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August 20, 2021

HESD In-Person Instruction Detailed Policy/Procedure Changes

The following is a detailed list and description of updated policies and procedures that are being put into place at Heber Schools to adhere to the most recent guidelines issued by state and local county public health officials. Due to the fluidity of the pandemic situation, this is a living document. These policies and procedures will continually be assessed in action and modified as needed.

Studies over the past year have helped us all learn a lot more about the transmission of the virus, and while the COVID-19 vaccine has helped a lot, it is important for us to remember that we are not quite out of the woods yet, especially with the recent surge of the Delta variant. Elementary schools are still considered an “unvaccinated group” since a huge majority of our students are not vaccinated. The most recent guidelines from the California Department of Public Health (CDPH), along with this week’s clarifications from our local public health department (ICPHD), reflect a lot of what has been learned. While there are many facets, below are the key main details. It is also important to remember that these are fluid guidelines that the Imperial County Department of Public Health may alter.

Masks

- Students, Staff, and Visitors, whether they are vaccinated or not, will still be required to wear masks indoors, with exemptions per CDPH face mask guidance.
- Persons exempted from wearing a face covering due to a medical condition, must wear a non-restrictive alternative, such as a face shield with a drape on the bottom edge, as long as their condition permits it. (*Families pursuing a waiver MUST meet with the Site Administrator ahead of time*)
- Masks are optional when outdoors for students and adults, although still recommended when in crowded situations.
- Students or visitors who forget their mask may get one from the school office or upon entering their classroom.

Physical Distancing/Cohorting

According to the guidelines by both the CDPH and the CDC, “Recent evidence indicates that in-person instruction can occur safely without minimum physical distancing requirements when other mitigation strategies (e.g., masking) are implemented.” Studies have shown that wearing masks indoors has greatly mitigated the transfer of the virus. As a result, although we should still be mindful, the social distancing requirements from last year have greatly been relaxed, allowing us to the ability to unify all the grade levels again.

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Ventilation Recommendations

Our HVAC systems have been equipped with MERV 16 filters, and supplemental air purification systems are being placed in large congregation areas.

Morning Drop-off/Pick-up/Recess/Lunch/Extra-Curricular Activities

HESD will be returning to our pre-pandemic routines for these areas. While we will not be conducting a morning screening at drop-off, families are still required to complete a self-conducted screening for COVID-19 symptoms before coming to school. Pick-up at the end of the day will also return to our pre-pandemic procedures.

For recess and lunch, each grade-level will have their assigned times as before, and while outside, masks are optional for students and adults. Students will be sitting at assigned seats for lunch in order for us to better track potential close-contact situations. Shared play equipment will be disinfected regularly.

Extra-curricular activities are allowed to resume following the same protocols outlined here and by the ICDPH.

Staying Home When Sick & Testing

Students and staff must remain home when they are sick and displaying any potential symptoms for COVID as outlined by the CDC, or with a temperature equal to or greater than 99.5 degrees. If students or staff begin showing symptoms while at school, they will be sent home as well. Staff members and students with symptoms of COVID-19 infection are not to return for in-person instruction until they have met CDPH criteria to return to school for those with symptoms:

1. At least 24 hours have passed since resolution of fever without the use of fever-reducing medications; and
2. Other symptoms have improved; and
3. They have a negative test for SARS-CoV-2, OR a healthcare provider has provided documentation that the symptoms are typical of their underlying chronic condition (e.g., allergies or asthma) OR a healthcare provider has confirmed an alternative named diagnosis (e.g., Streptococcal pharyngitis, Coxsackie virus), OR at least 10 days have passed since symptom onset

To assist with the rapid return to in-person instruction for students and staff with symptoms, HESD has received authorization to provide on-site testing for our students and staff (For more information or to establish weekly testing contact Fanny Ambriz via email: fambriz@hesdk8.org).

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Currently, students are not required to undergo screening tests at school. In the coming weeks, any unvaccinated staff member will be required to complete a screening test weekly.

Visitors

We encourage parents to complete any school business **electronically** if possible as we try to limit office visits to essential business. If you have questions about school-related issues, please contact the appropriate school office or department. Our office support staff teams will be available to answer your phone calls and your questions. However, if necessary, you may schedule an appointment for an in-person office visit.

Please be aware we will follow the guidelines listed below to provide a safe working environment for our employees:

- All visitors to our school offices must have a scheduled appointment.
- All visitors to our school offices must wear a mask.
- All visitors should use the hand sanitizer provided when they enter a school office area.
- All visitors to our school offices must remain in the front office areas unless authorized by the principal.
- All visitors must practice social distancing. All in-person meetings must allow participants to socially distance themselves at least six feet from another person or person(s).
- All visitors should complete a self-check before entering a school building. Visitors with fever greater than 100.4, congestion, dry cough, breathing difficulties, sore throat and/or chills should NOT enter our school buildings or offices. It is extremely important that you do NOT come to our schools or offices if you are sick. Please help our school minimize risks to our students and employees.

