



Chula Vista Elementary School District Safe Return to School

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Board of Education

Kate Bishop • Leslie Ray Bunker • Francisco Tamayo • Lucy Ugarte

Superintendent

Francisco Escobedo, Ed.D.



Dear Parent/Guardian:

Welcome back to school! I am so excited to see that students and staff will be at our campuses again full-time, starting on Wednesday, July 21. I know the past year and a half has been tough on all of us. Thankfully, we continue to reach new milestones in combatting COVID-19. A full return to school is the greatest sign yet of a return to normalcy. Safely returning to in-person instruction in the new school year is a priority to local, state and federal officials alike. Vaccination is currently the leading public health prevention strategy to end the COVID-19 pandemic, and San Diego County continues to be a leader in the state in regards to vaccination rates.

In addition, please know that each of our schools has gone to great measures to keep students and staff safe. Our campuses and operating procedures will not look the same as pre-pandemic. Schools have upgraded ventilation systems and/or added purifiers to each classroom; received hand sanitizer and other safety supplies, and adapted to continuously evolving safety guidance. We are confident schools are the best and safest places for students to learn and succeed.

Procedures continue to evolve. Recently, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) updated its guidance to stress the full reopening of schools and recommended masks only be worn by the unvaccinated. As of this writing, masks are still required when indoors in K-12 schools, according to the California Department of Public Health (CDPH). While students are present in the room, masking indoors is required for everyone—including for vaccinated individuals. When students are not present, fully vaccinated people are not required to mask indoors, according to CDPH.

Students will be able to remove their masks outdoors. Our schools will make every effort to serve meals outdoors. Where cafeterias or group dining rooms must be used, our schools will work to keep students together in their stable groups, and practice physical distancing as much as possible. Additionally, our schools will practice and emphasize hand hygiene before and after eating.

As an elementary school district, we note that nearly all of our schools serve children under the age of 12 who are not eligible for vaccination at this time. Therefore, we follow guidance that emphasizes implementing multi-layered prevention strategies (e.g., using multiple prevention strategies together consistently) to protect people who are not fully vaccinated, including students, teachers, staff, and other members of their households. We have stressed multiple prevention strategies throughout the pandemic.

You may have additional questions about school procedures to prevent the spread of COVID-19 when we resume classes. Please review this handbook carefully. As a reminder, CDC's guidance is not binding for California schools, which must abide by requirements from state and county public health.

Again, we look forward to welcoming students and their families back to school on July 21.

Sincerely,

Francisco Escobedo, Ed.D.
Superintendent

District Values & Commitment to Families

Our mission is to nurture every child's imagination, intellect, and sense of inquiry. Working collaboratively with stakeholders, we tap a collective intelligence rich with the spirit and creativity necessary for students to become difference makers in our community and the world.

CVESD has worked diligently to prepare each school site for our children's safe return to campus. Adhering to state guidelines and local public health directives, we have taken measures to prepare for a return for the 2021-22 school year.

At Chula Vista Elementary School District, we recognize that COVID-19 places extraordinary responsibility on all of us. Our values of equality, equity, accountability, ethical responsibility, diversity, teamwork, innovation, and excellence will guide us in our response to COVID-19.

Returning to Campus

When students are welcomed onto campus this year, things will look different. The District and school sites have been rethinking the day-to-day use of facilities and school operations to limit staff and student exposure to COVID-19 in accordance with the latest public health information and best practices. The [newest state guidance](#) released on July 12, 2021 updated many of the procedures experienced by students who attended our hybrid model of in-person learning during the spring, so even these students will notice a difference when at school.

We thank you in advance for talking to your children and explaining that school will be different, and it is okay for things to be different. The changes we are making indicate that good things are happening to keep everyone safe so we can return to education like before COVID-19.

Physical Distancing

Even though the state and local guidelines do not require physical distancing, it will be encouraged at CVESD schools while the COVID-19 virus is present in our community. Whenever possible, our students will be seated apart. Our schools will also encourage physical distancing in other settings like at lunch and extra-curricular activities.

