

COVID-19 and Schools FAQ

June 15, 2021

Updates in italics

1. Are schools or districts required to apply for the Safe Schools for All Funding?

No. Only public schools are eligible to apply for this funding and it is not a requirement.

2. What new resources are available for schools?

The [State of California Safe Schools for All Hub](#) is available for technical assistance, reporting concerns and the latest news on reopening schools for in-person instruction.

3. *What is the process for a school to open for in-person learning?*

Schools must post their COVID Safety Plan to their website prior to opening for in person learning. Schools may also submit their Covid Safety plan to VCPH at COVIDSchools@ventura.org.

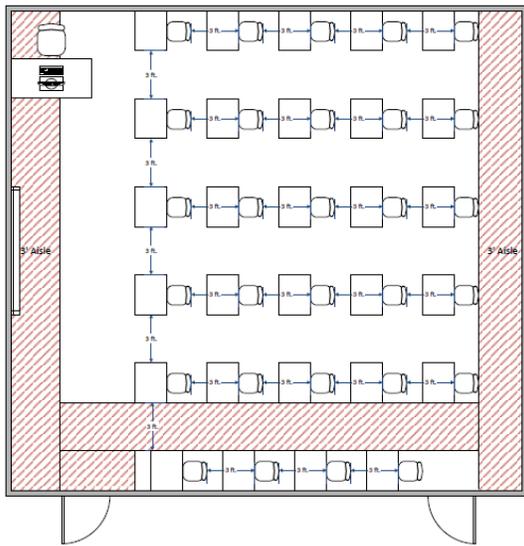
4. *What are the new testing requirements?*

Any school currently open is subject to the minimum testing requirement standards established by [Cal/OSHA](#). In school settings, screening testing can be used at a cadence of every 2 weeks or less frequently, to understand whether the school has higher or lower rates of COVID-19 rates than the community, to guide decisions about safety, and to inform LHDs. Updated testing guidance from CDPH can be found [here](#).

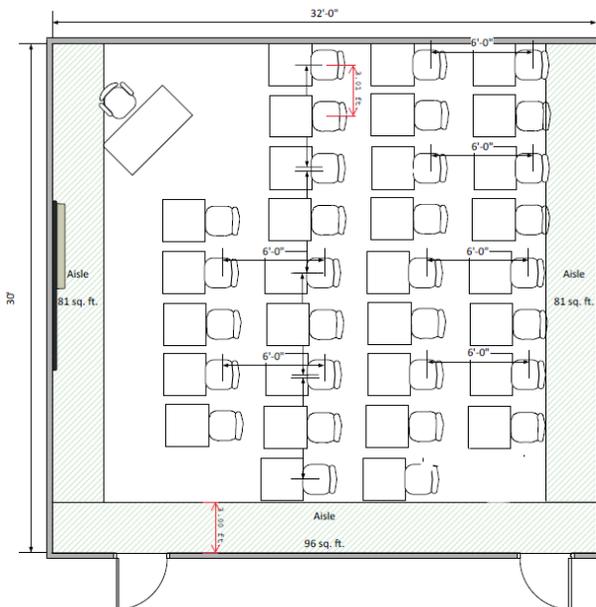
5. *What are the social distancing requirements with the new plan?*

As of March 20, 2021, CDPH released new [guidance](#). Schools should maximize space between seating and desks. Distance between teacher and other staff desks at least 6 feet away from student and other staff desks. Maintaining a minimum of 3 feet between student chairs is strongly recommended. A range of physical distancing recommendations have been made nationally and internationally, from 3 feet to 6 feet. Considerations for schools implementing a

shorter physical distancing policy between students: focus on high mask adherence—if there are doubts about mask adherence, consider more robust physical distancing practices; consider enhancing other mitigation layers, such as stable groups or ventilation; maintain 6 feet of distancing as much as possible during times when students or staff are not masked (e.g., due to eating or drinking). See below for sample classroom layouts.



