



VIBRANT MINDS CHARTER SCHOOL

TK-6 Grade, Free, Public Education

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COVID-19 BOARD POLICY

The health, safety, and welfare of the staff and families of Vibrant Minds Charter School (the “School”) are our first priority. The following constitutes the policies and procedures that school staff, scholars, families, vendors, and visitors will adhere to in the prevention and/or event of a COVID-19 outbreak or epidemic when on school grounds.

These guidelines will be updated as needed to comply with the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, U.S. Department of Education, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, Homeland Security, the California Department of Education, the California Department of Public Health, and the Orange County Health Care Agency. Under conditions of increased severity, the CDC may recommend additional measures to help protect scholars and staff if global and national assessments indicate that COVID-19 is causing more severe disease. In addition, local health and education officials may elect to implement some of these additional measures, up to and including school site closure, and move all scholars to distance learning.

Reporting Suspected or Diagnosed COVID-19 Cases

Schools must report suspected or diagnosed COVID-19 cases to the County Public Health department. See, for example: <https://www.ochealthinfo.com/about-hca/public-health-services/public-health-services/diseases-conditions/report-disease>, which will be reproduced in some fashion and posted at the school site.

Schools must generally follow these regulatory procedures to report communicable diseases, including COVID-19:

<https://www.cdph.ca.gov/Programs/CID/DCDC/Pages/Immunization/ncov2019.aspx>

COVID-19 should be treated as a disease that comes under the category of “Report Immediately” by telephone or via a designated website system. Recently, the “School Portal for Outbreak Tracking” or SPOT https://spot.cdph.ca.gov/s/?language=en_US has been created. After a report is made by VMCS, the Orange County Health Care Agency and/or the California Department of Public Health may conduct an investigation or take further actions after reporting.

General Policies and Procedures

Reporting to Administration: All employees are required to report suspected or known cases of COVID-19 infection to school administration immediately. Similarly, parents and guardians are required to report suspected or known cases of infection to school administration immediately.

Stay home when sick: Those with symptoms associated with COVID-19 must stay home for at least 24 hours after they no longer have a fever, or signs of a fever, without the use of fever reducing medicines. They should stay home even if they are using antiviral drugs. Schools should exclude scholars, teachers, or staff who have been diagnosed with COVID-19. There is a different protocol for scholars and staff who have been in close contact with someone who has been diagnosed with COVID-19. The protocol for close contacts is delineated in the two decision trees (Appendix A and B).

- **Separate ill scholars and staff:** Scholars and staff who have symptoms associated with COVID-19 are to be sent to the site health office and kept separate from others until they can be sent home. CDC recommends that those displaying symptoms wear a surgical mask, if possible, and that those who care for ill scholars and staff wear protective gear such as a mask and single use gloves.
- **Hand hygiene and respiratory etiquette:** All scholars will participate in hygiene curriculum. This curriculum will emphasize:
 - the importance frequent handwashing with soap and water when possible, or the use of hand sanitizer when soap and water are not available,
 - covering noses and mouths with disposable tissue when coughing or sneezing (or alternative face covering such as shirts or “elbow” if no tissue is available),
 - the importance of disposing soiled tissues immediately,
 - the importance of keeping hands off face and out of mouth,
 - the importance of personal space.
- **Routine cleaning:** School staff will develop a schedule for routine sanitization with the ongoing disinfection of areas that scholars/staff touch often.
- **Air Filtration Systems:** Each classroom and other areas of the school will have an air filtration system in place that will be turned on from the start of the school day until the end of the after-school program.
- **Early treatment of high-risk scholars and staff:** People at high risk for COVID-19 complications due to autoimmune issues, asthma, age, etc. should confer with their health care provider as soon as possible. Receiving a vaccination is very important for people at high risk because it can prevent hospitalizations and deaths.
- **Active screening:**
 - Designated staff will screen scholars for fever and other flu-like symptoms when they get to school in the morning, separate those who are ill, and send them home as soon as possible. Throughout the day, staff should be vigilant in identifying scholars who behave as though they do not feel well or appear ill.