Cleaning & Disinfecting

Hand sanitizer stations will still be used throughout school facilities, including free standing stations around the playground. Students will be regularly encouraged to wash their hands throughout the day, including reminder signs throughout the school plant. All classrooms will still be cleaned, and high touch surface areas will be disinfected at night.

Case Reporting & Vaccination Status

Heber Schools are required, per AB 86 (2021) and California Code Title 17, section 2500, to report COVID-19 cases to the local public health department. Eligible students and staff are encouraged, but not required to be vaccinated by the Heber School District. We are asking students and staff to volunteer their vaccination status with us, which will be kept confidential in the school office. Any staff member that does not have vaccination verification on file in the district office will be considered unvaccinated and is required to undergo weekly testing.

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Exposure Management

Vaccinated Students & Staff

For now, fully vaccinated Students and Staff who are considered a Close Contact exposure (more than 15 minutes over a 24-hour period within 0-6 feet indoors) will follow the *CDPH Fully Vaccinated People Guidance* regarding quarantine. Following a known exposure, fully vaccinated students and staff do not need to quarantine if they continue to be asymptomatic.

Unvaccinated Students

Quarantine guidelines for unvaccinated students for close contact exposures (more than 15 minutes over a 24-hour period within 0-6 feet indoors) when both parties were wearing a mask indoors or in an outdoor setting.

- a. When both parties were wearing a mask, unvaccinated students who are close contacts (more than 15 minutes over a 24-hour period within 0-6 feet indoors) may undergo a modified quarantine as follows. They may continue to attend school for in-person instruction if they:
 - i. Are asymptomatic;
 - ii. Continue to appropriately mask, as required;
 - iii. Undergo at least twice weekly testing during the 10-day quarantine; and
 - iv. Continue to quarantine for all extracurricular activities at school, including sports, and activities within the community setting. **Note:** This modified quarantine is only for attending in-person classroom sessions. Students who are under this modified quarantine cannot attend any extracurricular activities (e.g., school related sports, conditioning, dram practice, etc.).

Quarantine guidelines for unvaccinated close contacts who were not wearing masks or for whom the infected individual was not wearing a mask during the indoor exposure.

- a. For these contacts, those who remain asymptomatic, meaning they have NOT had any symptoms, may discontinue self-quarantine under the following conditions:
 - i. Quarantine can end after Day 10 from the date of last exposure without testing; AND
 - ii. Continue daily self-monitoring for symptoms through Day 14 from last known exposure; AND
 - iii. Follow all recommended non-pharmaceutical interventions (e.g., wearing a mask when around others, hand washing, avoiding crowds) through Day 14 from last known exposure.

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- b. If any symptoms develop during this 14-day period, the exposed person must immediately isolate, get tested and contact their healthcare provider with any questions regarding their care.

Note: HESD is evaluating the 7-day quarantine with test after Day 5 option as stated in the CDPH guidance.

Unvaccinated Staff

Cal/OSHA guidance requires a 10-day quarantine of staff for unvaccinated close contact exposures (more than 15 minutes over a 24-hour period within 0-6 feet indoors), as long as they remain asymptomatic.

Procedures for Positive Cases

If someone in the school (staff or student) tests positive for COVID-19, they must quarantine at home for two weeks, shifting to short term independent study.

- All guidelines for informing ICPHD and any health department officials will be followed.
 - ICPHD requires that each school district designate a point person to coordinate support when there is a suspected or confirmed COVID-19 exposure within the school district. Confidential notifications can be sent to superintendent@hesdk8.org.
- School personnel will investigate to determine who may be considered a close contact as defined by the CDC (more than 15 minutes over a 24-hour period within 0-6 feet)
- Parents will receive a letter informing them if their child has been deemed a close contact to someone who has tested positive for COVID-19, however, due to HIPAA regulations, families will not be informed of the identity of that person.
- If a cluster of three or more positive cases occur within fourteen days, the school will consult with DCS and DPH officials about whether the entire school should temporarily shift back to Distance Learning.
- Students and/or staff members who test positive for COVID-19 will not be able to return to school until they have met CDC criteria to discontinue home isolation, including at least 24 hours with no fever, symptoms have improved and at least 10 days since symptoms first appeared.

We are continually monitoring the situation and will update our guidelines as the both the ICDPH and the CDPH update their own requirements. The safety of everyone in our community is very important to us.

The following individuals are the school's point people for the Imperial County Department of Public Health relating to COVID-19 issues:



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