group. The Planning Team met on October 28th and November 4th and created the foundation of this document to support opening for small stable cohorts. The Planning team consisted of 4 superintendents, 2 parents, 1 teacher, 1 behavior assistant, 1 psychologist, 1 nurse, 1 speech therapist, the transportation director, the office assistant and the consortium director.

The West Sonoma County Consortium operates on three campuses in West Sonoma County, Park Side Elementary School in the Sebastopol Union District, Twin Hills Middle School in the Twin Hills School District and Analy High School in the West Sonoma County Union High School District. Each of these districts have created their own Reopening Plans. This Cohort Plan refers to them but does not seek to reproduce those plans, rather this plan is focused on the consortium classrooms.

The following documents were utilized in building this document:

[COVID-19 Industry Guidance: Schools and School-based Programs- August 3, 2020](#)

[COVID-19 and Reopening In-Person Learning Framework for K-12 Schools in California, 2020-2021 School Year](#)

[CSNO COVID-19 Health Services Recovery Plan Resource Guide in Educational Settings](#)

[Sonoma County 2020-2021 Roadmap to a Safe Reopening- June 2020](#)

[California Department of Education: Stronger Together: A guidebook for the safe reopening of California public schools](#)

[COVID-19 Reopening In-Person Instruction Framework & Public Health Guidance for K-12 Schools in California, 2020-2021 School Year](#)

[COVID-19 School Guidance Checklist](#)

### **Guiding Principles to the Plan**

- Safeguard the health and safety of students, staff, families, and community members
- Adherence to State, County Health Department, and CDC guidelines
- Foster equitable access to student learning and progress for students not benefiting from Distance Learning
- Minimize unintended consequences
- Maintain positive learning environments
- Attend to social and emotional needs of students

### **Background**

Schools in West Sonoma County closed their doors following a State of Emergency proclamation in California as a result of the impacts of COVID-19 on March 16, 2020. The California Department of Public Health has issued a number of health directives since that time. [The Reopening In-Person Learning Framework for K-12 Schools](#) issued July 17, 2020 prohibits in-person instruction while a county falls onto the monitoring list due to high positivity rates now referred to as a Tiers. Further guidance was provided on [January 14, 2021](#) Sonoma County is currently on Tier 1- Widespread due to a new case rate of 11.1. August 3, 2020 the CDPH issued guidance on the [Elementary Education Waiver](#) process including the ability to apply for a waiver even if the county continues on the monitoring list for the last 14 days. CDPH recommends that counties that have a 14-day case rate that is more than two times the threshold for the county monitoring list should not be considered for a waiver to re-open for in-person instruction.

Then the Small Cohort Guidance was issued and updated regarding permissible small stable cohorts for in-person services stressing that these small cohorts must be kept separate from other cohorts to contain any contamination and to allow the targeted

testing, quarantine, and isolation of a single cohort in the event of a positive case or cluster of cases.

## Glossary of Terms

**Cohort:** a cohort is a stable group of no more than 16 children or youth and supervising adults, who are meeting for targeted support and intervention services under the direction of the LEA, while the school is closed to in-person instruction and in addition to distance learning.

**COVID-19:** a mild to severe respiratory illness that is caused by a coronavirus; is transmitted chiefly by contact with infectious material (e.g. respiratory droplets) or with objects or surfaces contaminated by the causative virus, and is characterized especially by fever, cough, and shortness of breath and may progress to pneumonia and respiratory failure.

**Distance Learning:** a method of teaching and learning where teachers and students do not meet in a brick and mortar classroom but instead use online resources and virtual classrooms

**Mitigate:** to cause to become less harsh or hostile; to make less severe or painful

**Pandemic:** an outbreak of a disease that occurs over a wide geographic area and affects an exceptionally high proportion of the population

**Personal Protective Equipment (PPE):** personal protective equipment, commonly referred to as "PPE"; worn to minimize exposure to hazards that cause serious injuries or illnesses

**Social/Physical Distancing:** maintaining a greater than usual physical distance from other people or avoiding direct contact with people or objects in public places during a pandemic in order to minimize exposure and reduce the transmission of infection

**Supervising adult:** an adult assigned to one cohort of children or youth, who does not physically interact with any other cohorts. This includes child care staff, certificated or classified school staff, volunteers, participating parent or caregiver, or other designated supervising adult(s).