- Scholars who are observed not feeling well or self-report feeling ill will be sent to the health office for evaluation. All visits will be documented in the scholar's health records.
- School staff will self-check temperature prior to arrival to work. Staff with an unexplained temperature should follow procedures for taking sick time and seek medical advice before returning to work.
- **High-risk scholars and staff members stay home:** People at high-risk of COVID-19 complications should talk to their doctor about staying home from school when the flu/COVID-19 is circulating in the community
 - Scholars may elect to participate in Independent Study for an annual total of 15 days in lieu of in-class attendance for a period of time in compliance with all applicable school policies and the law.
 - Scholars requiring an extended period of distance learning may be referred to an alternative school program since VMCS will only offer short-term Independent Study during the 2021-2022 school year.
 - Should the community in which the School is located be considered high-risk in terms of community transmission of COVID-19, the school may close the site and move all scholars to a distance learning program.
- **Scholars and staff members with ill household members stay home:** A scholar or staff member who has a household member with COVID-19 should stay home in accordance to the protocol for a close contact. Typically, this would be a close contact in which masks were not worn, so the requirements for a modified quarantine are most likely not in place.
- **Increase distance between people at schools:** CDC encourages schools to try innovative ways of separating scholars during the COVID-19 pandemic. However, with the masking in place, there is no longer a set physical distancing. To the extent possible, staff will encourage personal space between scholars.
- **School dismissals:** School and health officials should work closely to balance the risk of COVID-19 in their community with the disruption that school closures cause in both education and the wider community. The length of time schools should be dismissed will vary depending on the type of dismissal, as well as the severity and extent of the illness. Should school sites close, teachers and staff will remain available to provide instruction, support, remediation, and food services.

Reactive dismissals might be appropriate when schools are not able to maintain normal functioning (e.g., when a significant number and proportion of scholars have documented fever while at school despite recommendations to keep ill children home).

Preemptive dismissals can be used proactively to decrease the spread of COVID-19. CDC may recommend preemptive school dismissals if COVID-19 causes severe disease in a significantly larger proportion of those affected.

- **Face Covering:** Face coverings (e.g., masks) should be worn pursuant to CDC guidelines found here: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/schools-childcare/schools.html>

- Face coverings must be worn by scholars and staff whenever inside the school building, even by those who are vaccinated. If an adult is in a room by him/herself, a face covering may not be necessary.
 - Face coverings are optional when outside for eating or play, as long as there is physical distancing in place (i.e., minimum of 6 feet). However, scholars who are in a modified quarantine must wear the face covering while inside and outside.
 - Face coverings should not be placed on children younger than two years old, anyone who has trouble breathing or is unconscious, and/or anyone who is incapacitated or otherwise unable to remove the face covering without assistance.
 - A medical note signed by a physician stating that a face covering should not be worn due to a health condition will be accepted. A school form has been adopted for the medical practitioner to sign. A face shield with a drape will be an option in this case. Also, the scholar will be seated with increased physical distancing from other scholars and staff.
- **Verification of Vaccination Status:** All staff members and volunteers will be asked to verify their vaccination status. Proof of each person's vaccination status will be maintained on file. If proof cannot be provided, the staff member must provide a note that communicates that s/he has not been vaccinated. Only the Executive Director and Assistant Director will be privy to this information. The following will serve as proof of vaccination:
 - COVID-19 Vaccination Record Card (issued by the Department of Health and Human Services Centers for Disease Control and Prevention or WHO Yellow Card), which includes name of person vaccinated, type of vaccine provided, and date last dose administered; or
 - A photo of a Vaccination Record Card as a separate document; or
 - A photo of the client's Vaccination Record Card stored on a phone or electronic device; or
 - Documentation of COVID-19 vaccination from a health care provider; or
 - Digital record that includes a QR Code that when scanned by a SMART Health Card reader displays the client's name, date of birth, vaccine dates, and vaccine type; or
 - Documentation of vaccination from other contracted employers who follow these vaccination records guidelines and standards.
 - When scholars under 12 years of age are permitted to receive a vaccination for COVID-19, their vaccination status will also be determined and on file.
 - **COVID-19 Testing:** Once per week, all scholars, staff members, and volunteers will undergo a free COVID-19 Antigen Test during their time on campus. This is a more comprehensive approach than just testing unvaccinated adults. If there is a positive result, then the COVID-19 PCR Test will be administered to confirm the findings. If there is a shortage of available Antigen Tests, the following groups will be eliminated from testing in this order: vaccinated adults, unvaccinated volunteers (they will be asked to cease their volunteerism), scholars, and unvaccinated adults. If a scholar is on modified quarantine, s/he will be tested twice per week. The testing went into effect the first week of school.

