



## **Interim Guidance for Out-of-School Time Programs**

**March 23, 2021**

This guidance was developed by the San Francisco Department of Public Health (SFDPH) for local use. It will be posted at <http://www.sfdcp.org/CovidSchoolsChildcare>.

**AUDIENCE:** Educational and recreational programs that provide care and supervision for children when they are not attending school or child care in-person. Out-of-school time (OST) programs include afterschool and weekend programs, youth sport programs, in-person programs to support distance learning such as learning hubs, day camps during school breaks, and other group care for children and youth not run by schools or child care programs.

### **Summary of Changes since the 3/12/2021 Version**

**Major revisions are highlighted throughout the document in blue color.**

- Travel advisory and quarantine recommendations updated.
- Physical distancing in classroom settings decreased to 3 feet.
- Staff may work with more than one cohort.
- Most children and youth can be in two OST cohorts outside of school or childcare. Children who play indoor moderate-high contact sports cannot participate in other OST programs.
- Most OST cohorts can have up to 25 children and youth. Cohorts that involve indoor sports, dance, singing, wind instruments or exercise can have up to 16 people, including staff.
- Most sports, dance, band, and choir activities in OST programs are permitted and must follow SFDPH and California Department of Public Health (CDPH) guidelines. See below and <https://www.sfdph.org/dph/alerts/files/Directive-2021-01-Sports-Youth-and-Adult.pdf>
- Outdoor field trips are allowed if no shared vehicles or public transportation are used.

**PURPOSE:** To help OST programs understand health and safety practices needed to prevent spread of COVID-19 in their programs.

**BACKGROUND:** Since the start of the COVID-19 epidemic, our understanding of COVID-19 and how it spreads has increased tremendously. We now know that precautions such as universal face coverings and cohorting effectively decrease the risk of COVID-19 transmission. By coordinating and layering effective interventions, OST programs can minimize the risk of infection for staff, children and youth, while continuing to meet children and youths' academic, developmental and socio-emotional needs.

The guidelines below are based on the best science available at this time and the current degree of COVID-19 transmission in San Francisco. They are subject to change as new knowledge emerges and as local community transmission changes.

## Contents

Key messages for programs for children and youth .....	2
Prepare for opening .....	3
Required signs .....	4
Strategies to prevent spread of COVID-19.....	5
Prevent COVID-19 from entering the program.....	5
Keep staff, children and youth in small, stable groups (“cohorts”).....	6
Physical distancing .....	9
Face masks and cloth face coverings .....	10
Hand hygiene .....	11
Ventilation and outdoor spaces.....	12
Limit sharing.....	13
Cleaning and disinfection.....	14
Specific situations .....	14
Transportation .....	14
Drop-off and pick-up.....	15
Meals and snacks .....	15
Staff break rooms, work rooms and offices.....	15
Field trips.....	16
Sports, dance, wind instruments, singing, and related activities .....	16
Children and youth receiving special services .....	18
What to do when someone has COVID-19 symptoms or confirmed COVID-19 .....	18
When staff or students have symptoms of COVID-19 .....	18
When there is a confirmed COVID-19 case.....	18
Deciding if your program should close due to COVID-19 .....	19
Resources.....	21

### Key messages for programs for children and youth

- **Address adult-to-adult transmission and adults as sources of infection.** In many cases, staff are the source of COVID-19 in settings that provide care and supervision for children and youth. Although children can be infected with COVID-19 and spread it to adults, spread of infection between adults is more common.
  - **Minimize the number of staff eating together in indoor break rooms.** Eating together in break rooms is a common way that staff are exposed to COVID-19 in work settings.
- Preventing person-to-person transmission via respiratory droplets is more important than cleaning and disinfection. Face masks, physical distancing, and indoor ventilation are most important in preventing the spread of COVID-19.

COVID-19 spreads from person-to-person in the air through virus-containing respiratory droplets. These droplets enter the air when a person with COVID-19 breathes, especially when they talk, sing, cough, sneeze or exercise. In poorly ventilated indoor spaces, smaller droplets can float in the air and travel more than 6 feet. The virus that causes COVID-19 must enter a person’s eyes, nose or mouth to infect them.

COVID-19 can also spread if a person touches their eyes, nose or mouth after touching a contaminated surface (also known as a fomite), but this is less common.