**Supervised care environment:** an environment where multiple children or youth, from multiple families or households, are being supervised simultaneously by an adult. This includes, but is not limited to, licensed child care facilities, licensed exempt child care programs, supervised programs on a school site while a school is not in session or is providing curriculum in a distance-learning format, or where some educational services are being offered to a subgroup of students as identified by a local educational agency on a school campus.

## Health & Safety

### Health and Safety Communication Information

Providing regular and transparent communication within the school community is critical to building and maintaining trust, especially during these stressful times. Communications will be provided in multiple formats to address the need for multiple languages and alternative communication methods based on the target audience. The formats include but are not limited to communications through, parent notification system, telephone, text messaging, email, website, and in-person discussions.

The WSCC has designated the **Director, Rose Velasquez, in collaboration with Nurse Ferland and nursing staff** as **COVID-19 Coordinator** who will:

1. Coordinate notification of staff, students/parents (following Public Health Guidelines) when there has been a COVID-19 exposure at a school site or other district worksite
2. Collect and report data to the Sonoma County Public Health Office via the LEA
3. Be a point of contact for concerns and questions from staff, parents, and students via a telephone, email or video conferencing during the day
4. Provide Contact Tracing in conjunction with Public Health guidelines
5. Provide for the dissemination of related communications
6. Set up COVID-19 related training for students, parents, and staff. This will include training on pre-screening and self-assessments protocols to determine when students or staff should remain at home instead of coming to a school site or other district worksite.

The COVID Coordinator will coordinate with COVID Coordinators at the host sites.

## *Healthy Hygiene Practices to Reduce the Spread of COVID-19*

### Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)

Face Covering ALL individuals on campus must wear face coverings including, staff, specialists and students. Breaks from mask wearing can be scheduled for individual students. If students are not able to wear masks, they may present with higher risk factors that could be beyond the abilities of a small cohort to provide services in a safe manner outlined by the State and local authorities and determined by the LEA/WSCC. WSCC will provide face masks or face shields ( if required) to any student who fails to provide their own or in cases where their face mask becomes unwearable.

Gloves, gowns and shields These supplies will be provided to staff and used during procedures as needed such as sanitizing, toileting and feeding.

6ft social distancing. Desks/chairs are organized to observe that distance from other students.

Handwashing Upon entering the cohort environment staff and students will wash with soap and water for 20 seconds and dried using single-use hand drying materials (when

available) or air dried or sanitize hands with handsanitizer. A *regular hand sanitizing schedule* will be developed by classroom staff. Bottles and installed dispensers of hand sanitizers are in every room. Hand soap is beside every classroom sink.

Cleaning/disinfecting Classrooms at ParkSide are cleaned by a professional cleaning service. Analy High School classroom is cleaned by the high school crew and Twin Hills is cleaned by their janitorial staff. Additional cleaning schedule will be developed by the cohort staff for cleaning during the day. Checklist is provided for wiping down with the WSCUHSD choice of Botanical Disinfectant. Buses are sanitized by the bus company staff before and after student pickup/dropoff.

Daily Screenings Students/Staff must complete a daily screening that includes a temperature check before entering campus or the school bus. The screening asks staff and families specifically about COVID-19 symptoms.

- Fever (100.4° Fahrenheit or higher), chills or shaking chills
- Cough (not due to other known cause, such as a chronic cough)
- Difficulty breathing or shortness of breath
- New loss of taste or smell
- Sore throat
- Headache when in combination with other symptoms
- Muscle aches or body aches
- Nausea, vomiting, or diarrhea
- Fatigue, when in combination with other symptoms
- Nasal congestion or runny nose (not due to other known causes, such as allergies) when in combination with other symptoms

Staff will do a temperature check before coming on campus and each student that is dropped off by a parent will get a temperature check.