Cleaning and Hygiene

Cleaning

We've implemented heightened cleaning and disinfecting measures to ensure the health and well-being of staff and students. We will clean classrooms and common areas once every day. Classrooms or common areas will be disinfected when an individual who contracts COVID has been in the area within 24 hours. Employees will be provided cleaner/disinfectant to use in their areas, when necessary.

According to the January 14, 2021 [document](#) released by the California Department of Public Health (CDPH), “frequent disinfection, which was thought at the beginning of the pandemic to be a key safety component, can pose a health risk to children and students due to the chemicals used and has proven to have limited to no impact on COVID19 transmission.” Disinfection with specified products, is recommended for schools after a case has been identified in the school, in the spaces where the case spent a large proportion of their time (e.g., classroom, or administrator’s office if an administrator). With this updated guidance, the district and school sites have moved to cleaning as the primary method and using disinfecting less frequently and when appropriate.

Hygiene

- Staff and students are trained on proper hand hygiene, including hand washing and use of hand sanitizer.
- Handwashing/sanitizing is reinforced daily with time allotted to wash hands regularly.
- Students and staff are instructed on protocols for coughing, sneezing, etc. while protecting others.
- Visual reminders to increase hygiene procedures are provided and posted for staff and students.

Health Monitoring and Contact Tracing

Health Screening

At this time, temperature checks and/or health screening will not be conducted when students enter the school. We ask your family to conduct health screenings for their child(ren) before leaving for school each morning. This could include checking your child’s temperature, assessing for symptoms consistent with COVID-19, and asking your child “do you feel well today?”

Staff members will monitor student health throughout the day and temperature checks will be conducted if a child appears to not feel well or develops symptoms while at school.

Following the [San Diego County COVID-19 Symptom Decision Tree](#), Chula Vista Elementary School District requires any student or staff exhibiting a fever or any of the COVID-19 symptoms to be immediately sent home. The guidance also states that if anyone in a student or staff member’s household has tested positive for COVID-19, all household members and close contacts of the individual are required to quarantine at home for a specified period of time (based on their last known contact with the individual, and the individual’s ability to meet requirements for returning to work or school).

Considerations for Partial or Total Closure

Currently, the state of California does not allow for distance learning during the 2021-22 school year. Based on communication received from the state, any decision to mandate a partial or total closure of schools will be decided by state and local health officials.

What Happens to Learning if a Class or School is Quarantined or Closes?

The intent of the school district is to ensure a safe and effective learning environment for our students and staff. The recent guidance provided by the CDPH allows for students exposed to COVID-19 to remain on campus, if mitigation strategies are followed. It is mandatory for students and staff to wear masks indoors, in accordance with state guidance.

Below you will find the most recent CDPH and County of San Diego Health and Human Services guidance on quarantining and isolating:

- When both parties wore a mask in the indoor setting, unvaccinated students who were close contacts (more than 15 minutes over a 24-hour period within 0-6 feet indoors) may undergo a modified 10-day quarantine. They may continue to attend school for in-person instruction if they:
 - Are asymptomatic;
 - Continue to appropriately mask (indoors and outdoors);
 - Undergo at least twice weekly testing during the 10-day quarantine; and
 - Quarantine for all extracurricular activities at school, including sports, and activities within the community setting.
- Additional guidance requires that individuals unmasked indoors are required to quarantine. [Close contacts](#) not wearing masks or the infected individual was not wearing a mask during the indoor exposure; or unvaccinated students must follow the guidance below:
 - For these contacts, those who remain asymptomatic, meaning they have NOT had any symptoms, may discontinue self-quarantine under the following conditions:
 - Quarantine can end after Day 10 from the date of last exposure without testing; OR
Quarantine can end after Day 7 if a diagnostic specimen is collected after Day 5 from the date of last exposure and tests negative.
 - To discontinue quarantine before 14 days following last known exposure, asymptomatic close contacts must:
 - Continue daily self-monitoring for symptoms through Day 14 from last known exposure; AND
 - Follow all recommended safety measures (e.g., wearing a mask when around others, hand washing, avoiding crowds) through Day 14 from last known exposure.
 - If any symptoms develop during this 14-day period, the exposed person must immediately isolate, get tested and contact their healthcare provider with any questions regarding their care.

What Happens When a Student is Exposed to COVID-19 at Home?