- **Exposure risk lies along a continuum.** A rule of thumb is that a person must spend a total of 15 minutes in 24 hours within 6 feet of someone with COVID-19 to be at risk of infection.
  - Spending less time together is safer than more time; being further apart is better than being closer together.
  - Smaller groups are safer than larger ones, outdoor settings are safer than indoor ones.
  - More people using face masks is safer than fewer people using face masks.
  - Activities that produce fewer respiratory droplets are safer than those that produce many droplets (silence < quiet talking < loud talking < singing).

## Prepare for opening

- Designate a COVID-19 staff liaison to be the single point of contact at each site for questions or concerns around practices, protocols, or potential exposure. This person will also serve as a liaison to SFPD.
- Establish health and safety protocols to prevent COVID-19 transmission.
  - Train staff and teach children and youth about health and safety practices.
  - Create a health and safety plan outlining what the program will do to implement the requirements in this guidance and any relevant Health Officer directives or orders. Share this plan with staff, families, and other members of your program's community.
- During the two weeks before the program re-opens and while the program is open, avoid in-person staff development, meetings, or team-building activities that bring together staff who will be working with different cohorts.
- Establish protocols for staff, children and youth with symptoms of COVID-19 and for communication with staff, families, children and youth, and families after COVID-19 exposure or a confirmed COVID-19 case in the program.

## Staff considerations

*Protect staff, especially those at high risk of severe COVID-19 illness. See [sfcdcp.org/vulnerable](https://sfcdcp.org/vulnerable) for a list of groups at higher risk for severe COVID-19.*

- Offer options that reduce exposure risk to staff who are in groups at higher risk for severe COVID-19 (e.g. telework, reassignment, or modified job duties that limit direct interaction with staff and children).
- Avoid assigning staff at higher risk for severe COVID-19 to screen people for symptoms or monitor/care for sick children waiting to be picked up.
- Consider the use of face shields, to be used with face coverings, for staff whose duties make it difficult to maintain physical distancing.

- Keep staff in different stable cohorts from mixing. During the two weeks before the program opens, do not hold in-person staff development, meetings, or team-building activities that bring together staff who will be working with different stable cohorts.
- Implement sick leave policies that support staff in staying home when ill.
- Plan for staff absences of 10-14 days due to COVID 19 infection or exposure. Cross train staff and have a roster of back up staff experienced in working with children. **Avoid combining cohorts when staff are absent**, as this increases the risk of infection spreading in your program.

### Considerations for children and youth

- Prioritize enrollment of the following groups:
  - At-risk children and youth, including:
    - Children and youth who are clients of Family and Children's Services (FCS) or are at risk of abuse, neglect, or exploitation
    - Children eligible through the Emergency Childcare Bridge Program for Foster Children
    - Children and youth experiencing homelessness
    - Foster children
    - Children of domestic violence survivors
    - Children and youth with disabilities or special health care needs whose individualized education programs (IEP) and/or individual family support plans (IFSP) include ELC services
    - Children and youth from low-income families, including those who receive or are eligible for free or reduced school lunch, Medi-Cal, SNAP (food stamps), WIC, Head Start, CalWORKs and other public assistance programs.
- Do not exclude children and youth because of medical conditions that may increase their risk of getting very sick from COVID-19. Allow the child's medical team and family to determine whether in-person attendance is safe.

### Required signs

Programs must post the following signs:

- **Reminder to wear a face covering, maintain physical distancing, and stay home if ill**  
Post at all public entrances and other places where the signs will be easily noticed.  
SFPD-approved signs are at [sf.gov/outreach-toolkit-coronavirus-covid-19](https://sf.gov/outreach-toolkit-coronavirus-covid-19)
- **Reporting unsafe conditions related to COVID-19**  
Post in staff break rooms and other staff areas.  
Online at <https://sf.gov/file/reporting-health-order-violations-poster-11x17>  
and <https://sf.gov/sites/default/files/2020-11/YourHealthOnTheJob-8.5x11-111220.pdf>  
Signs must say that personnel can report violations of COVID-19 health orders and directives by calling 311 or at <https://www.sf.gov/report-health-order-violation>, and that the employee's identity will not be disclosed to the employer.

- **Ventilation Checklists** (indoor programs only)  
Post at all public entrances and in staff break rooms.  
<https://sf.gov/file/ventilation-checklist-poster>  
Signs must list how the program is ventilated:
  - All available windows and doors are kept open
  - Fully operational HVAC systems
  - Appropriately sized portable air cleaners in each room
  - None of the above
- **Take a Break Safely**  
Post in staff break rooms. <https://sf.gov/file/covid-break-room>
- **Indoor Risk of COVID-19** (indoor programs only)  
<https://sf.gov/file/Indoor-Risk-poster>  
Signs must say that
  - COVID-19 is transmitted through the air, and the risk is generally higher indoors.
  - Seniors and those with health risks should avoid indoor settings with crowds.

