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Childcare permitted on school sites following the state guidance
School waivers not yet allowed in Ventura County

Ventura, CA – The California Department of Public Health (CDPH) issued information this week on what it would take for elementary schools to open for in-person instruction in counties on the state monitoring list. Ventura County Public Health will consider accepting waivers once the numbers improve in the County.

“Due to our status with COVID-19 infections and our place on the State’s monitoring list, we are not currently approving waiver applications. We will reconsider this position in 2 weeks or when we see a significant improvement in our COVID numbers,” said Public Health Officer Doctor Robert Levin. “Our current COVID case rate is quite close to the over 200 new cases per 100,000 in population mark that the State says makes us ineligible to offer waivers. Our 7-day test positivity rate is over the 8% mark. Our COVID+ hospitalization rate is also unacceptably high. We recognize the value of in-person education and during this time we will put efforts into setting up a system that takes into consideration the needs of children, their parents, equity and the public’s health,” he added.

Although waivers are not yet being approved in the County, Schools are encouraged to review the state issued guidance to prepare for this possible option. The guidance lists conditions that must be met in applying for a waiver:

- A school or district must publish a school’s reopening plan online and, before applying, consult with parents, community organizations and teachers or, in the case of school districts, employee unions.
- Applications should be submitted at least 14 days before the planned date to reopen.
- The application will apply only to TK to sixth grade, even if the school includes seventh and eighth grades. “Based on the current best available scientific evidence, Covid-related risks in schools serving elementary-age students (grades TK-6) are lower than and different from the risks to staff and to students in schools serving older students,” the department said in an [FAQ accompanying the guidance](#).
- The school must show evidence that it would comply with all the safety and hygiene requirements for opening elementary schools, as listed in the [CDPH/CalOSHA Guidance for Schools and School-Based Programs](#). These include a 6-foot social distancing requirement, face covering requirements, staff training and family education and student and staff testing.

“We understand this is a challenging time. We encourage our community members to continue to do the good work of wearing masks, socially distancing and not gathering so that local children can get back to traditional school soon,” said Public Health Director Rigo Vargas.

While schools are not yet able to open for traditional instruction in the County of Ventura. Childcare programming continues to be permitted by the State and County at this time. Childcare programs must follow the state guidance for childcare found at <https://files.covid19.ca.gov/pdf/guidance-childcare--en.pdf>. It is permissible for students to receive remote, distance learning whether the student is at home or in a childcare setting operating in accordance with State guidance.

There are schools in our County that have prepared to offer childcare on their campuses. This is allowed by the State and by the County. The schools can have daycare providers, school staff and/or teachers providing the childcare, homework assistance and tutoring for the distance learning. The schools that have consulted with the County have provided detailed plans on how they will safely follow the State childcare guidance while facilitating online learning. This is permitted.
