

A microscopic view of COVID-19 particles, showing their characteristic spiky, spherical structure. The particles are rendered in shades of blue and white against a dark blue background.

Sierra Sands Unified School District

COVID-19

District Plan For All Elementary and Secondary Schools

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Implementation of COVID-19 School Plan

Sierra Sands Unified School District's goal is to prioritize the reopening of our schools as safely and as quickly as possible given the many known benefits of in-person learning. To enable this and assist schools with their day-to-day operations, it is important to adopt and implement actions to slow the spread of COVID-19 inside the school and out in the community. The district has utilized guidance documentation from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), the California Department of Public Health (CDPH), the Kern County Public Health Department (KCPHD), the California Department of Education (CDE) and Kern County Superintendent of Schools (KCSOS) to develop this district plan in conjunction with site administration. It is reasonable to expect that the protocols in this document will change as local conditions change. This plan will also be a part of each school's site safety plan.

Out of an abundance of caution, Sierra Sands USD will enforce all procedures that are recommended by the CDC and CDPH. In some cases, the district might choose to enforce stricter safety precautions than what is recommended if conditions worsen. Any general questions or concerns regarding the District's COVID-19 Safety Plan which will be implemented at every district site and facility should be directed to Bryan Auld, Assistant Superintendent of Human Resources and COVID-19 Safety Coordinator for Sierra Sands USD at 760-499-1620.





Health and Safety Protocols

Purpose

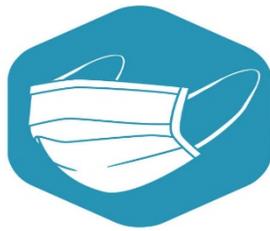
The purpose of this guidance is to outline the procedures the school will follow as we return to campus to provide in-person support services and instruction.

The CDC and CDPH highly recommend that all eligible individuals get the COVID-19 vaccination because, according to their guidance, the vaccine is the single most effective way to slow the spread of COVID-19. The use of face masks, in addition to other preventative measures such as sanitation and washing of hands, remains the second-best defense against the spread of COVID-19 within schools and offices.



Face Coverings

Students in all grade levels TK-12 are required to wear face coverings at all times while indoors, unless exempted. (Persons exempted from wearing a face covering due to a medical condition must wear a non-restrictive alternative (e.g., face shield with a drape on the bottom edge).) Adults, including all staff, in K-12 settings are also required to mask when sharing indoor spaces with students. Masks are optional when outdoors for everyone in K-12 school settings. Any student who fails to bring a mask with them to school will be provided a mask by school staff.



What is a cloth face covering? A cloth face covering is a material that covers the nose and mouth. It can be secured to the head with ties or straps. It can be made of a variety of materials, such as cotton, silk, or linen. A cloth face covering may be factory-made or sewn by hand.

How well do cloth face coverings work to prevent the spread of COVID-19? There is scientific evidence demonstrating that the use of cloth face masks or coverings by the public during this COVID-19 pandemic helps reduce disease transmission. The face mask has been shown to reduce the release of infectious particles into the air when someone speaks, coughs, or sneezes. Clearly, the face mask helps protect the spread of COVID-19 in people who are symptomatic, but it also protects others when someone is asymptomatic and, therefore, does not know they have COVID-19. Cloth face coverings are not a substitute for proper hygiene, washing hands, and staying home when ill or under quarantine, but they are an added layer of protection when combined with these primary interventions.

How should I care for a cloth face covering? It's a good idea to wash your cloth face covering frequently, ideally after each use, or at least daily. Have a bag or bin to keep cloth face coverings in until they can be laundered with detergent and hot water and dried on a hot cycle. If you must re-wear your cloth face covering before washing, wash your hands immediately after putting it back on and avoid touching your face.

Discard cloth face coverings that:

- No longer cover the nose and mouth
- Have stretched out or damaged ties or strap
- Cannot stay on the face
- Have holes or tears in the fabric.

