



Ask Dr. Rodriguez



Top Ten Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)
Edition #38 – Week of February 1, 2021

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

- 1. Would you please update us on the COVID vaccine availability? Some Santa Cruz city teachers/staff are already receiving the vaccine...why are we not? What is the plan for prioritizing the vaccines - will the District Office be first in line, or will it be staff that are already working onsite? Thank you for communicating openly and clearly with us about this critical issue.**

When educators were provided vaccine priority within Tier 1b, PVUSD developed a plan in coordination with Santa Cruz County Office of Education, Cabrillo College and Salud Para La Gente to create our own Educator Vaccine Centers. To date, we have not been provided vaccine supply specifically for educators. There has been a countywide shift to focus on age criteria instead of occupation. At this moment, we are seeking opportunities to access vaccines through local health providers for educators within their priority lists. This week, we had our first set of Early Childhood educators, both certificated and classified, receive the COVID-19 vaccine. Thanks to Dominican Hospital and Dignity Health, another set of Early Childhood educators and our kindergarten teachers will have the opportunity to receive the vaccine next week. There is a daily focus to pursue additional vaccine supply for our staff. While we are dependent on the prioritization of the local health providers, we plan on staff receiving the vaccine through the following priorities: 1) Anyone over 65 that has not already received the vaccine, 2) All classified, certificated, management currently working at the sites or in person community outreach 3) Current staff working remotely 4) Temporary employees, substitutes and student teachers.

- 2. I am a teacher with PVUSD but I do not live in Santa Cruz County. Will I be vaccinated with the PVUSD teachers as a group in Santa Cruz County? Thank you**
Yes, where you live does not affect your ability to receive a vaccination. All PVUSD staff will receive vaccinations according to priorities noted above. You may of course receive notification from your healthcare provider of vaccine availability for you as well.
- 3. Are teachers going to be required to get the COVID vaccine? It seems unwise to get a vaccine that has had so little testing. We don't fully understand the side-effects it could have.**
No. While we recommend that staff receive the COVID vaccine, staff is not required to get one.
- 4. I am currently a subbing as a classified employee here at PVUSD, Will we also have the opportunity to get the COVID-19 vaccine?**

Yes, both certificated and classified substitutes will have an opportunity to get the COVID 19 vaccine. However, they will be in the last set of staff that will receive the vaccine.

5. Will student teachers be able to get the vaccine when we do?

Yes, they will be able to receive the vaccine at the same time as the certificated and classified substitutes.

6. Per OSHA requirements, when do you have to notify staff of COVID-19 exposure? Does it include when someone fails a screening?

The CalOSHA guidelines include developing and implementing a process for screening employees for and responding to employees with COVID-19 symptoms. It also includes how to respond to employees failing their daily screening as well as how the District must respond when there is a positive COVID-19 case. The District developed a [Standard Operating Procedure](#) for when an employee fails a screening. Human Resources and the COVID nurse follow-up with all employees who fail the screening as well as all potential close contacts. CDPH defines a close contact as being within 6 feet of a COVID-19 case for a cumulative total of 15 minutes within any 24-hour period during the COVID-19 case's "high risk exposure period." CalOSHA does not require exposure notices to be issued when employees fail a daily screening. When an employee tests positive, Cal OSHA requires a "Potential Exposure" notice be sent to all employees who were present during the "high risk" period of the positive COVID case within one business day. The high risk period is defined as two days prior to symptoms beginning and 10 days after symptoms and 24 hours have passed with no fever. Human Resources review every COVID-19 positive case and work with the site/department to issue the "Potential Exposure" notices are sent within the timeframe.

COVID-19 Emergency Temporary Standards Frequently Asked Questions

Q: What must an employer do to identify, evaluate and correct workplace hazards?

A: Identifying, evaluating and correcting workplace hazards includes:

- Developing and implementing a process for screening employees for and responding to employees with COVID-19 symptoms
- Reviewing state and local guidance and orders on hazard prevention, [including industry-specific guidance found on Cal/OSHA's website](#) or at [Covid19.ca.gov](https://www.cdph.ca.gov/Programs/CID/DCDC/Pages/COVID-19/Industry-Specific-Guidance.aspx)
- Reviewing existing practices for controlling COVID-19
- Conducting a site-specific evaluation of where COVID-19 transmission could occur, including interactions between employees and any other persons, and places employees may congregate or interact with members of the public
- Allowing employees or employees' authorized representatives to participate in hazard identification and evaluation
- Ensuring a process is in place to immediately address COVID-19 cases
- Conducting periodic inspections of the workplace to ensure compliance with the ETS and check for new hazards
- Implementing procedures to correct identified hazards

Q: What must an employer do to investigate and respond to a COVID-19 case?

