

# **ORDER OF THE HEALTH OFFICER OF THE COUNTY OF MENDOCINO REGARDING COVID-19 PROTOCOL FOR SCHOOLS**

**DATE OF ORDER: January 30, 2021**

**EFFECTIVE UNTIL RESCINDED**

**Please read this Order carefully. Violation or failure to comply with this Order is a misdemeanor punishable by fine, imprisonment, or both (Cal. Health & Safety § 120295, *et seq.*; Mendocino County Ordinance No. 4464; Cal. Penal Code § 19)**

**UNDER THE AUTHORITY OF THE CALIFORNIA HEALTH AND SAFETY CODE  
SECTIONS 10140, 101085, 120175, THE COUNTY OF MENDOCINO HEALTH OFFICER  
ORDERS:**

1. The Mendocino County Health Officer issues this Order (which supersedes the prior Order issued on December 17, 2020) to provide a protocol to support all Mendocino County schools and school-based programs, which are planning to reopen to in-person instruction during the COVID-19 pandemic, in accordance with State of California Department of Public Health (CDPH) COVID-19 and Reopening In-Person Instruction Framework & Public Health Guidance for K-12 Schools in California, 2020-2021 School Year (hereinafter “Consolidated Schools Guidance”):  
([https://www.cdph.ca.gov/Programs/CID/DCDC/CDPH%20Document%20Library/COVID-19/Consolidated\\_Schools\\_Guidance.pdf](https://www.cdph.ca.gov/Programs/CID/DCDC/CDPH%20Document%20Library/COVID-19/Consolidated_Schools_Guidance.pdf)) and the corresponding State of California Safe Schools For All Hub with resources and information for Schools (<https://schools.covid19.ca.gov/>)<sup>1</sup> including the CDPH public health directives therein. These guidances and this Order apply to all public schools (traditional and charter) and private schools (including nonpublic nonsectarian schools), and school districts operating in Mendocino County, and are inclusive of school-related events and activities supported by schools or school districts, occurring during, before, and after school hours either on or off school-sites. The guidances and this Order do not apply to childcare programs or preschools, which should follow separate statewide childcare guidance and provisions specific to childcare.
2. The Blueprint for a Safer Economy continues to inform the school reopening process. (<https://covid19.ca.gov/safer-economy>). The Blueprint for a Safer Economy is based on Tiers, defined using the case rate (CR), the 7-day average of daily COVID-19 cases per 100,000 population, and the test positivity in a county. The Schools Framework uses the adjusted case rate, as described in the Blueprint. (See Table 1. School reopening actions for in-person instruction by Tier in CDPH Consolidated Schools Guidance).

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<sup>1</sup> CDHP noted that the updated Consolidated Schools Guidance issued January 14, 2021, intended to consolidate and update prior state public health guidance and orders related to schools, including superseding the former elementary education waiver process.

3. COVID-19 Liaison. Prior to re-opening for in-person instruction, each school site in Mendocino County must designate an onsite COVID-19 liaison(s) to be responsible for maintaining regular communication with County Public Health in the event of any exposure at the school involving a COVID-19 positive individual, and responding to COVID-19 issues and concerns of students, parents, teachers, and staff. The COVID-19 Liaison is not required to be a licensed medical professional. The COVID-19 Liaison will also be responsible for ensuring timely entry of school case and contact exposure information into the CalCONNECT Schools Portal for Outbreak Tracking (SPOT) system. The school must email the name and contact information (including phone, fax, and email) for the COVID-19 Liaison to County Public Health by email to [DOC-Schools@mendocinocounty.org](mailto:DOC-Schools@mendocinocounty.org).
4. School-Based Screening Testing. Schools are subject to certain minimum testing requirements standards established by Cal/OSHA. In the Consolidated Schools Guidance and more particularly described in “Testing Considerations for LEAs and School Communities” ([https://www.cdph.ca.gov/Programs/CID/DCDC/CDPH%20Document%20Library/COVID-19/K12\\_School\\_Testing\\_Considerations\\_Information.pdf](https://www.cdph.ca.gov/Programs/CID/DCDC/CDPH%20Document%20Library/COVID-19/K12_School_Testing_Considerations_Information.pdf)), the CDPH includes recommendations regarding asymptomatic testing (aka screening testing) for students, which may be considered by each school district but not required by this Order. The Health Officer requires asymptomatic testing for some staff depending on case rate (and school district size) and further elaborates as to symptomatic and response testing in the Testing Cadence Chart within the updated local Guidance for Reopening Schools for In-Person, On-Site Instruction, anticipated to be released concurrently herewith.
5. School-Based COVID-19 Exposure Plan. Prior to re-opening for in-person instruction, each school in Mendocino County must create a site specific COVID-19 Safety Plan (CSP) including a School Guidance Checklist ([https://www.cdph.ca.gov/Programs/CID/DCDC/CDPH%20Document%20Library/COVID-19/COVID19\\_School\\_Guidance\\_Checklist.pdf](https://www.cdph.ca.gov/Programs/CID/DCDC/CDPH%20Document%20Library/COVID-19/COVID19_School_Guidance_Checklist.pdf)), which must be posted online and submitted to the State Safe Schools for All Team by email to [K12csp@cdph.ca.gov](mailto:K12csp@cdph.ca.gov), and concurrently to Mendocino County Public Health by email to ([DOC-Schools@mendocinocounty.org](mailto:DOC-Schools@mendocinocounty.org)) as outlined in the CDPH Consolidated Schools Guidance, ([https://www.cdph.ca.gov/Programs/CID/DCDC/CDPH%20Document%20Library/COVID-19/Consolidated\\_Schools\\_Guidance.pdf](https://www.cdph.ca.gov/Programs/CID/DCDC/CDPH%20Document%20Library/COVID-19/Consolidated_Schools_Guidance.pdf)).<sup>2</sup> The plan must account for when a staff member, child or visitor (on campus or off site at school-related activities) becomes sick with symptoms associated with COVID-19, is diagnosed

