



# Ask Dr. Rodriguez



Top Ten Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)  
Edition #43 – Week of March 8, 2021

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

- 1. After seeing your answer about staff, more specifically teachers, not being required to get the COVID vaccine, I'm curious about the double standard. Students are required to be fully vaccinated in order to attend school, why aren't teachers being required for COVID? As a parent, I'm concerned about an asymptomatic teacher teaching my children, especially since privacy prevents us from knowing. Covid still can and is spread in environments that follow all protocols.**

Students are not required to have the COVID-19 vaccination to return to in person instruction. PVUSD will only require students to have the COVID-19 vaccine if it is required by California state law. According to California Department of Public Health, the current COVID-19 vaccines are not recommended for children and therefore are not available. Clinical trials are ongoing to identify a safe vaccine for children.

The three COVID-19 vaccines are available for the following age groups:

- Pfizer/BioNTech vaccine is for ages sixteen and above
- Moderna vaccine is for ages eighteen and above
- Johnson & Johnson vaccine is for ages eighteen and above

- 2. Hi Dr. Rodriguez, We were just informed that our 1st grade teacher, along with every other 1st grade teacher at our child's school is opting out for in person learning. Who will be teaching my child? Aside from the teachers survey, did you do any other research on teachers opting out? Why is it that private schools make it work and PVUSD cannot? Do you think it would be a good idea for you to open lines of communication with private schools to figure out how they are able to get their students back into the classroom so effectively?**

We have used an opt-in method for both teachers and students. We have been surveying our teaching staff and a grand majority of our teachers will be returning to in person instruction. We will ensure that all in-person instruction for students is with a credentialed teacher. For the elementary grades, we will be utilizing interested intervention teachers and specialty release teachers from their site for any classroom teacher that decides to opt out of in-person instruction. Alongside both PVFT and CSEA, PVUSD will ensure that all students receive high quality in-person instruction in the afternoon this spring.

- 3. We are very excited about the return to school! My son is a 4th grader who is looking forward to returning Monday, May 3. It is my understanding that teachers are not required to return to in person learning, just as students are not. So our question is: How will we know if our child will have his teacher? Will the groups be students from only his class or all 4th graders at his school? If it is not his teacher/class or is not working out, can we return to just virtual?**

We are excited to welcome back our students as well. The date has been accelerated and all 2<sup>nd</sup>-5<sup>th</sup> grade students will now be returning the week of April 12, 2021. Parents will receive notification from their school no later than two weeks prior to the return to in person instruction on who will be providing the in-

person instruction and which days the student will be attending. Students will remain with their class with the instruction from our intervention and specialty release teachers to the greatest extent possible. While we encourage all students to attend, it is voluntary to return back to in person instruction, therefore, students and families can decide to not participate in the afternoon sessions.

**4. If our county moves into the red tier (which we are expected to do so in the next couple of weeks) what can we expect for the return of in person instruction for our junior high and high school students? I have yet to see this addressed.**

All seniors may return for in-person instruction the week of April 12, 2021. All 8<sup>th</sup> grade students and cohorts of students in grades 6-7 and 9-11 will be welcomed back the week of April 19, 2021. Secondary students will come back to campus for in-person instruction from 2:00-3:30pm following their distance learning morning schedule.

**5. What will happen with Advanced Placement (AP) Tests?**

Each year students taking AP courses throughout our high schools have the opportunity to take an AP Exam administered by the College Board. Success on the exam earns students' college credit and placement. Last year, the College Board made some allowances for students indicating they may have lost connectivity during the test. This year, they have indicated that they will not consider any requests to retest based on lost connectivity. As a result, Site Administrators have worked collaboratively across high school campuses in the district to outline a testing schedule that will support student's access to AP testing.

AP testing will occur May 18-21 & 24-28. In addition, another opportunity will occur June 1-4 & 7-11. The College Board identifies the format of testing; digital or paper in person. The sites will offer any version in the subject area that the College Board allows which will give students options. The administration at each campus will govern the students for these tests. If a test is only offered in digital format then students will be allowed to come to campus to take the test online in order to ensure there are no connectivity issues.