- **Processing Requests for Accommodations for Testing:** Under the CDPH Order, the testing exemption will not be given to unvaccinated adults who have a medical contraindication to vaccination since they are still able to spread COVID-19. Previous history of COVID-19 from which the adult recovered more than 90 days earlier, or a previous positive antibody test for COVID-19, also do not exempt unvaccinated adults from the testing requirement.

Regardless, under civil rights laws such as the Americans with Disabilities Act, Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, and the California Fair Employment and Housing Act, VMCS is obligated to engage in the interactive process and provide reasonable accommodation to weekly COVID-19 testing if an employee requests an exemption or accommodation on the basis that a disability, medical condition, or mental health condition, or a sincerely held religious belief or practice, prevents vaccination and/or testing. The process will include:

- A letter from the employee to the Executive Director and Assistant Director requesting an exemption or accommodation. If additional documents support the possible granting of the exemption or accommodation, they should also be submitted.
- A meeting will be held between the employee and the Executive Director and Assistant Director to discuss the request, during which notes will be taken by the school staff.
- All documents will be provided to the legal team of VMCS for a legal opinion on the validity of the request.
- A written response will be provided to the staff member regarding the decision made about the requested exemption or accommodation.

Preparing for the 2021-2022 School Year

These steps will be reviewed to prepare for a return to the 2021-2022 school year while COVID-19 continues to be an issue.

- Update scholar, teacher, and staff contact information, as well as emergency contact lists.
- Identify and establish points of contact with public health and education agencies.
- Develop a plan to cover key staff positions when staff stay home because they are in quarantine due to being a close contact or have COVID-19.
- Develop communication tools (e.g., ParentSquare) that can be used to send sick scholars home, dismiss scholars, and to remind parents and staff how long sick scholars and staff should remain at home.
- Continuously review school policies and establish criteria to protect personal space.
- Develop a school dismissal plan and options for how schoolwork can be continued at home (e.g., homework packets, Web-based lessons, phone calls), if school is dismissed or scholars are sent home when sick.

- Collaborate with the local health department, community organizations, local businesses, and social services on a plan for COVID-19 response.
- Help families and communities understand the important roles they can play in reducing the spread of flu in schools.

Teacher Fact Sheet – Action Steps for Teachers to Prevent the Spread of COVID-19

Take the following steps ALL the time, and not only during a pandemic, to help keep your scholars and yourself from getting sick with flu and/or COVID-19.

- Educate and encourage scholars to cover their mouth and nose with a tissue when they cough or sneeze. Also, provide them with easy access to tissues. Remind them to cover coughs or sneezes using their elbow instead of their hand when a tissue is not available.
- Remind scholars to practice good hand hygiene and provide the time and supplies (easy access to running water and soap or hand sanitizer) for them to wash their hands as often as necessary.
- Be a good role model by practicing good hand hygiene and covering your mouth and nose when coughing or sneezing.
- Keep an eye out for sick scholars and send them to the school health technician for further evaluation. Sick people should stay at home until at least 24 hours after they no longer have a fever or signs of a fever (without the use of fever-reducing medicine).
- Clean surfaces and items that are more likely to have frequent hand contact such as desks, doorknobs, keyboards, or pens, with cleaning agents that are usually used in these areas.
- Teachers should also stay home when sick. Stay home until at least 24 hours after you no longer have a fever or signs of a fever (without the use of fever-reducing medicine).
- If you have health conditions that put you at higher risk for complications from COVID-19, you should speak with your doctor as soon as possible if you develop COVID-19 symptoms.
- If you have children, plan ahead for childcare if your child gets sick or his or her school is dismissed.
- Be prepared in case COVID-19 becomes more severe.
- Develop options for how schoolwork can be continued at home (e.g., independent work, Web-based lessons, etc.) for your scholars who must remain home because someone in their household is sick.

- High-risk scholars will be permitted to stay home for up to 15 days of Independent Study. Prepare a means to provide support for these students that works for the family. This may include Zoom lessons, video lesson, remind calls, etc.
- Find ways to increase personal space in your classroom. Limit activities that require personal contact.

School Closure

The School will continue to monitor CDC, State, and local agency guidance. Because local communities can expect to see a lot of differences in disease burden, the School will strive to balance a variety of objectives to determine their best course of action to help decrease the spread of COVID-19. The School will explicitly identify and communicate its objectives which might be one or more of the following:

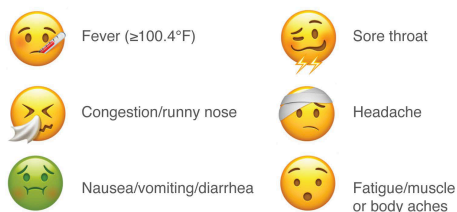
- protecting overall public health by reducing community transmission;
- reducing transmission in scholars and school staff; and
- protecting people with high-risk conditions.