A: Investigating and responding to a COVID-19 case in the workplace includes the following:

- Determining when the COVID-19 case was last in the workplace, and if possible the date of testing and onset of symptoms
- Determining which employees may have been exposed to COVID-19
- Notifying employees of any potential exposures within one business day (and notifying any other employer who has potentially exposed employees in the workplace)
- Offer testing to potentially exposed employees at no cost and during working hours
- Investigate the exposure, whether workplace conditions could have contributed to the risk of exposure, and what corrections would reduce exposure

- 7. Good evening Dr. Rodriguez, I am an Administrative Assistant here at PVUSD. Today I was told that we must have our offices open so that parents can receive help inside. My question is, what is the reason for this? We have been helping our families outside with seemingly no issues. They call our office as they arrive and we go out to help them. Why can't we continue doing this to minimize our level of exposure to potential positive COVID cases?**

The objective is to ensure that our families and community have access to our site resources and have knowledgeable staff who can address any questions and concerns that they have. There has not been direction that families cannot be supported outside of the office if there is still reasonable access for families. During my visits to sites this year, I have seen many set ups that allow for engagement with our stakeholders and staff providing that service outside of the office or at the front door of the office.

- 8. I have read several times that if we go back that families can choose to stay virtual. Please explain what that would look like. Would they still have daily instruction? Would they have their same teacher?**

The daily schedule would stay the same as it is now according to the grade level of the student. Each day, the students would have both synchronous instruction through Google Meet with a teacher and asynchronous instruction through Google Classroom and digital programs. There is the possibility that students would have a different teacher as we meet these changing needs.

- 9. I thought that if we go back, kids would be in bubbles with their classmates. How will bubbles work when they go home with their siblings in different classrooms and different bubbles?**

Stable groups provide a key mitigation layer in schools. A stable group is a group with fixed membership that stays together without mixing with any other groups for any activities while at the school site. Guidance from other agencies, including the federal Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), sometimes refers to them as “cohorts” or “pods.” Implementing stable groups of students and staff reduces the numbers of exposed individuals if COVID-19 is introduced into the group, decreases opportunities for exposure to or transmission of the virus; facilitates more efficient contact tracing in the event of a positive case; and allows for targeted testing and

quarantine of a small group instead of potential schoolwide closures in the event of a positive case or cluster of cases.

Students will be in stable cohorts for both instruction and recess/break time within the school day. The California Department of Public Health established the stable cohort concept in recognition that students will be engaging with their families when they are not in school.

10. Will the District be applying for a waiver while we are in the purple tier?

No, PVUSD will not provide hybrid learning opportunities while we are in the purple tier. PVUSD continues to place the health and safety of our students, staff and families at the forefront of our decisions and is currently focusing on securing vaccinations for our staff. In addition, one of the State prerequisites for providing in person instruction, while we are in the purple tier, is weekly testing cadence required by the State for all staff and students which cannot be accomplished at this time.

Table 3. Testing Cadences with Support from the State of California for K-12 schools

	Yellow CR <1.0* TP <2%	Orange CR 1-3.9* TP 2-4.9%	Red CR 4-7* TP 5-8%	Purple CR >7-13.9* TP >8%	CR >14*
Staff	Symptomatic and response testing.	Symptomatic and response testing.	Symptomatic and response testing +	Symptomatic and response testing +	Symptomatic and response testing + Weekly asymptomatic



			Every 2 weeks asymptomatic testing.	Every 2 weeks asymptomatic testing.	(PCR or twice weekly antigen testing)**.
Students K-12	Symptomatic and response testing.	Symptomatic and response testing.	Symptomatic and response testing + Every 2 weeks asymptomatic testing.	Symptomatic and response testing + Every 2 weeks asymptomatic testing.	Symptomatic and response testing + Weekly asymptomatic (PCR or twice weekly antigen testing)**.

TP = test positivity

*The case rates above are adjusted case rates.

** Weekly asymptomatic testing assumes the use of a PCR test. If antigen testing is used, testing should be at a twice weekly cadence.

Students or staff who have tested positive for active infection with SARS-CoV-2 virus within the last 90 days are exempt from asymptomatic testing.