For additional information and resources regarding masks and face coverings, including types of recommended and not recommended masks, see the [CDC Face Coverings Website](#).

There are no physical distancing requirements so long as masks are worn.

Refusal to Wear a Face covering

Facial coverings are required for all students' grades TK through 12. Those students who refuse to wear a mask will be referred to Independent Study (I.S.)



COVID-19 Testing

Current guidance does not require surveillance testing (testing of all employees regularly regardless of whether they have symptoms of COVID-19). However, the District will provide testing free of charge and during regular work hours for any employee who exhibits symptoms of COVID-19.



Hand Washing

Students and staff should wash their hands frequently. When staff or students are washing their hands, it is recommended that they use soap and water and rigorously rub fingers together for a minimum of 20 seconds. Hand sanitizer is recommended when soap and water are not available. Hand sanitizer, which contain at least 60% ethyl alcohol as recommended by the CDPH, will be available at multiple locations on each school site including each classroom.

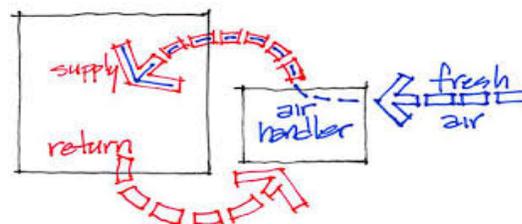
Students and staff should wash their hands or use hand sanitizer at the following times:

- Before and after eating

- After using the restroom
- After using a tissue to blow their nose or coughing into their hands

Coughing or Sneezing

All students and staff are reminded to use a tissue or the inside of their elbow as a barrier when coughing or sneezing. If a tissue is used, it must be disposed of immediately.



HVAC Ventilation and Air Purification

The district is committed to providing the safest equipment available for reducing the risk of transmission. Research has determined that the virus travels through ventilation systems that do not allow for high efficiency filters. The highest rated filtration system is the MERV 13 HVAC filter. Currently, every HVAC system in the district has a MERV 13 filter. In addition, the district will provide portable high efficiency air cleaners in each classroom.

What Families and Students Can Expect on Campus



Symptom and Exposure Screening

Note to Parents: Daily screening for COVID-19 symptoms and for exposure to someone with COVID-19 prior to leaving for school can prevent students with COVID-19 from coming to school while infectious, thus preventing in-school transmission.

If your student has any symptom(s) that are common in COVID-19, **DO NOT BRING THEM TO THE SCHOOL SITE.** Instead, keep your child home and contact the school's office manager for guidance on how to proceed. In addition, if there are other children in the home that are school aged, keep them home, initially, even if they are asymptomatic.

