



# TOP 5 THINGS TO KNOW ABOUT THE STATE'S NEW COVID-19 SCHOOL GUIDANCE

Beginning January 14, the California Department of Public Health (CDPH) issued [new, consolidated guidance](#) for the safe reopening of in-person instruction. While lengthy, and often confusing when layered over past guidance, these are the **top five things to know** about the new framework.

1

## Physical Distancing is Required

Among other provisions for indoor and outdoor distancing, the guidance **requires**:

- Maximizing space between teachers, other staff, and students by **requiring** staff desks be **at least six feet** from student and other staff desks.
- Maximizing space between students by **requiring** student chairs be **at least six feet apart**, except where that is not possible after a good-faith effort has been made and demonstrated. **In no case, can student chairs be less than four feet apart.**

See pages 23-25 of the guidance for more details on physical distancing.

2

## Face Coverings are Required and Surgical Masks Recommended

**All TK-12 students are required** to wear face coverings **at all times** while at school, unless exempted. The CDPH recommends use of disposable 3-ply surgical masks for staff, as they are more effective than cloth. See pages 18-19 of the guidance for more requirements and recommendations.

3

## Schools are Restricted from Opening

Unless a school site has previously opened for in-person, general instruction in at least one grade level while in the Red Tier or better (or had previously opened pursuant to an elementary waiver), the following community health conditions must be met before a site is permitted to open:

- **TK-Grade 6:** The county case rate must be below 25 cases per 100K people on the Tuesday state COVID report. If so, beginning the next day, a three week window is triggered to allow opening during that period even if case rates rise.
- **Grades 7-12:** The county must be in Red Tier or better on the weekly COVID report and then has the same three week window to open even if case rates rise.

See pages 7-14 for more details including the chart on page 14. Also see [CDPH Q & A](#).

4

## COVID Safety Plan, Posting, and New Directives on Reporting

**All schools** must complete and post a COVID-19 Safety Plan (CSP) to their website homepage prior to reopening for in-person instruction (pp. 7, 10-14).

**Every LEA** must promptly notify the local health officer of any known case of a student or employee with COVID-19 who was on a K-12 campus within ten days prior to testing positive (pages 49-52).

**Every LEA** must update the CDPH on how it is teaching by grade level, indicating full or part-time (hybrid) in-person instruction, in Cohorts, or distance learning only (pages 53-54).

5

## Enforcement

In addition to the site and chapter-based advocacy outlined in CTA's [Safe & Stable Return to In-Person Instruction Toolkit](#), the new state framework creates two options for reporting concerns and/or violations:

- Call the **COVID Hotline** (833-422-4255; M-F 8AM-8PM, Sa-Su 8AM-5PM).
- [File a report for potential state intervention](#) (through an online form).

For more information, visit the [State Safe Schools for All Hub](#) and [CTA.org/C4OB](#). And as always, consult with your local CTA Primary Contact staff person for specific assistance.