Students and staff should **NOT** come to school if they or someone in their household has any of these symptoms. Students/staff will not be allowed to return to school until the person has been without fever for at least 24 hours AND tests negative for COVID-19 **or** self-isolates for 10 days. During that time, the student will participate in Distance Learning if the child is well enough.

Testing WSCC requires school staff to be tested periodically by their primary care provider or at a community testing site, as testing capacity permits and as practicable. Recommended frequency include all cohort staff being tested once a month. Analy High School has on-site testing every Thursday afternoon.

Contact/line Tracing Contact tracing follows CDC/Sonoma County Protocols. Names will not be given but all cohort families and staff will be notified when someone tests positive.

*Environment Organization to Reduce the Spread of COVID-19*

### Limit Sharing

- Each student's belongings are kept separated from others in individually labeled containers.
- Each student will be equipped with their own supplies
- If food is provided it is pre-packaged boxes or bags
- Water fountains are not available. Students are to bring their own bottled water or bottled water will be provided.
- No sharing of food, drink or utensils.

Signage Signage will be posted around the cohort environments to promote handwashing, social distancing and masking.

Restroom Designation One restroom will be designated for the cohort and staff. Staff will wear gloves, masks and gowns when assisting students with toileting. The classroom staff will develop a bathroom sanitization schedule.

Modified classroom layouts- Classrooms are cleared of personal and unnecessary items to make cleaning easy and efficient and promote social distancing.

- Space seating/desks at least 6 feet apart when feasible.
- Turn desks to face in the same direction (rather than facing each other), or have students sit on only one side of tables, spaced apart.
- Modify learning stations and activities as applicable so there are fewer students per group, placed at least 6 feet apart if possible.
- Outside at different tables

Plexiglass barriers are provided to all teaching staff who are working in the cohort environment.

Air filtration HVAC filters have been upgraded and each cohort environment will be equipped with a HEPA air purifier.

Playground Cleaning after each use or play in separate areas and cleaned at the end of each day.

Staggered Arrivals/Departures Parents who transport their own children will be given a schedule for drop-off and pick-up. Parents/guardians will not be allowed to enter campus and must maintain a 6ft distance between themselves and staff members while verification of lack of symptoms checklist and temperature check is completed.

Children riding the school bus, will have a specific protocol for pick-up and drop-off that includes a verification of lack of symptoms checklist and temperature check. Cohorts will be assigned to one school bus whenever possible. Seating will be arranged to support distance between children on school buses when possible. The bus schedule will be developed once a cohort list is developed.

Transferring of materials Materials can be dropped off at specified locations at each site. Parents are to remain 6ft. distance between other parents and utilize the provided bins. Parents should not come to school if symptomatic.

## *Specific Protocols*

### **Protocol if someone shows symptoms or becomes ill at school?**

If a student develops a fever of 100.4°F or higher and/or symptoms consistent with COVID-19, your child will be placed in an isolation or care area and observed until they are picked up. Students must be picked up within 30 minutes by parent or parent's identified emergency contact. Symptomatic students cannot ride the bus. If a student becomes seriously ill, medical assistance will be called. If a staff member becomes ill, the staff member will be sent home or medical assistance will be called.

Isolation Areas:

Analy High School- The Isolation/Care area will be located near the Village 4 classroom.

- Parents / guardians must always have a plan for picking up their child. Siblings and/or other household members attending school must also be picked up.
- When the parent arrives to pick up their child, stay in the car, call the classroom, and wait for the child to be escorted outside. Parents and other visitors are not allowed on campus during this time.

Numbers to call:

Analy High School Classroom number: 824-2312

- Parents need to contact their child's healthcare provider to schedule an appointment and/or schedule COVID-19 testing. The child, their siblings, and other household members attending school will not be allowed to return to school until the symptomatic child has been without fever for at least 24 hours AND tests negative for COVID-19 **or** completes 10 days of isolation (*Test or 10*).
  - Isolation (Separating from others if you have COVID-19): People who are in isolation should stay home until it's safe for them to be around others. In the home, anyone sick or infected should separate themselves from others by staying in a specific "sick room" or area and using a separate bathroom (if available).
  - Quarantine (Staying home if exposed to COVID-19): People in quarantine should stay home, separate themselves from others, and monitor their health.