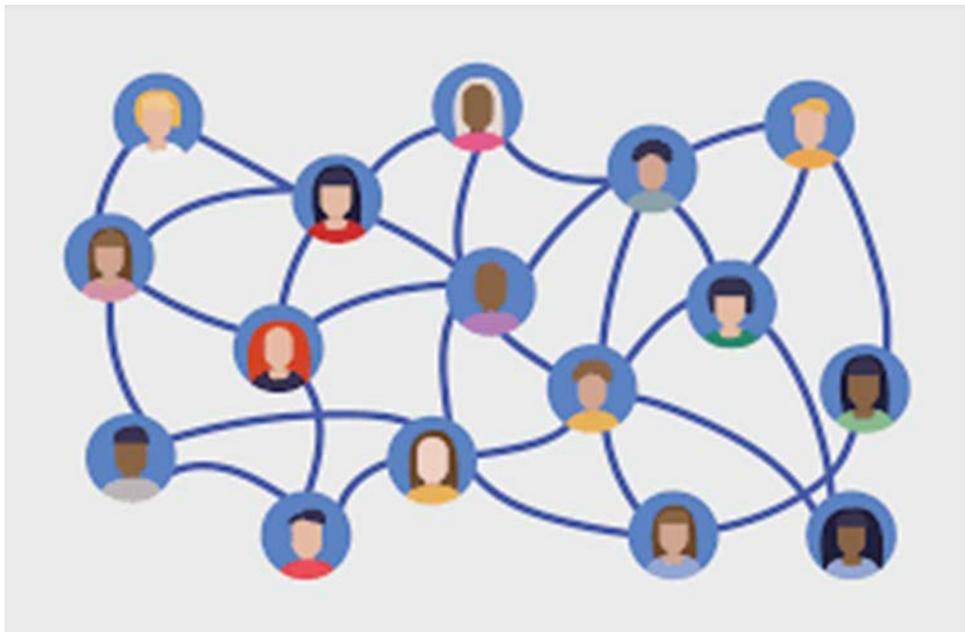


Quarantine Protocols:

The quarantine protocols for someone who tests positive for COVID-19 or someone who has had a direct exposure have been modified by the CDC and CDPH. The quarantine time now depends on several different variables that might, or might not, exist. Therefore, anyone who tests positive for COVID-19 or has contact is defined as a person who was within 6 feet from someone who has tested positive for COVID-19 for 15 minutes or more cumulative within a 24- hour period, regardless of face covering.

Contact Tracing Protocols

The Human Resources Department, in partnership with Kern County Department of Public Health (KCPH), will be responsible for managing the contact tracing protocols. As such, every COVID-19 positive case within the SSUSD community must be reported to H.R. Please contact the H.R. department by calling (760) 499-1620.



Transportation



Face coverings are required for all students and employees during transportation activities. If a student does not have a face mask or his/her face mask is damaged, the bus monitor will provide a new face covering to the student.

School buses will be cleaned and/or disinfected daily to protect student passengers and staff. In addition, the drivers use a hydroelectric sprayer to clean the bus ensuring all surfaces are cleaned.

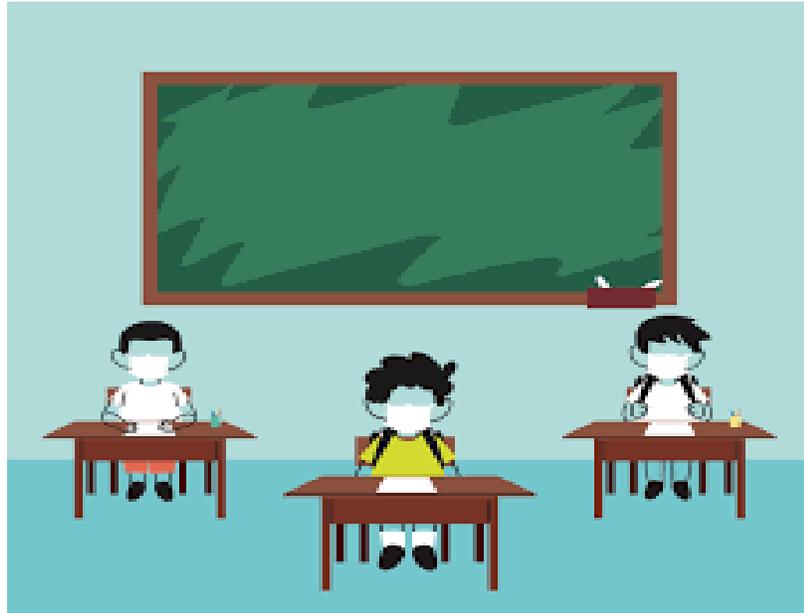


Visitors/Volunteers on Campus:

The district values the role volunteers can play in a student's educational experience. As such, we are hopeful that conditions will allow for volunteers to return to campus in the near future. However, the district is currently required to implement the following regarding visitors/volunteers:

- Schools should limit nonessential visitors, volunteers, and activities involving external groups or organizations with people who are not fully vaccinated, particularly in areas where there is moderate-to-high COVID-19 community transmissions.
- Schools should not limit access for direct service providers but can ensure compliance with school visitor's policies.