960 Sq Ft Layout: 3 feet distance (29 students)



960 Sq Ft Layout: 3 feet distance (31 students)

6. Has the definition of a close contact changed since the minimum spacing between student desks has decreased to 3 feet?

CDPH has not changed the definition of a close contact. Any students sitting less than 6 feet from a confirmed COVID positive person for more than 15 minutes will be considered a close contact and will need to quarantine per VCPH quarantine guidelines.

7. *What are the new face covering requirements?*

CDPH updated face covering guidance for schools effective June 15th to say students in all grade levels K-12 are required to wear face coverings in accordance with the [CDPH Guidance for the Use of Face Coverings](#), while at school, unless exempted. See VCPH [Mask Exemptions](#) for more information on mask exemptions. See [CDPH Q&A](#) for more information on face coverings at schools. Staff must continue to follow face covering guidance per Cal/OSHA guidance. Face coverings may be removed for meals, snacks, naptime or when it needs to be replaced. Students (even if unvaccinated) may remove their face coverings during recess. Persons exempted from wearing a face covering due to a medical condition as outlined in the [Mask Exemption for Students](#) guidance, must wear a non-restrictive alternative, such as a face shield with a drape on the bottom edge.

8. *What is considered a “fever?”*

While CDPH uses 100.5 as the threshold for a fever, VCPH uses 99.5. We are continuing to use this threshold.

9. *What is the guidance related to youth sports?*

VCPH continues to follow CDPH guidance for [youth sports](#).

10. Do schools need to submit their plan for athletics?

Athletic directors and/or superintendents or designees can submit their athletics plan to VCPH at covidschools@ventura.org. VCPH is not required to approve them, however, will keep them on file in the event of an outbreak or large exposure. Having the plan on file will aid in the investigation of the outbreak or exposure and allow VCPH to provide guidance appropriately.

11. What guidance is available related to “stable groups?”

CDPH guidance can be found [here](#). VCPH encourages schools to keep groups/cohorts as stable as possible to assist with better contact tracing if there were to be an exposure. However, it is more important to ensure everyone is screened for symptoms, masks are worn properly, and social distancing is maintained. It is understood that students will be moving from group to group at times, especially in middle and high school, as well as for sports. School staff should be able to keep track of the groups students may be in and keep them to a minimum. It is also recommended to have assigned seating for classes to ensure students are around the same people in each class.

12. What is VCPH’s current guidance regarding band practice?

Band practice is permitted, and schools need to read and closely follow the guidance from CDPH which can be found [here](#) under recommendations for musical performers. Please also follow the guidance in this document as it pertains to rehearsals and live events that involve the playing of instruments. Wind instrument performers should use additional modifications as appropriate, such as devices to capture aerosols or to redirect air emitted from the instrument. There must be more than 6 feet of distance between wind instrument performers and others. During performances, there must be permanent or added barriers to create at least 12 feet between space occupied by audience members and the focal point (stage or round).

13. What is the current guidance for distancing on school buses?

CDPH announced they have updated their bus guidance and it can be viewed [here](#). Please read and closely follow the guidance. Schools will need to determine maximum capacity of students for each vehicle while meeting the appropriate physical distancing between students and bus driver while creating maximum distancing between student to student. Student to student distancing can follow distancing practices for the schools as a minimum (e.g., if students sit 3 feet apart at school during the day, bus seating can follow the same distance or further distance). Mask compliance is extremely important, and windows need to be opened as much as possible to improve airflow. Please ensure each school bus is equipped with extra unused face coverings for students who may have inadvertently failed to bring one and symptom screening is done before students get on the bus.

14. Are field trips allowed under the current K-12 Schools Guidance?

Yes, field trips are allowed, following the current K-12 Schools Guidance safety mitigation approaches (e.g. stable groups, distancing, and bus ventilation and spacing recommendations).