



Preparing every student to thrive in a global society.

July 22, 2021

Dear Students and Parents/Guardians,

This letter is to share some important information with you regarding the new school year. We are excited to announce that all District schools and programs will be open for full in-person instruction beginning on the first day of school, August 10, 2021.

Our community and our students and families have endured much during the COVID-19 pandemic over the last 16 months. Infection rates in our community have decreased substantially in our community. According to public health experts, the drop in infection rates is due to strong vaccination rates in our community and continued widespread practices such as face coverings and social distancing in indoor spaces. Since the threat of COVID-19 has not been eliminated entirely, we need to remain vigilant. Nevertheless, and because of the positive trends in our community, we have been excitedly planning for the reopening of schools.

The California Department of Public Health (CDPH) and the Federal Center for Disease Control (CDC) have published updated guidance for safety measures and protocols for the return to school next month for the start of the new school year, and the Santa Clara County Department of Public Health has also issued recommendations. The District has reviewed the new requirements and recommendations and we want to share with you some key information and expectations for the start of the new school year on the school and program sites.

In order to provide a safe and successful return to in-person learning, the District will be implementing the following:

- Santa Clara County public health officials announced they are recommending mask-wearing indoors in public spaces for everyone, regardless of vaccination status, in an effort to curb the spread of COVID-19 and other highly transmissible variants in our community. **All students and all adults at our school sites will be required to wear face coverings (masks) when indoors together in classrooms and other school facilities and when in buses or other vehicles, unless the person qualifies for an exemption. The mask requirement will apply to all activities during the instructional day and to all extra-curricular and other school-sponsored activities on the school site at which students are present.** This approach meets the guidance from the California Department of Public Health.

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- The persons who are exempted from the mask requirement include:
 - (1) Persons who have a medical condition, mental health condition, or disability that prevents wearing a mask. This includes persons with a medical condition for whom wearing a mask could obstruct breathing.
 - (2) When the students are indoors eating or drinking. Students should maximize physical distance as much as possible while eating (especially indoors).
 - (3) Person who are hearing impaired or communicating with a person who is hearing impaired, where the ability to see the mouth is essential for communication.

If you believe your student qualifies for an exemption, please contact Human Resources at covid19line@esuhsd.org in advance of the first day of school to ensure that the school site has the necessary information to fully understand your student's needs, and so that your student is ready start on day one of the new school year on August 10.

- The District will provide a mask to all students and staff who do not have one.
- Persons who are exempt from wearing a mask due to a medical condition must wear a non-restrictive alternative such as a face shield with a drape on the bottom edge, if their condition permits it. In limited situations where a mask cannot be used when teaching students who have special needs, a face shield with a drape can be used instead of a face covering while in the classroom as long as the wearer maintains physical distance from others. The District will provide the necessary face shield and drape in these instances.
- Masks are not required when students and employees are outdoors, but are optional for both adults and students if someone wants to wear one outdoors.
- Physical distancing in classrooms and other indoor spaces will no longer be required.
- The District will have hand sanitizer available at all school sites and will be implementing safety measures and protocols to help ensure safety and the prevent the transmission of COVID-19, including promoting frequent hand-washing and regular cleaning and sanitizing of classrooms and other indoor spaces and school equipment.

Families of students involved in school athletics will be separately receiving information on safety protocols during sports training, practices and competitions.

The State has indicated it will be providing resources for COVID-19 testing to help monitor and contain and future outbreaks. The District is in the process of finalizing its plan for COVID-19 screening tests to be made available for students and staff. We will be sending you that information in a separate communication, as well as information on new quarantining requirements for persons who have a close contact with someone who tests positive for COVID-19, and the District's communication and response plan if and when an outbreak occurs at any school site.

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The CDPH has stated that it will continue to assess health and safety conditions in the State on an ongoing basis and will determine no later than November 1, 2021, whether to update mask requirements or recommendations. We will keep you updated on any changes or loosening in requirements that the Department of Public Health may issue.

Finally, to help meet the educational needs of all students, the District will be offering individualized study (“independent studies”) for a student whose parents believe their student’s health would be put at risk by in-person instruction. If you would like detailed information about the District’s Independent Study Program, please visit the District independent study website page at <http://www.esuhdsd.org/Students--Parents/Instruction/Independent-Study-Program/index.html>, which includes information about the right to request a pupil-parent-educator conference meeting before enrollment in pursuant to this section, pupil rights regarding procedures for enrolling, disenrolling, and reenrolling in independent study, and the synchronous and asynchronous instructional time that a pupil will have access to as part of independent study.

At East Side we are committed to building and sustaining equitable communities across our District where:

- ALL students are welcomed as they are
- Strengths and areas of growth for all students are known and supported
- Adults positively respond to the social-emotional, wellness, and academic needs of every student
- ALL students engage with tasks that develop the strategic thinking skills for full participation in their local communities and the global society.

We believe our reopening plan for in-person instruction meets and furthers those commitments and we are honored to serve you and your students in building that community.

Thank you for your commitment towards keeping our community and our schools safe. The entire ESUHSD team looks forward to an exciting new school year as our students return to school in-person!

Sincerely,



Glenn Vander Zee
Superintendent