Classroom Protocols



Classroom Space:

- Classrooms will be cleaned every day after students and staff have left.
- Manipulatives used for instruction will be stored in personal bins and are not to be shared.
- Backpacks are permitted.



Non - Classroom Space:

- Nonessential visitors are currently prohibited.

Recess activities will be staggered to reduce the number of students on the playground at any given time. Students will be required to thoroughly wash their hands immediately following the recess period.

Sports & Extracurricular Activities:

At this time, elementary schools will not be hosting sports or extracurricular activities on site.

Food Service



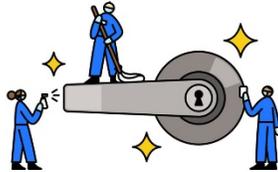
Please note, if your student has a medical need or food related allergy contact our Child Nutrition Services Director, Kris Groves at 499-1881 or email her at kgroves@ssud.org.

Breakfast and lunch will be provided by food services. Students will be allowed to bring their own bottled water. In addition, individual water bottles will be available to students throughout the day within the classroom. Drinking fountains have been disabled at this time.

The district will implement the following CDPH guidance regarding food services:

- Maximize physical distance as much as possible while eating (especially indoors). Using additional spaces outside of the cafeteria for mealtime seating such as classrooms or the gymnasium can help facilitate distancing. Arrange for eating outdoors as much as possible.
- Clean frequently touched surfaces. Surfaces that come in contact with food should be cleaned before and after meals.
- Given very low risk of transmission from surfaces and shared objects, there is no need to limit food service approaches to single use items and packed meals.

Cleaning and Disinfecting Protocols



The district will implement the following CDPH guidance regarding cleaning:

- In general, cleaning once a day is usually enough to sufficiently remove potential virus that may be on surfaces. Disinfecting removes any remaining germs on surfaces, which further reduces any risk of spreading infection. The cleaning agent the district uses for everyday cleaning has a disinfectant in it.
- If a facility has had a sick person with COVID-19 within the last 24 hours, clean AND disinfect the spaces occupied by that person during that time. Again, the district uses a cleaning agent that is also a disinfectant every day. However, when someone who is positive with COVID-19 was in a facility within the last 24 hours, those spaces where the person had been will also be disinfected with a hydroelectric solution.

Mental Health Support/Additional Family Resources



*Safeguard Your Kids
Mental Health*

Purpose

The following are social, emotional, and mental health resources available for our students and families. We welcome and encourage anyone who may be struggling or know of someone who is, to reach out for support. We are all stronger together.

Mental Health Supports:

Please contact your school principal or school counselor if any mental health support is needed.

Additional Supports

This year has been extremely difficult for people of all ages due to the many uncertainties surrounding the COVID-19 pandemic. Many Californians are out of work and under serious financial stress. Children are partaking in virtual learning, which has come with unforeseen challenges and setbacks. **Parents Anonymous®** offers a NO COST Parent and Youth Helpline which provides immediate emotional support from a trained and compassionate helpline counselor. Open 12 hours every day: Monday-Sunday 8 am – 8 pm CALL, TEXT OR CHAT in any language.



**California
Parent & Youth
Helpline**
1-855-4A PARENT
1-855-427-2736

8am-8pm Monday-Sunday

CALL, TEXT OR LIVE CHAT NOW
FOR EMOTIONAL SUPPORT OR TO
SIGN UP FOR ONLINE PARENTING
SUPPORT GROUPS

caparentyouthhelpline.org
info@caparentyouthhelpline.org

Asking for Help is a Sign of Strength®



**California
Parent & Youth
Helpline**
1-855-4A PARENT
1-855-427-2736

8am-8pm Lunes-Domingo

LLAME, ENVÍE UN MENSAJE DE TEXTO O CHATEE
EN VIVO AHORA PARA RECIBIR APOYO
EMOCIONAL O PARA REGISTRARSE EN
GRUPOS VIRTUAL DE APOYO PARA PADRES

caparentyouthhelpline.org
info@caparentyouthhelpline.org

Pedir Ayuda Es Un Signo De Fortaleza®

Crisis Stabilization Unit

760-463-2880, 1141 Chelsea St.