If a student is exposed to COVID-19 at home the District assumes that the exposure is ongoing and therefore will ask the student to quarantine until 14 days after their last exposure to the positive case while they are infectious. Your child may have a 24-day quarantine period. For example: An individual is typically infectious for 10 days. On Day 11, the student's quarantine period would begin. Fully vaccinated people do not have to quarantine after close contact with a positive case, unless they become symptomatic.

County Guidance on PCR and Antigen Tests

There are two main types of tests to determine if someone has the COVID-19 virus: Polymerase Chain Reaction (PCR) test and Antigen test. The County has provided guidance on which type of test school districts can accept. It is important to understand when each test is accepted for CVESD students returning to school campuses.

PCR Test (also known as NAAT – Nucleic Acid Amplification Test): PCR testing is considered the “gold standard” in SARS-CoV-2 detection. This test detects RNA (or genetic material) that is specific to the virus. It can detect the virus within days of infection, even if the person does not display symptoms. Test turnaround time typically requires 2-3 days, but results can be obtained in as little as 24 hours. PCR test results are accepted by CVESD for both positive and negative results.

Antigen Test: This test detects protein fragments (known as antigens) specific to SARS-CoV-2. Test turnaround time is usually very quick and, in some cases, results can be reported within 15 minutes. Antigen test results are accepted by CVESD for only positive results. Antigen tests that display positive results are considered valid for determination of coronavirus infection. However, because antigen tests have an elevated number of false negatives, antigen tests that display negative results are not accepted. The student must complete confirmatory PCR Test with negative results to return to school.

Thus, parents are required to test students with PCR (NAAT) testing rather than Antigen testing if excluded from school following detection of symptoms of COVID-19.

Testing Schedule and Parent Consent

CVESD now has ability to administer both the Antigen and PCR (NAAT) tests to students and staff at **NO COST**. At this time, we are not able to test parents or family members.

From Monday, July 19 – Friday, July 30, both tests will be available at the Education Services and Support Center located at 84 East J Street, Chula Vista, CA 91910.

Chula Vista Elementary School District will provide both the Antigen and PCR tests at each school on a two-week rotation starting August 2. Parents must OPT-IN for the two-week testing. A link will be sent prior to August 2 for parents to provide consent and opt-in their child(ren). Once parents provide consent by completing the form on-line, students will be automatically tested on the two-week cadence during the school day. This process will continue until further notice. If you opt-in for testing, and your child is exposed to an individual who tests positive for COVID-19, and remains on campus during their 10-day quarantine period, they can be automatically provided the mandatory testing at the school site, saving parents additional time and effort. At anytime you can cancel your child's participation in the testing program by emailing: Reanna.Craig@cvesd.org or Sherry.Stone@cvesd.org. School testing schedule will be posted on the District website in the Safe Return to School Information Center.

How is the CVESD PCR (NAAT) and ANTIGEN COVID-19 testing done?

The staff or student will be instructed to pull down their mask to expose their nostrils and keep their mouth covered by their mask. They will be handed a nose swab so they may **self-swab** each nostril, rotating the swab to touch the nasal walls at least 5 times. The swab should not be inserted more than 1 inch into the nostrils.

For the two-week testing program, asymptomatic students will first be tested with the Antigen BinaxNow Tests. If a student tests positive with the Antigen test, then confirmatory PCR (NAAT) Tests will be administered.

For students who have been exposed to a positive case and remain on campus for the Modified 10-Day Quarantine, Antigen tests will be conducted, and if a student tests positive, then will be given a confirmatory PCR (NAAT) per county and state requirements.

Symptomatic students can be brought to the District Office or one of the schools scheduled for testing. They will be given a PCR (NAAT) test, in order to return to school.

Follow the Procedures Below if Your Child or Someone in the House is Sick or Tests Positive for COVID-19

My child is sick and does not take a COVID-19 test

If your child gets sick and you or your healthcare provider decides not to have them get a polymerase chain reaction (PCR/NAAT) to determine if they have COVID, they may return when:

- It is at least 10 days from their symptom onset and
- They are without a fever for 24 hours with no fever reducing medication and
- Their symptoms are improving.