School Closure due to COVID-19 is determined by the Sonoma County Department of Health Officials. If a student or staff member is confirmed to have COVID-19, the classroom or facility may need to be closed for at least 24 hours. During that time the

cohort will revert to Distance Learning. Families and staff will notified of such closure as soon as possible.

#### Transferring of Materials Protocol

Any risk of transmission of the virus on school supplies themselves can be minimized. It is recommended that the following steps be taken prior to exchange of materials:

- Any locations in the school used for preparation and collection of supplies should be thoroughly cleaned, following appropriate cleaning protocols, before preparation, distribution or collection begins.
- If you are placing school supplies/materials in envelopes, choose envelopes that do not require moistening to seal.
- Wait 24 hours before distributing materials to families after preparation if only paper-based materials are involved.
- Consider waiting 72 hours if plastic materials or other materials are used.

#### Hand Sanitizing Protocol

Upon entering the cohort environment staff and students will wash with soap and water for 20 seconds and dried using single-use hand drying materials (when available) or air dried or sanitize hands with handsanitizer. A *regular hand sanitizing schedule* will be developed by classroom staff *and*:

- After blowing one's nose, coughing, or sneezing.
- After using the restroom.
- Before eating or preparing food.
- After touching one's face.
- After playing outside.
- Before and after providing routine care for another person who needs assistance.

#### Protocol for Cleaning

- Wear disposable gloves to clean and disinfect.
- Cleaning and disinfecting should not take place near children or people with asthma.
- Clean surfaces using soap and water, then use disinfectant.
- Follow the instructions on the label to ensure safe and effective use of the product. Many products recommend:
  - Keeping surface wet for a period of time (see product label)

#### Daily Cleaning Checklist

Scheduled by classroom staff using the Botanical Disinfectant, staff wearing gloves, will wipe down high touch surfaces:

- Door knobs/handles
- Light switches
- Tables
- Student and teacher desktops



- Chairs
- Sink faucet & handles
- Restrooms surfaces and knobs
- Keyboards, tablets, mouse, copy machines, phones, and laptops
- Any teacher equipment used
- Counters that students frequently touch
- Pick-up/Drop-off location areas
- Railings
- Communal spaces that are used

#### Drop off/ Pick-up materials Protocols

When it is necessary for families to physically come to school to drop off supplies or work, staff should take care to maximize physical/social distancing during the homework return process:

1. Drop-off location is outside the school building with clearly marked bins by the classroom.
  - a. Analy High School Location:
  - b. Twin Hills Middle School Location:
  - c. Park Side School Location:
2. Parents are to maintain distance from other parents while dropping off supplies remaining 6 feet apart from anyone else while at the drop off.
3. Do not come to drop off materials if you are symptomatic.
4. Drop-off area will be cleaned after each drop-off cycle with disinfectant by staff wearing gloves.
5. Wait 24 hours after a drop-off cycle before beginning to open or handle the collected items/packets. Items that are not paper will require longer time before being handled. Plastics/metals should be left undisturbed for 72 hours if possible wear gloves to remove items.
6. If you have provided envelopes for parents/students to return their work or supplies in, use envelopes that do not require them to be moistened to be sealed.
7. Hands should be washed frequently and after handling items returned from students.

When distributing supplies to families consideration should be given to maximize social distancing.

1. Pick-up location is the same as the drop-off location
2. Parents are NOT COME TO SCHOOL if symptomatic.
3. Take all necessary measures to clean the pick-up area after each pick-up cycle.

#### Cleaning and disinfecting if someone is sick Protocol

This cleaning will be done by cleaning staff after waiting 24 hours.

- Close off areas used by the person who is sick.
- Open outside doors and windows to increase air circulation in the area.

- Clean and disinfect all areas used by the person who is sick, such as offices, bathrooms, common areas, shared electronic equipment like tablets, touch screens, keyboards, remote controls.
- If more than 7 days since the person who is sick visited or used the facility, additional cleaning and disinfection is not necessary.