College Community Health (for students with MediCal)

760 499-7406, 1400 N. Norma St. #133

Omni Family Health (has sliding fee scale)

1-800-300-6664, 1133 N. Chelsea Street

Rural Health Clinic Mental Health

760 499-3863, 1111 N. China Lake Blvd.

Southern Sierra Mental Health

760-446-6404, 105 E. Sydnor

Resources for Suspected Child Abuse or Neglect

If you suspect child abuse or neglect, please call the Kern County Child Abuse Hotline.

Child Protective Services Hotline:

(661) 631-6011 (County)

(760) 375-6049 (Ridgecrest)

Substance abuse

College Community Services Adolescent Substance Use Disorder Treatment Team (12 to 17 years old)

760 499-7406, 1400 N. Norma Ste. 127-133

Ridgecrest Health Resources:

Pediatricians/Family practice

Omni Family Health (has sliding fee scale)

1-800-300-6664, 1133 N. Chelsea Street

Rural Health Pediatrics

760 499-3846, Suite 301, 1111 N. China Lake Blvd.

Immunizations

Omni Family Health (has sliding fee scale)

1-800-300-6664, 1133 N. Chelsea Street

Rural Health Pediatrics

760 499-3846, Suite 301, 1111 N. China Lake Blvd.

Urgent Care

Heather Stone Urgent Care

760 446-4571, 900 N Heritage Dr Ste E

Rural Health Clinic Urgent Care

760 499-3800, 1111 N. China Lake Blvd.

Emergency Care

Ridgecrest Regional Hospital

Call 9-1-1 for emergencies, 1081 N. China Lake Blvd.

Dentists

Bachman Family Dentistry

760 375-8512, 700 N. Sanders St. Ste B

Children's Dental Group

760 446-8688, 501 W Joyner Ave #B

Palm Tree Pediatric Dentistry

760 463-9006, 1101 N Norma St, Suite B

Rural Health Dental Clinic

760 499-3296, 1111 N. China Lake Blvd.

Hearing

High Desert Audiology

760-375-9399, 121 S. China Lake Blvd Ste. B

Vision

VisionCare

760 446-5555, 1409 N Norma St.

Focus Optometry Center

760 375-9709, 905 Drummond Ave.

Walmart Vision Center

760 463-6058, 201 E Bowman Rd.

Orthopedics

Healthy Bone & Joint Center

760 446-8692, 1041 N. China Lake Blvd.

Valley Orthopedic Institute (in Ridgecrest on Thursdays)

661 949-8643, 1533 North Downs Street

Pharmacies

Center Pharmacy

760 446-4141, 1109 N. China Lake Blvd.

Rite Aid

760 375-0223, 101 North China Lake Blvd.

Sav-on at Albertsons

760 384-4020, 927 S China Lake Blvd.

Walgreens

760 384-2358, 101 Drummond Ave.

Physicals/Sports physicals

Omni Family Health (has sliding fee scale)

1-800-300-6664, 1133 N. Chelsea Street

Rural Health Pediatrics

760 499-3846, Suite 301, 1111 N. China Lake Blvd.

Sports Medicine/Chiropractic

Ridgecrest Regional Hospital Chiropractic Clinic

760 371-1300, 840 N. Norma St., Suite B

Ledesma Chiropractic Sports Medicine

760 499-2367

Women's Health

Ridgecrest Regional Hospital Women's Health Services

760 499-3640, 1011 N. China Lake Blvd., Suite A

Ridgecrest Pregnancy Care Center

760 384-2273, 341 Ridgecrest Blvd

Women's Center High Desert

760 371-1969, 134 China Lake Blvd