Students and families will be made aware of the College Board's stance that they will not allow make-ups if a student loses connectivity and encouraged to work in a stable environment or come to campus for the administration of the AP tests for more stability. The effort to administer testing in this manner will require multiple staff to oversee the testing. Both Site Administrators and District Leadership that will be helping with this effort. Without them this design to offer all forms of the test in every subject areas and opportunities to ensure connectivity, would not have been possible. Here is a sample of the tests scheduled to be given.

School	Course	May 18-21 & 24-28	June 1-4 & 7-11
AHS-2	Physics	Digital Monday 5/24	Digital Wednesday 6/9
AHS-2 PVHS-	Environmental Science	Digital Thursday 5/27	Digital Friday 6/11
WHS-2 AHS-2 PVHS	Calculus AB	Paper In Person Only Monday 5/24	Digital Wednesday 6/9
WHS-2 AHS-2	Calculus BC	Paper In Person Only Monday 5/24	Digital Wednesday 6/9
AHS-2	Statistics	Paper In Person Only Tuesday 5/25	Digital Thursday 6/10
WHS, AHS	Spanish Language	Paper In Person Only Friday 5/21	Paper In Person Only Friday 6/4
WHS, PVHS	Spanish Literature	Paper In Person Only Friday 5/21	Paper In Person Only Friday 6/4

**6. I have a question. If you get your Covid vaccine and you feel sick the next day to come to work do they dock you from your sick days?**

No, you can take the day of your vaccine and the day following your vaccine without using your sick leave. If you experience additional side effects from the vaccine, you can acquire a doctor's note and use up to ten of your COVID-19 leave days. For teachers, on the day of and day after the vaccine they may provide only asynchronous instruction for their students. Here is the complete staff information on vaccines:

**Protocol for the day of Vaccine:**

Classified - may use work time to go get their vaccine. Please communicate with your supervisor about appointment time.

Certificated - may use work time to go get their vaccine. Asynchronous learning may be used during the time to get the vaccine. If there are negative effects the day immediately after getting the vaccine, an asynchronous day may be used. In both cases administrators need to be notified beforehand.

**Post Vaccine Protocol for Symptomatic Staff:**

As more of us have the opportunity to receive the COVID-19 vaccine, we may hear reports of some experiencing short-term side effects 24-36 hours after vaccination. Most people experience mild reactions after being vaccinated, such as pain or redness at the injection site, sore arm, fatigue, or headache. The side effects are a result of the immune system revving up and learning how to fight the infection - so this is a great thing!

However, because we can become infected with COVID-19 right before or after receiving the vaccine, it is important that we continue to take all COVID-19 related symptoms seriously. In other occupations, there have been reports of individuals becoming infected with COVID-19 just days following vaccination. Those individuals returned to work assuming their symptoms were simply reactions to the vaccine, causing transmission of the COVID virus in the workplace.

If you have received a COVID-19 vaccination, AND are experiencing any post vaccine symptoms, are to follow all **existing protocols**:

**Symptoms:**

- new onset cough or shortness of breath
- fever over 100.4
- chills
- muscle or body aches
- headache
- sore throat
- congestion or runny nose
- fatigue
- loss of sense of smell or taste
- nausea, vomiting or diarrhea

**Existing Protocols:**

1. Employee is to call their supervisor to report post vaccine COVID symptoms.
2. Employee is to stay home and someone from HR or the COVID nurse will call the employee.

Employees who experience or develop symptoms may use the Emergency COVID sick leave days under the MOU agreed to by both unions before using personal sick leave.

Employees who are working from home providing Distance Learning need to communicate with April and Brian when they are well enough to work from home again to end using the emergency COVID leave.

**7. When will I receive information about the cohort and bus schedule for hybrid learning?**

Parents will receive information from their school administration regarding the cohort and bus schedules at least two weeks prior to the return to in person instruction. For example, students in grades TK-1<sup>st</sup> grade students will receive their information on Monday, March 22, 2021 for their return the week of April 5, 2021. Second-Fifth grade students and sixth grade students at the elementary level. Seniors will receive their information by Friday, March 26, 2021 for their return the week of April 12, 2021. Sixth-Eleventh grade students will receive their information by Monday, April 5, 2021 for their return the week of April 19 2021.