### Feeding Protocol

When providing support for Assistance of Daily Living (ADL's) such as feeding assistance for a child, wash your hands and wash the child's hands before you begin, and wear gloves. Follow safety procedures. Steps include:

1. Prepare yourself (includes putting on gloves, face mask/shield, gown)
2. Prepare the child- (disposable gown, wipes, )
3. Perform the procedure (feeding, etc)
4. Remove trash (soiled napkins and wipes)
5. Wash child's hands (with soap water, wipes)
6. Clean up the area following cleaning protocols
7. Wash your hands following cleaning protocols.

### Toileting Protocol

Restrooms:

The custodial staff will conduct deep sanitizing each evening. Staff overseeing restroom breaks must wear gloves and gowns.

- Student restrooms will be cleaned at regular intervals throughout the day based on the schedule developed by classroom staff
- To the extent possible, leave doors and windows open and block off middle stalls.

### Diapering Protocol

When diapering a child, wash your hands and wash the child's hands before you begin, and wear gloves and a gown. Follow safe diaper changing procedures. Procedures should be posted in all diaper changing areas. Steps include:

1. Don gloves and any other needed PPE
2. Untape and remove portions of the diaper
3. Using wipes, clean the student from any urine or soiled material
4. Discard wipes and soiled diaper in the trash
5. Make sure the student's skin is free from any urine or soil
6. Reapply a new diaper.
7. Remove gloves and redress the student.
8. Return the student to a secure place.
9. Wash the child's hands and your hands.
10. Don gloves and clean up the diapering station.
11. Remove the trash with the soiled diaper and used wipes.
12. Remove the gloves and wash your hands.

After diapering, wash your hands (even if you were wearing gloves) and disinfect the diapering area with a fragrance-free bleach that is EPA-registered as a sanitizing or disinfecting solution. If other products are used for sanitizing or disinfecting, they should

also be fragrance-free and EPA-registered. If the surface is dirty, it should be cleaned with detergent or soap and water prior to disinfection. -CDC recommendations for diapering in child care settings remaining open during Covid-19 quarantine

### Seizure Protocols

1. Ease the person to the floor and remove any face covering from the individual.
2. Turn the person gently onto one side. This will help the person breathe.
3. Clear the area around the person of anything hard or sharp. This can prevent injury.
4. Put something soft and flat, like a folded jacket, under his or her head.
5. Remove eyeglasses.
6. Loosen anything around the neck that may make it hard to breathe.
7. Time the seizure. Call 911 if the seizure lasts longer than 5 minutes.
8. Wash hands immediately following the seizure
9. Notify the parent and determine next steps for the student.

### Medication Protocol

#### Bringing Medications to School

1. Make an appointment with the school administrator.
2. Medication must be delivered to the school by the parent/guardian or other responsible adult.
3. Medication must be in your student's original, pharmacy-labeled container or a sealed over-the-counter container.
4. All liquid medication must be accompanied by an appropriate measuring device.
5. Any tablets requiring partial doses (1/2 or 1/4) must be sent to school already cut.
6. A separate form is required for each medication.

#### Returning Medications

1. Medication must be picked up by the parent/guardian or other responsible adult.
2. Any medication that has not been picked up by the end of the school year will be appropriately disposed of.

### Education & Training

Parent education training will be provided by staff on the topics of reducing the spread of COVID-19. **Training is required before a student is accepted into a cohort.** After completion of training, parents must sign an agreement outlining the responsibilities of students and families participating in the Small Cohort.

Training topics include proper use, removal, and washing of cloth face coverings, proper handwashing, limiting social contacts outside of the home. Parents will also receive training on screening protocols and pick-up/drop-off of students and materials. Another topic would be what would happen if someone tests positive.

Staff receive materials and protocols for cleaning and sanitizing, proper use and disposal of PPE, protocols for arriving/departing, limited sharing, isolation, feeding and toileting.

Additional Resources

[Sonoma County Notification Process](#)