## Strategies to prevent spread of COVID-19

### Prevent COVID-19 from entering the program

Screen everyone entering the program for COVID-19 for symptoms and exposure.

- Give staff and families of participants a screening form to review at home each day. Instruct staff and participants to stay home and get tested if they have COVID-19 symptoms or exposure (close contact). Programs may require staff and families to submit screening responses by app, email, on paper, or by other means.
- Both outdoor and indoor programs must screen all children, staff, and others entering the program.
- Ask all other persons about COVID-19 symptoms and exposures when they arrive – including parents/caregivers, visitors, contractors, and government officials. Emergency personnel responding to a 911 call do not need to be screened.
- If people answer “yes” to any of the screening and exposure questions, do not let them enter.
- If children or youth arrive with symptoms, send them home. Keep children and youth who are waiting to be picked up in a designated isolation room.
- Programs may choose to require temperature checks of people entering the school, either at home or upon arrival. SFPD does not require temperature checks at schools.



For more information about screening and temperature checks, see [sfcdcp.org/screen](https://sfcdcp.org/screen).

Staff, children and youth who are sick must stay home.

- Remind families to keep children home when ill. A parent/guardian handout, “COVID-19 Health Checks/If Your Child has Symptoms” is available at [sfcdcp.org/CovidSchoolsChildcare](https://sfcdcp.org/CovidSchoolsChildcare).
- Encourage family members of children and staff to get tested promptly if they have symptoms of COVID-19, to lower the risk of spreading infection to children and staff.

Encourage staff and children to stay home for 10 days after traveling.

- Students and staff should avoid non-essential travel more than 120 miles from their home, as advised by CDPH. In addition, people arriving in or returning to San Francisco from other states or countries should quarantine for 10 days. For more information, see <https://www.cdph.ca.gov/Programs/CID/DCDC/Pages/COVID-19/Travel-Advisory.aspx>

Restrict non-essential visitors.

- Allow only volunteers who are essential to the program operations.
- Discourage parents and other family members from entering the building.
- Therapists who are not OST program employees but work with children and youth on-site, such as ABA therapists, occupational therapists and physical therapists, are considered essential staff and should be allowed to provide services.
- Cancel or move to virtual platforms for special events that involve parents and families, such as festivals, holiday events, and performances.

Keep staff, children and youth in small, stable groups (“cohorts”).

*A cohort is a stable group that has the same staff, children and youth each day, stays together for all activities (e.g., snacks, recess, etc.), and avoids contact with people outside the group. Keeping staff, children and youth in the same small cohort each day lowers their exposure risk by limiting the number of people they interact with.*

Limit cohort size

The risk of COVID-19 is greater indoors than outdoors, especially with group sports and aerobic exercise.

- Cohorts that involve indoor sports, dance or aerobic exercise can have up to 16 people total, including staff.
  - This limit does not apply to programs that incorporate non-aerobic physical movement into their program, such as clapping, stomping, standing, stretching, meditation, striking a pose, playing “Simon Says,” or doing the “hokey-pokey.”
- Other cohorts can have up to 25 participants and 2 staff. A cohort can have more than 2 staff if it decreases the number of participants, so that the total number of people is no more than 27.
- The maximum cohort size applies to all children and youth in the cohort, even if not all children attend the program at the same time. For example, for indoor sports and dance programs,
  - A cohort may not include 2 staff, 6 children who attend full-time, 6 children on Mon/Wed/Fri, and 6 children on Tu/Th (total of 20).