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<sup>2</sup> Those schools which actually re-opened for in-person instruction pursuant to the former CDPH elementary education waiver process (waivers approved prior to August 3, 2020) may remain open provided that they complete and post a COVID-19 Safety Plan (CSP) by February 1, 2021, which the Health Officer also requires be submitted to County Public Health by email to [DOC-Schools@mendocinocounty.org](mailto:DOC-Schools@mendocinocounty.org).

with COVID-19, or is a close contact of someone infected with COVID-19. The plan must track the measures required by CDPH Consolidated Schools Guidance requirements, and must also address the following:

- a. Isolation Room and Safe Transportation: Schools must identify an isolation room or area to separate anyone who exhibits symptoms of COVID-19 and establish procedures for arranging safe transport home or to a healthcare facility as appropriate, when an individual is exhibiting symptoms of COVID-19.
- b. Procedure for School-Based Response to Student(s)/Teacher(s)/ Staff/ Volunteer(s) with COVID-19 symptoms Who Are Not Confirmed COVID-19 Cases: These individual(s) should be immediately sent home with instruction to contact their primary care provider as soon as possible for evaluation and testing, or to a healthcare facility (as appropriate). For students with symptoms, staff should immediately communicate with the parent/caregiver and provide space in the designated isolation room until the student can be safely transported home or to a healthcare facility. The school and classroom may remain open. If a person tests negative after symptoms, they may return to school after 24 hours without fever and without the use of fever reducing medications, if other symptoms are resolving, and with a provider's note or negative test result.
- c. Procedure for School-Based Response to a Confirmed COVID-19 Case Infection At School :
  - i. The COVID-19 liaison for the school must confer verbally with County Public Health immediately (on the day it learns of a confirmed COVID-19 case), by contacting **(707) 272-8035** and also by email to [DOC-Schools@mendocinocounty.org](mailto:DOC-Schools@mendocinocounty.org) for direction and consultation from County Public Health Officials on necessary actions which may include School Portal Outbreak Tracking (SPOT) registration, proper cleaning of the school, isolation of COVID-19 positive individuals and quarantine of all exposed persons at the school.
  - ii. For a confirmed COVID-19 case on campus, the school must close off the classroom or office where the COVID-19 positive individual was based and wait at least 24 hours before cleaning and disinfecting. The school may remain open unless otherwise directed to close by County or State Health Officer.
  - iii. The school must work with County Public Health to isolate the COVID-19 positive individual and exclude from school and school related activities for the isolation period, (10 days from COVID-19 test sample collection and 24 hours after resolution of fever without

the use of fever reducing medication and with improvement of symptoms). The school must advise sick staff members and students not to return until they have been released from home isolation pursuant to health officer isolation orders. The school must also document serving the isolation order on the COVID-19 positive individual, (if orders have not already been delivered by County Public Health). Isolation Orders in English and Spanish (with instructions) are found here:

<https://www.mendocinocounty.org/community/novel-coronavirus/health-order>

- iv. The school must work with County Public Health to identify close contacts at the school (i.e., all persons within less than 6 feet of the COVID-19 positive individual for 15 minutes or more cumulatively over a 24 hour period whether masked or unmasked), and exclude close contacts from school for 10 days from last date of close contact while infectious (i.e., the 48 hours before symptoms began or within 48 hours before the COVID-19 positive test sample was collected). The school must advise school-based close contacts not to return until they have been released from home quarantine pursuant to health officer quarantine orders. The school must also document serving the quarantine orders on all school-based close contacts (if orders have not already been delivered by County Public Health). The quarantine period is 10 days from last known contact with the case. Quarantine Orders in English and Spanish (with instructions) are found here:

<https://www.mendocinocounty.org/community/novel-coronavirus/health-order>

- v. The school must implement communication plans for exposure at school and potential school closures, including outreach to students, parents, teachers, staff, labor, and the community.
- vi. The school must follow their Cal/OSHA COVID-19 Prevention Program (CPP) and investigate if any work-related factors contributed to the risk of infection and update protocols as needed to prevent further cases. (See CDPH Guidelines, Responding to COVID-19 in the Workplace:

<https://www.cdph.ca.gov/Programs/CID/DCDC/Pages/COVID-19/Workplace-Outbreak-Employer-Guidance.aspx>)

- d. Procedure for School-Based Response to a Student/Staff Member/Volunteer or Teacher's Exposure to COVID-19 from outside the school whereby the COVID-19 case infection is not a student, staff member, teacher, or volunteer: The school liaison should contact County Public Health immediately by phone to **(707) 272-8035** and by email to

**DOC-Schools@mendocinocounty.org**, on the day it learns of this potential exposure so that County Public Health can investigate and give guidance. When the exposure is confirmed, the school should send the close contact home and document serving the quarantine orders if they have not already been delivered. The quarantine period is 10 days from last known contact with the case. Quarantine Orders in English and Spanish (with instructions) are found here: <https://www.mendocinocounty.org/community/novel-coronavirus/health-order>. The school and classroom may remain open. The school should consider notification and outreach to the school community of a known close contact.

6. School or District Closures. School-wide closure is recommended (and may be required by the Health Officer) in event a school has multiple COVID-19 cases in multiple stable groups or classrooms, such as: (1) Within a 14 day period, an outbreak has occurred in 25% or more stable groups in the school; (2) Within a 14 day period, at least three outbreaks have occurred in the school and more than 5% of the school population is infected; and (3) When warranted for other reasons, including results from public health investigation or other local epidemiological data. District-wide closure is recommended (and may be required by the Health Officer) if 25% or more of schools within a district have closed due to COVID-19 within 14 days. Nothing in the State Guidances or this Order prohibits individual schools or school districts (in accordance with their governing bodies) from closing prior to reaching these stated threshold percentages.
7. Facial Coverings. Facial coverings must be used in accordance with CDPH Guidance for the Use of Face Coverings unless a person is exempt as explained in the same. (<https://www.cdph.ca.gov/Programs/CID/DCDC/Pages/COVID-19/guidance-for-face-coverings.aspx>). CDPH Guidance requires adults and all children in all grade levels to wear facial coverings. People are exempted from facial covering requirements, if they are under age 2, have a medical or mental health condition or disability confirmed by their primary care provider that would impede them from properly wearing or handling a mask, or when it would inhibit communication with a person who is hearing impaired. Schools must exclude students from school or school related activities who arrive at school or school-related activity without a facial covering if they are not exempt and refuse to wear one provided by the school. Facial coverings are also required while on and while waiting for school buses.
  - a. Face Shields. Pursuant to CDPH Guidance and the Health Officer's facial covering order (<https://www.mendocinocounty.org/home/showdocument?id=36531>), a face shield (i.e., a piece of rigid, clear plastic attached to a headband which covers the entire face extending from forehead to below the chin) is an acceptable alternative to a cloth facial covering (preferably with a cloth

extension stretching from shield to shirt, and tucked in), especially where a facial covering cannot be used for pedagogical or developmental reasons, (i.e., communicating or assisting young children or those with special needs). The Health Officer recommends that a face shield *with* a mask protects the user, more than the mask alone, and would be an added protection for people who cannot maintain 6 foot distance. The Health Officer notes that when a face shield is used without a mask, a face shield is not as protective to others as the mask.

8. This Order shall become effective upon release, and will continue to be in effect until it is rescinded, superseded, or amended in writing by the Health Officer.
9. Copies of this Order shall promptly be: (1) made available at County of Mendocino Executive Office, County Administration Building, 501 Low Gap Road, Ukiah, California 95482 (2) posted on the County website [www.mendocinocounty.org](http://www.mendocinocounty.org) and (3) provided to any member of the public requesting a copy of this Order.
10. If any provision of this Order to the application thereof to any person or circumstance is held to be invalid, the remainder of the Order, including the application of such part or provision to other persons or circumstances, shall not be affected and shall continue in full force and effect. To this end, the provisions of this Order are severable.

**IT IS SO ORDERED**

**ISSUED BY:**

**DATE:**

**January 30, 2021**

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Howard A. Coren", with a stylized flourish at the end.

Howard A. Coren M.D.  
Health Officer, County of Mendocino