My child is sick and/or tests positive with the COVID-19 virus

If your child tests positive for COVID-19 through either PCR (NAAT) Test or antigen test, they may return when:

- It is at least 10 days from their symptom onset or the date they tested positive if asymptomatic and
- They are without a fever for 24 hours with no fever reducing medication and
- Their symptoms are improving.

My child is sick and tests negative for the COVID-19 virus

If your child gets sick and tests negative for COVID-19 through a PCR (NAAT) Test, they may return when:

- They are without a fever for 24 hours with no fever reducing medication and
- Their symptoms have been improving for 24 hours and
- They provide proof of the negative PCR test results to the school site.

IMPORTANT NOTE: Negative Antigen tests are not accepted. Currently San Diego County only accepts negative PCR (NAAT) Tests for return to work/school. It is recommended that parents choose to get a PCR (NAAT) Test for their children, to prevent having to retest. Parents can use the testing available through the District to meet these requirements.

My child has symptoms that are a result of a chronic pre-existing condition

- If your child has a pre-existing condition, which has previously been reported to the school, call the school nurse for further directions.
- Students who have a pre-existing condition may return to school with a note from their healthcare provider. The note MUST:

- Be signed by a licensed MD/DO/NP/PA who manages the condition.
- Confirm the chronic diagnosis (cite labs, date of record when diagnosed with the condition, etc.).
- Include the provider's contact information.
- Explain how the symptoms are unrelated to COVID-19.
- Be accompanied by a signed consent (from the parent/guardian) for the school to interact with the MD/DO/NP/PA.

Actions to take when your child is at home sick

Families that have a sick child at home are recommended to do the following:

- **Stay home:** Do not allow your child to leave your home, except to get medical care. As much as possible, others in the family should stay home. If ANYONE in the house tests positive for COVID-19, no one should leave the house except to seek medical care.
- **Take care:** Make sure they get rest and stay hydrated.
- **Stay in touch with your doctor:** For medical emergencies, call 911 and report your child's COVID-19 diagnosis during call.
- **One point of contact:** If at all possible, separate your child from other people and pets in your household. Try to have one person only care for your child, so others are not exposed.
- **Use a face covering:** If your child is over 2 years old and can wear a face mask without finding it hard to breathe, have them wear one when the caregiver is in the room. Do not leave you child alone while they are wearing a face mask. The caregiver should also wear one when in the same room.
- **Separate bathroom use:** Have your child use a separate bathroom from other people, if available. If that is not possible, clean and disinfect the bathroom often.
- **Monitor their symptoms:** Symptoms of COVID-19 include fever, cough, shortness of breath, runny nose, sore throat, nausea, vomiting, diarrhea, fatigue, new loss of taste/smell, headache, body aches, and/or poor appetite. Consult with your child's healthcare provider for ways to monitor their symptoms.
- **Follow care instructions:** If your doctor or local health department has provided specific instructions, follow these directives.
- **Wash hands often:** Everyone in your family should wash their hands well and often.
- **Clean often:** Use regular household cleaners or wipes to clean things that get touched often (doorknobs, light switches, toys, remote controls, phones, etc.).

Outbreaks

As students and staff return to school, CVESD will be proactive. We understand even a single positive case among students and staff could potentially develop into an outbreak. Because outbreak circumstances and work practices vary, CVESD will request assistance from the local health department, and will contact the School COVID Line at Health and Human Services if there is an outbreak or possible outbreak.

Contact Tracing

When any member of the CVESD community becomes ill with COVID-19, the District Contact Tracing Team will work with the school site to identify those with whom the individual has been in close contact and assess the significance of the exposure. Notifications will be made to all necessary constituents including site staff, teachers, and parents.

The District will report all positive COVID-19 cases to the pertinent campus community, including bargaining units, and will provide findings in the contact tracing investigation to the Health and Human Services Agency's School COVID Team as required.

Vaccinations

The Chula Vista Elementary School District and the California Department of Public Health strongly recommend that all persons eligible receive COVID-19 vaccines. Currently, children under 12 are not eligible for the vaccine since trials for that group are still underway. Once vaccinations are available for children under 12, we will establish vaccination clinics at many of our campuses to provide families a convenient location for services.