Some strategies can have negative consequences in addition to their potential benefits. In the particular case of school dismissals, the School will consider and balance these additional factors:

- how to ensure scholars continue to learn;
- how to provide an emotionally and physically safe place for scholars;
- how to reduce demands on local health care services;
- how to provide services to scholars with unique needs; and
- how to support the whole family, including childcare for working parents.

Student Symptom Decision Tree

Low-risk: general symptoms

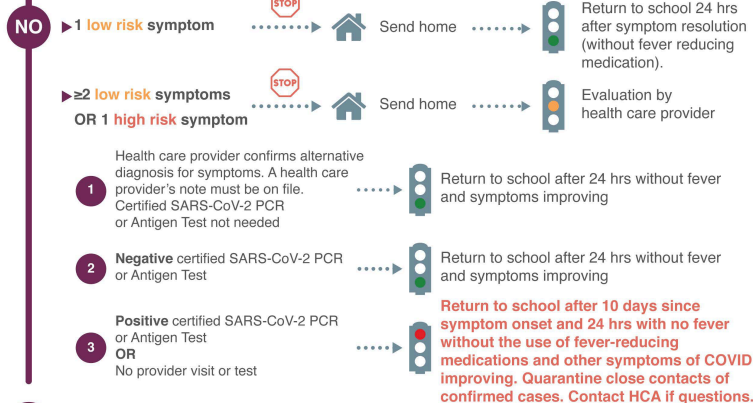


High-risk: red flag symptoms



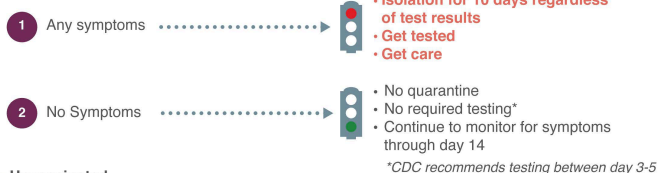
Exposure to a COVID-19 positive person?

within 6 ft of a COVID + or clinically compatible person for >15 min in a 24 hr period, regardless of masking, and occurring in any location (indoor or outdoor)

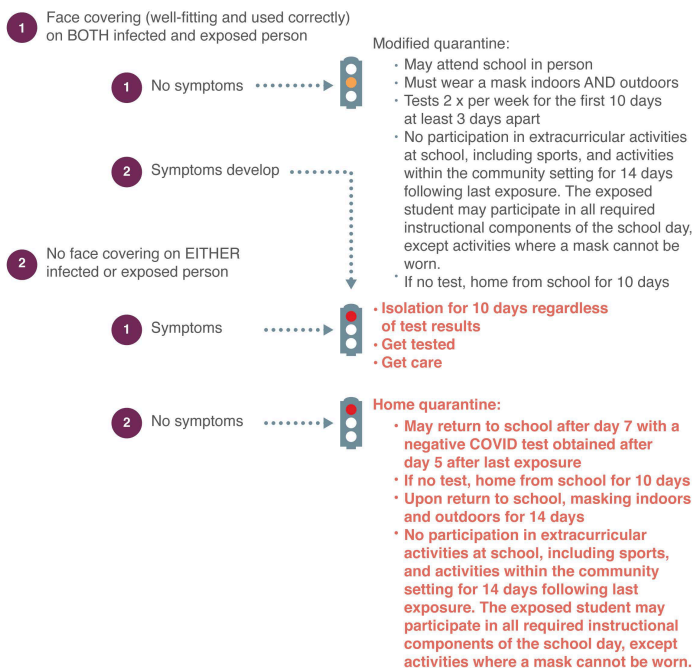


YES (within 6 feet for >15 min in a 24 hr period, regardless of masking)

► Vaccinated or Documented COVID within 90-days



► Unvaccinated



This care pathway was designed to assist school personnel and is not intended to replace the clinician's judgment or establish a protocol for all patients with a particular condition. Diagnosis and treatment should be under the close supervision of a qualified health care provider, including school nurses. This guidance is based on current evidence and best data at the time of publication. Updates are provided to reflect changes in knowledge about the impact of the disease on children and adolescents (08-27-2021).