**8. Will you explain why there is no "COVID Safety Plan" when the district has received over \$40 million in COVID funds? This information is from [maps.schools.covid19.ca.gov](https://maps.schools.covid19.ca.gov)**

PVUSD received \$24.7 Million from the first distribution of CARES Act funding which was used for multiple purposes including some of the following:

- Purchase of additional PPE and face shields for all staff and students
- Installation of hand sanitizer stations throughout all the sites including entrances and within classrooms without sinks
- Acquisition of three-sided barriers for individual student desks to promote physical distancing
- Comprehensive Interagency evaluation of ventilation system throughout district with \$4 Million of repairs to facilities HVAC and windows to date
- Purchase of 1,200 HEPA filters for all classrooms and areas at sites with the need for additional ventilation
- Installation of thermal scanners for symptom screening at each site
- Purchase and monthly fees for 4,250 hot spots for students in need of internet
- Purchase of additional devices and technology for students and staff to support distance learning
- Surveillance Testing of staff through Stanford University

Schools are required to post a compliant COVID-19 Safety Plan prior to reopening for in person instruction. PVUSD is finalizing all three safety documents: 1) the site-specific COVID-19 Prevention Program (CPP) that includes safety procedures to reduce the risk of exposure to an identified pandemic required by CalOSHA emergency general industry safety order, 2) a checklist from California Department of Public Health (CDPH) that satisfies requirements for the safe reopening of schools and 3) a Comprehensive School Safety Plan that addresses the safety concerns identified through a systematic planning process. The Comprehensive School Safety Plan is completed and will be submitted to the County Office of Education after Board approval on February 24, 2021. The CPP and CDPH checklist will be submitted to the County Office of Education by March 19, 2021.

**9. Why are you cutting the Life Skills Class at Ohlone Elementary?**

We are committed to serving the needs of our special education students at all of our school sites. Across the district, specifically at the elementary level, we have seen an enrollment decline over the last three years of 850 elementary students. This is requiring us to continually review and adjust the location of our programs to best fit the needs of our students.

Next year, we will have Elementary Life Skills programs at four locations throughout the district: Landmark, Calabasas, Bradley, and Valencia. In particular, at Ohlone Elementary next year, four students would have remained in the Life Skills program. We considered both their educational needs and also where they live within our district. The four students do not live near Ohlone and will be attending Bradley Elementary or Valencia Elementary next year. In each case, they will now be attending a program that is closer to their home and allows them to be on bus transportation for a shorter period of time. In addition, several of the students will continue to have their current teacher for the upcoming school year at Bradley Elementary

## **10. Do I mark the students here or absent for attending any minimal amount of time in my Class Meeting?**

The Synergy attendance is based on student's showing up to synchronous class time. Therefore, you should be marking a student present if they show up. Several teachers have asked, if a student leaves class after a short amount of time what is best practice. The best practice and a requirement under AB2815 is to "raise the awareness of school personnel, parents, guardians, caregivers, community partners, and local businesses of the effects of chronic absenteeism, truancy, and other challenges associated with poor attendance". Informing the parent of the student leaving is the first step. As we are in distance learning, it would also not be unimaginable for a student to have a connection issue once in a while. The contact with parents allows teachers to assess what may be happening. However, if the pattern continues to happen, teachers should be reporting this to their site administration. AB2815 requires us to "identify and respond to grade level or pupil subgroup patterns of chronic absenteeism or truancy" this legislation also provides that we need to "ensure that pupils with attendance problems are identified as early as possible to provide applicable support services and interventions." Safe Spaces may be an option for students struggling.

There are several examples that I have been provided by teachers that are in alignment with what the State defines as a truancy. Though there are different levels of truants, the State's basic definition of a truant is a student missing more than 30 minutes of instruction without an excuse three times during the school year. The law was amended to allow school administrators to excuse school absences due to pupil circumstances. In the traditional school setting, it is much easier for a teacher to see a student leave a class or to not show for class for a 30 minute duration. In the Google Meet world this has been challenging for some instructors. If you believe a student is leaving class willingly, teachers are encouraged to report it to site administration so attendance determinations can be made.