As additional guidance is provided by federal, state and local public health agencies, the District will align our guidelines to conform with the applicable agency. For additional information regarding the COVID-19 vaccine, please visit the California Department of Public Health's website at <https://covid19.ca.gov/vaccines/>.

Personal Protective Equipment and Other Safety Supplies

To help contain the spread of COVID-19, CVESD has procured and purchased supplies and equipment to protect students and staff. CVESD will continue to budget for and distribute additional supplies to individual sites in a timely manner.

CVESD is committed to providing safety equipment and supplies to help prevent the spread of the COVID-19 virus, including but not limited to:

Hand Sanitizer

Hand sanitizer will be located in classrooms and common areas such as lunch areas, multi-purpose rooms, front offices, and priority locations identified by the site safety committee. However, it is still recommended that staff and students use hand washing with soap and water as their primary method of hygiene.

Masks

The CDPH announced on July 12, 2021 new mask guidance for schools as follows:

- Masks are optional outdoors for all in K-12 school settings.
- Students are required to mask indoors, with exemptions per [CDPH face mask guidance](#). Adults in school settings are required to mask when sharing indoor spaces with students.
- Persons exempted from wearing a face covering due to a medical condition, must wear a non-restrictive alternative, such as a face shield with a drape on the bottom edge, as long as their condition permits it.
- Schools will provide a face covering to students who inadvertently fail to bring a face covering to school to prevent unnecessary exclusions.

- In limited situations where a face covering cannot be used for pedagogical or developmental reasons, (e.g., communicating or assisting young children or those with special needs) a face shield with a drape (per CDPH guidelines) can be used instead of a face covering while in the classroom as long as the wearer maintains physical distance from others. Staff must return to wearing a face covering outside of the classroom.

Visitors are required to supply their own masks.

How to Select Your Child's Mask

When selecting a mask, there are many choices. Here are some do's and don'ts.

DO choose a mask that:

- Is made for children to ensure proper fit.
- Fits snugly over the nose and mouth and under the chin and that there are no gaps around the sides.
- Provides for two or more layers of washable, breathable fabric.

DO NOT choose a mask that:

- Is made of fabric that makes it hard to breathe (i.e., vinyl, plastic, etc.).
- Has exhalation valves or vents which allow virus particles to escape.
- Are intended for healthcare workers, including N95 respirators.
- Please note that scarves, ski masks, gaiters, and balaclavas are not a substitute for masks.

Gowns

Non-surgical gowns are used in minimal to low-risk situations. The District provides non-surgical gowns for those employees such as Nurses, Attendance/Health Specialists, Student Attendants and other employees who work in special education, who conduct activities where they may come in contact with bodily fluids.

Gloves

Other personal protective equipment such as gloves are provided to staff as appropriate to their position. Each classroom has access to gloves for use during cleaning, or any other activities which necessitate protection for the hands. Gloves are also be worn by Child Nutrition staff, Custodians, Nurses, Student Attendants, and Attendance Secretaries/Health Specialists for many duties.

Acrylic Shielding and Protective Screening

One piece of acrylic shielding has been provided to each school site for placement in the front office. Two pieces of protective sheeting have been provided to each school site for use in the health office or in the determined isolation area if the school has need of them. Desk partitions may be used in classrooms. These shields will provide another layer of protection, in addition to the face covering requirements, if a teacher chooses to use them or if a student is unable to wear a mask for medical reasons.

Canopies

School sites received canopies that can be used at the discretion of the site administrator. These can provide shading for classes meeting outside, as an extra isolation area, or for small group instruction.

Sprayers/Disinfectant

Each site has received two pump sprayers and one Titan Flex handheld disinfectant sprayer. These sprayers will be used by the custodial staff when cleaning and disinfecting large areas such as classrooms, multi-purpose rooms, and outdoor lunch tables.

Other Safety Considerations

- Drinking fountains are disabled. Students should bring their own water bottles and may refill their bottles at designated sinks on campus.
- Bathrooms are cleaned and stocked with soap throughout the day.
- Disinfecting/cleaning spray are provided in every classroom to be used if necessary by teachers and other staff.
- HVAC systems have been serviced and inspected across the District to ensure proper operation and circulation of outside air.

