



# Ask Dr. Rodriguez



Top Ten Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)  
Edition #26 – Week of October 5, 2020

*Questions are quoted as I received them directly from our community.*

- 1. What's being done for expectations/uniformity throughout all schools? (When it comes to social distance learning) My child's school will request, for example, children to keep the camera on while in school. But when I email the board, I am told it isn't a rule from the district. Are principals allowed to implement their own rules for distance learning aside from our current district plan? Demanding or "highly encouraging" or "rewarding" students for keeping their camera on and ignore zoom fatigue, anxiety and all other negative aspects of this is dangerous to our children's well being.**

The issue of camera/no camera is indeed connected to student wellbeing. The original intent of the "no camera required" rule was to recognize the challenging learning environment that some students may encounter at home, the technology issue the use of the camera causes for some students, and the psychological impact it has on other students. At the same time, some of the goals of synchronous learning are to build community, decrease the sense of isolation and provide actionable feedback to students. Many of the goals are enhanced when the students have their cameras on. We have found a higher level of learning from engaged students when they receive consistent feedback, and therefore, we are highly encouraging students to keep their cameras on. Many teachers and administrators are using positive incentives to encourage students to have their cameras on. No one can require students to have their camera on. To address this issue, I am holding a focus group with approximately 35 people including students from each secondary school, parents from Migrant Ed, DELAC and SSC, teachers, counselors and administrators on Friday, October 16 to come up with additional recommendations and solutions.

- 2. Why is my student's teacher telling them that they HAVE to have their cameras on or they will lose participation points?**

We should not be requiring students to use their cameras and they should not be losing points or receiving lower grades due to not using their cameras. As noted in the previous question, we are encouraging students to have their cameras on so that we can provide a higher level of instructional and behavioral feedback. Please contact your child's teacher first and then the site administrator if necessary.

- 3. What are the locations of your Safe Spaces? How can I get my child to attend a Safe Space?**

PVUSD Safe Spaces are located at Aptos Junior, Radcliff, Mar Vista, Pajaro Middle and Watsonville High. Safe Spaces exist to provide a supportive and supervised environment for high need students who need specialized intervention and support. Referrals are made only

through the Site Wellness Team. If you feel that your child could benefit from attending a Safe Space, please contact your site administrator. The Site Wellness Team will decide if this is the appropriate action to be taken or if other interventions should be tried prior to attending a Safe Space. If it is the best option the Site Wellness Team will refer the student to the District Wellness Team. Once the District Wellness Team receives the referral, they will work with the family to place the student in a Safe Space.

**4. How do I apply for low cost internet through Cruzio through Equal Access Santa Cruz County?**

You may apply to low cost internet through Cruzio, you can apply through the links below, one in Spanish and one in English. <https://cruzio.com/services/broadband/easc-suf-espanol/> or <https://cruzio.com/services/broadband/easc-suf/>. To submit the form will need the Signup Code, which is **EASC2020SCHOOLS**, otherwise you will receive an error code before submitting the form.

**5. What training has been provided to administrators regarding materials distribution? Our site's materials distribution is chaotic and nothing is being kept track of for teachers regarding which students receive what... some students get some supplies, others don't. Our site administration has said that it is the principal and AC and only a couple of volunteers passing out. Where are the classified staff that is supposed to be funded by our ASP funds? This is a huge debacle for families, students, teachers and admin that needs to be ironed out.**

All Elementary Site Administrators have been provided training in following PVUSD Health Safety protocols pertaining to COVID-19 before the distribution of instructional materials and supplies. As part of this training, they have been provided appropriate PPE, signage to help ensure physical distancing is maintained during distribution events, along with staggering grade level pick up times. A variety of school staff assist in the various distribution events. In addition, we have also highlighted best practices as an administration team as well as individually supporting sites from our district office level, as well from other district departments. All Secondary Administrators have also been trained in the Health and Safety precautions of COVID-19 prior to distribution events this year. In addition, sites break down distribution events through several formats to ensure physical distancing and protocols are followed. This can include grade level time span assignments, multiple day distribution, and specific course materials pick up by subject area. Classified and certificated personnel on campuses plan and execute the distribution events within the safety precautions.

