



Tuolumne County Public Health Department

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Due to the continued upward trend of confirmed COVID-19 cases in California, Governor Newsom recently set forth a new directive for California K-12 private and public schools that provides clarity as we look to the beginning of the 2020-2021 school year. The governor's order mandates all counties who qualify for the California Department of Public Health (CDPH) COVID-19 Monitoring List to provide only distance learning until they can remain off the list for 14 consecutive days. The CDPH monitoring list criteria are determined by elevated levels in the areas of disease transmission, increasing hospitalization, and limited hospital capacity specific to each county.

Tuolumne County has met the criteria to be on the state monitoring list as of the last week of July 2020. Immediately upon being placed on the monitoring list, school districts, charter schools, and private schools are required to provide only distance learning instructional services. Schools may reopen for in-person instruction once Tuolumne County has been off the monitoring list for 14 consecutive days. Tuolumne County schools will reopen when local public health data demonstrates that it is safe to do so, with reduced transmission levels and the availability of testing and contact tracing for the school community. Based on the trajectory of the pandemic in our county, it is unlikely schools will be able to re-open for in-person instruction before the end of the first grading period. Each district will make the determination, in consultation with local public health, on when to return to in-class instruction.

On July 17, the governor and the CDPH presented new guidance to allow both public and private elementary schools to submit a waiver that would enable some programs to offer in-person instruction, provided they can meet all necessary social distancing and sanitation requirements. The waiver applications will not be available until our county's testing capacity is robust enough to respond to confirmed COVID-19 cases. Waiver applications will be available only after finalization by California Department of Public Health.

The safe return of students and staff to in-person instruction remains the highest priority for the district superintendents and public health officials of Tuolumne County. As the many district teams collaborate on plans to return to classrooms, our teachers will be providing high quality, rigorous, distance learning to the nearly 6,000 students of Tuolumne County.

Liza M. Ortiz, MD, MPH
Interim Health Officer

Cathy Parker
County Superintendent of Schools