Consistent Communication

Sharing of timely, accurate, and pertinent information will be essential to engaging the CVESD community in measures to prevent the spread of COVID-19 within our campus community. Parents should look for communication from their child's school site as well as communication from the District office.

Ventilation

The virus that causes COVID-19 spreads in droplets that are exhaled by someone who has the virus. Ventilation can reduce the of viral particles in a specific area by diluting them and thus help decrease the risk of exposure.

CVESD is committed to improving air quality in classrooms by using the following strategies:

Fresh Air: Encourage teachers and staff to introduce fresh outdoor air as much as possible, for example, by opening windows where practicable. If opening windows poses a safety or health risk (e.g., by allowing in pollen or exacerbating asthma symptoms) to persons using the facility, we consider alternatives such as maximizing central air filtration for HVAC systems or using the provided air purifier.

Systems Maintenance: We replace and check air filters and filtration systems per manufacturer guidance to ensure optimal air quality.

Systems Upgrades and Improvements: We have supplied each classroom and common area with an air purifier utilizing a H13 True HEPA Filter.

Child Nutrition and Meal Services

Meals for breakfast and lunch will be provided for free to all students in the 2021-22 school year. Parents may provide lunch from home if they choose.

At breakfast, students can walk up to the service line and select one entree, one of any fruit choices, and one beverage container.

At lunch, students select one entree, one of any fruit choices, one vegetable choice and one beverage container.

Transportation

With return to full in-person instruction CVESD will follow these practices:

- CVESD Transportation services will be prioritized to meet the transportation requirement for students with transportation services in their special education IEP.
- Parents should complete the daily health screening for their child(ren) prior to sending them to school.
- Students will have assigned seating on the bus. This will assist the District in conducting contact tracing should a student or employee test positive for COVID-19.
- Should a student become ill during transit, the Driver will proceed to destination and inform School and/or Parent. Students becoming ill during the school hours will not be able to board the bus after school.

Bus Cleaning

- Drivers will clean the bus and wipe down high touch points.
- Each bus will be cleaned nightly and disinfected as appropriate.
- CVESD Bus Drivers have been trained in the steps to properly disinfect buses.
- Drivers are encouraged to assure air flow for constant ventilation by means of air conditioning, open windows, or open roof ventilation hatches.
- School bus windows will be open to ensure maximum ventilation, unless doing so poses a safety or health risk for current or subsequent occupants.

Mask Requirement on Bus

Masks are required for all staff and students unless a medical condition necessitates an adaptation or alternative.

Student Arrival/Departure

The District will allow parents to drop off and pick up their child on the school campus, following health and safety guidelines. Parents are expected to leave campus immediately following dropping off or picking up their child. If local or state guidelines change the District may revise this practice, accordingly.

Special Education

IEP

The District is committed to providing the highest level of academic support to all students and will continue to comply with the Individuals with Disabilities Educational Act (IDEA) to ensure students have access to their education as indicated on their individualized education program (IEP).

504

The District will continue to implement all 504 plans, and teams may develop updated plans that identify precautions/ exceptions are necessary for working with students with significant support needs or who may be unable to comply with mask mandates due to documented disability.



Chula Vista Elementary School District
84 East J Street, Chula Vista, CA 91910
www.cvesd.org



The Chula Vista Elementary School District is committed to providing a working and learning environment free from discrimination, harassment, intimidation and bullying. The District prohibits discrimination, harassment, intimidation and bullying based on race, color, ancestry, national origin, ethnic group identification, age, religion, marital or parental status, physical or mental disability, sex, sexual orientation, gender, gender identity or expression, genetic information; the perception of one or more of such characteristics, or association with a person or group with one or more of these actual or perceived characteristics in any program, practice or activity it conducts. For inquiries or complaints related to employee-to-employee, student-to-employee, or work/ employment related discrimination or harassment, contact: Human Resources Service and Support Department, Jeffrey Thiel, Ed.D., Assistant Superintendent/ Title IX Coordinator, 84 East J Street Chula Vista, CA 91910, Jeffrey.Thiel@cvesd.org, (619) 425-9600, Ext. 1340.