In past years, after school programs were staffed by a combination of Certificated and Classified staff who were also regular day employees. Now during Distance Learning, these staff are providing student support online during the school day. There were few after school staff who were not district employees as well. We are hoping to recruit any available non-district staff over the next few weeks to provide targeted student support. This fall is quite different from last spring, since most instruction is taking place through digital platforms such as Google Meets, Google Classroom, and Seesaw instead of instructional learning packets as in the spring. Please do not hesitate to contact the appropriate Assistant Superintendent, so they

are able to work with the school site administration directly to support the safe distribution of materials on that campus.

- 6. Could you review the expectations regarding COVID safety precautions for staff working at school sites? Specifically, what are the expectations regarding staff wearing masks in shared indoor spaces? At my site, office staff are not wearing masks while they are working in the front office and only put them on when other people enter the office. My understanding had been that staff need to wear masks at all times when working in indoor public spaces, and this feels unsafe for me as a staff person entering the main office.**

If a staff member is in any room or enclosed area where other people are present, and they are unable to physically distance they need to wear a mask. Except for the following directives included in our local county health order:

- If a person is working in any space visited by members of the public, such as a reception area, waiting room, a restroom, or exam room they need to wear a mask.
- If a person is working in or walking through any common areas such as hallways, stairways, elevators, and parking facilities they would wear a mask.
- If a person is in a private cubicle, but are less than 6 feet from someone walking by or present in your cubicle they need to wear a mask.

#### When are Masks Not Required?

If a person is in a private office as long as members of the public do not visit that office.

#### Further Guidelines:

- Lunch should be eaten out of the office with at least 6 feet between people. Eating outside when the weather permits is a great idea. It is not a good idea to eat with other people in a contained space, in fact the chance of being infected with COVID is higher in indoor restaurants even with physical distancing, than eating outdoors.
- Breaks that are taken with others need to continue with mask wearing protocols and maintaining physical distancing, and not in a small space.

- 7. I'm an Instructional Assistant (IA) working from home. I now have to use my own ink to print my weekly homework packets to model for the students I work with. I know Certificated are getting a stipend for using their Internet. What about us, IA's , who also use our internet, our ink? How about Doc Cams are those available for us? Those would come in handy too.**

We recommend that if you need to obtain printed materials to implement lessons, please coordinate with your teacher to pick up a packet or contact site office staff to coordinate use of the printers and/or copiers on site. Additionally, you may utilize the District Office printers in the Special Services department. We are open daily 8am to 4:30pm and able to support these types of needs. Discussing your needs with the teacher or case manager you are working with is another option. Please work with site administration to get equipment that you need such as

document cameras. If there document cameras or other equipment you need are not available at your site, then contact the Special Services office and they will work to locate the equipment.

**8. What steps are being taken to keep racist, misogynistic, transphobic and overall harmful teachers accountable? How can community be made aware they are being heard without violating HR laws. What are the consequences for such poor behavior? I have seen it in multiple teachers and when students speak up, nothing is done.**

The District has a strong commitment to equity and inclusion in education and zero tolerance for this type of behavior. We have board policies prohibiting discrimination, harassment and bullying based on any protected trait, such as race, gender, sexual orientation or religion. Our policies prohibit any employee from acting in a manner that is racist, misogynistic or transphobic while performing their duties for the District. If anyone is aware of the violation of these policies while performing their duties for the District, I encourage them to file a complaint with the District, using our UCP process. <https://pps-pajaro-ca.schoolloop.com/ucp> We investigate all uniform complaints against employees. The consequences will be based on the outcome of the investigation and the severity of the policy violation.

**9. Can you put back Google Hangouts, please, I have awesome memories on it?**

In order to abide by the Child Internet Protection Act, and student data privacy laws, school districts cannot provide accounts in communication systems to be used for non-academic purposes. PVUSD must do everything possible to make sure that students are using district provided resources appropriately (for academic purposes) and in a safe manner. Currently Google does not provide a way for district and school administration to monitor Google Chat in order to ensure that it is being used appropriately by students. PVUSD is in the process of evaluating other instant communication systems such a Remind App that may be implemented for academic purposes with the needed oversight built in.

**10. My child is depressed with all of this that is going on and only wants to cry. He says that he feels depressed and I cannot explain how he feels makes me worried. Do you all have some resources to help students who are suffering the same as my child?**

Yes. We have several supports in place for students including our own social emotional counselors (contact your site administrator to connect with a counselor) and our community partner, PVPSA. Links to all of the community resources can be found at the following web page: <https://www.pvUSD.net/p/resources>. Please do not hesitate to reach out for assistance for your child or to recommend that others do.