- A cohort may not include 2 staff, 8 children who attend for the entire day, 4 who attend mornings only, and 4 who attend afternoons only (total of 18).
- A cohort may not include 14 children, a teacher, one parent-volunteer on Mon/Wed/Fri, and a 2nd-parent volunteer on Tu/Th (total of 17).
- Each cohort can have no more than 4 staff, including volunteers and interns.
- When determining the number of staff in a cohort, do not count people who provide one-to-one services to individual children but do not interact with the entire cohort. This includes but is not limited to occupational therapists, physical therapists, speech and language therapists, and ABA providers. See the San Francisco Health Directive on Specialized Support Services for more information at <https://www.sfdph.org/dph/alerts/files/Directive-2020-26-Specialized-Support.pdf>.
- Staff may work with more than one cohort. Try to assign staff to as few cohorts as feasible, to limit staff exposure and prevent the spread of COVID-19 across cohorts.
- Staff should stay with each cohort for at least 3 weeks, except for substitute providers who are covering for short-term staff absences.
- Children and youth must enroll in a cohort for a period of at least 3 weeks. Do not allow children to attend for shorter periods.
- **Children and youth can participate in no more than 2 OST cohorts.** This is true even if the programs are on different days of the week. For example, a child may not attend a music program on Monday, a dance class on Thursday, and a Saturday language program.
  - Afterschool clubs and other school-based extracurricular activities count toward this limit if they allow students from different instructional groups at school to mix. For example, if a middle school cohorts students by grade, an afterschool drama club that combines students from different grades would count toward this limit, but a 6th grade drama club would not.
- **Children and youth who play indoor moderate- or high-contact sports, whether on a school team or a team outside of school, may NOT participate in a 2<sup>nd</sup> extracurricular program** at the same time. Indoor high-contact sports like basketball and hockey are higher risk for spread of COVID-19, and have been associated with outbreaks in children and youth.
 

For example, a child who plays indoor basketball is not allowed to participate in any other extracurricular activities. However, they may continue to participate in sports, dance and exercise activities at their childcare.

For a list of moderate- and high-contact sports, see <https://www.cdph.ca.gov/Programs/CID/DCDC/Pages/COVID-19/outdoor-indoor-recreational-sports.aspx>
- Schools and child care programs are not out-of-school time (OST) programs. Children who attend school or childcare in-person can still participate in up to two OST cohorts.



### Keep cohorts from mixing.

- Each cohort must be in a separate room or space.
- Minimize interactions between cohorts, including interactions between staff in different cohorts.
  - Stagger playground time and other activities so that no two cohorts are in the same place at the same time.
  - Do not hold activities that bring different cohorts together, even if outdoors wearing face coverings.
  - For specialist activities such as art and music, staff may cross between cohorts to meet children's educational and enrichment needs. Limit staff movement between cohorts as much as possible.
  - Staff must document visits that are not part of their cohort. Consider using a sign-in sheet/log to keep track of when staff have worked with different cohorts, to help determine which children, youth and staff were exposed to COVID-19 after a COVID-19 case occurs in the program.
  - Assign children and youth who live together or carpool together to the same cohort, if possible and consistent with age and developmental needs.
- Avoid moving staff from one cohort to another when possible.
- Avoid moving children and youth from one cohort to another, unless needed for a child's or youth's overall safety and wellness.

### Partition large indoor spaces to prevent direct air flow between cohorts.

A room divider or partition may be used to allow more than one cohort to use a large indoor space if the following requirements are met:

- All cohorts are from the same program.
- Staff, children and youth can access bathrooms, kitchens, and other common areas or exits without entering another cohort's space. If one cohort must pass through another cohort's space to access common areas or exits, use partitions to separate the pass-through space from both cohorts.
- The room divider must prevent direct air flow between cohorts.
  - Best Practice: Solid, non-permeable, cleanable partitions extending from the floor to as close to the ceiling as practical, to reduce direct and indirect air flow between cohorts.
  - Minimum Requirement: Solid non-permeable, cleanable partitions extending from the floor and at least 8 feet high.
- The room divider must not:
  - Interfere with ventilation of each space (e.g., windows must be present on either side of the partition, or if mechanical ventilation is used, supply and return diffusers must be present on each side of the partition)
  - Obstruct sprinkler systems, access to emergency exits and other fire and building codes.



- If smoke detectors are required and/or are in use in the building, separate smoke detectors may be required on each side of the room divider. Seek consultation as needed for each facility.

## Physical distancing

*Physical distancing decreases the risk of COVID-19 from respiratory droplets. Recent studies of schools that re-opened have found that physical distancing of 3 feet is effective at preventing student transmission in classroom settings when combined with masks, even when community COVID-19 levels are high. However, staff are much more likely than children to infect other staff and children in classroom settings. For this reason, staff should continue to stay 6 feet away from children and from each other.*

### Physical distancing for staff

- Stay at least 6 feet from other adults, including staff in the same cohort.
  - Set up offices and staff rooms so that staff do not work or sit within 6 feet of each other.
  - Encourage virtual meetings using video conferencing apps for staff meetings and parent-staff discussions, instead of meeting in-person.
- Stay 6 feet away from children and youth as much as possible while meeting their learning needs.
  - If it is not possible to stay 6 feet apart, keep the interaction short, make sure to wear face coverings, and consider wearing a face shield in addition to a face covering.

### Physical distancing between children and youth

- *In settings where children are typically seated at desks or tables, children and youth must be seated as far apart as possible, and at least 3 feet apart for individual activities.*
- Rearrange furniture and work/play spaces to prevent crowding and promote physical distancing between children who are not playing together.
- If feasible, arrange desks, workstations, or computers facing in the same direction, so that children do not sit facing each other. Also, have children sit in the same seats each day, if possible.
- Offer more opportunities for individual activities, such as reading, painting or crafts. Choose group activities that do not involve close contact between children.
- During group activities, such as playtime, physical distancing may be relaxed for younger children who have difficulty staying apart, especially if outside and wearing facemasks.
- Prioritize preventing interactions between cohorts over physical distancing within a cohort in shared spaces like outdoor areas, hallways and bathrooms.
- Limit occupancy of bathrooms, elevators, staff rooms and similar shared spaces to allow 6 feet of distancing. Adjacent bathroom stalls may be used. Post signs with occupancy limits.
- At places where people congregate or wait in line, mark spots on the floor or the walls 6 feet apart to indicate where to stand.

## Face masks and cloth face coverings

*Face masks and other face coverings keep people from spreading the infection to others, by trapping respiratory droplets before they can travel through the air. They also help protect the person wearing the face covering from infection.*

For this guidance, “face masks” includes cloth face coverings that cover the mouth and nose and do not have an exhalation valve.

- All adults and children 2 years of age and older must wear face masks over both their nose and mouth. This includes family members and caregivers dropping off or picking up children outside the building.
- People may not enter the building unless they are wearing a face mask or have documentation of a medical contraindication to face masks.
- Provide face masks to children who forget to bring their face mask to the program. Reusable cloth face masks are recommended over disposable masks, and can be sent home with families to be laundered.
- Keep a supply of face masks for other individuals who have forgotten to bring one.
- Some children will need additional support to consistently wear face masks. Programs should take into account equity and each child’s individual circumstances when deciding how to best support children in wearing face masks.
- Do not exclude children from in-person participation if they have an approved medical exemption to face masks. For children and youth with documented medical exemptions to face masks due to developmental delay, autism or other conditions that limit their ability to tolerate face masks, encourage and remind them to wear their face mask as much as possible.
- For children and youth who have difficulty keeping their face masks on at all times, prioritize consistent face mask use in the following situations:
  - In hallways, bathrooms and other spaces where they may encounter staff and students from other classrooms.
  - For younger children, during times where physical distancing is relaxed.
  - When a child or youth is ill and waiting to be picked up (and is not asleep).
  - When in public and within 6 feet of others, for example, while walking to a nearby park or outside the program at drop-off. CDPH requires face masks for children ages 2 and up in public. Wearing face masks at drop off also protects staff who are screening children and youth for COVID 19.
- Avoid excluding children from the program or disciplining them if they initially have difficulty wearing a face covering. Continue to encourage and remind them to wear their face covering.

## Exemptions to cloth face coverings; use of face shields

- Children 0-1 year old must not wear face coverings due to the risk of suffocation.
- People who are unconscious, asleep, or unable to remove a face mask independently.

- Children and youth with documented medical or behavioral contraindications to face masks are exempt. This includes children and youth who are unable to tolerate face masks due to autism or sensory sensitivity, or children and youth unable to remove a face mask independently due to developmental delay or disability. Seat children and youth who are not wearing face masks at least 6 feet away from others, if possible to do so without stigmatizing the child or youth.
- Adults with a medical contraindication documented by a medical provider to a face covering may be allowed to wear a face shield with a cloth drape on the bottom tucked into the top of their shirt. However, this is not thought to be as effective as a face mask in preventing spread of infection.
- Asthma, claustrophobia, and anxiety are not usually considered to be contraindications to face masks.
- Staff working alone in a private indoor space do not have to wear a face mask if
  - The space is completely enclosed (i.e. a private office, not a cubicle), and
  - Other people are not likely to enter the space at any time in the following few days

Staff working alone in a classroom that will be used later by others are not exempt, and must wear a mask. Similarly, administrators in a private office must wear a mask, even when alone, if they can reasonably expect others to enter their office to ask questions or to meet.

- Staff working with children and youth who are hard-of-hearing may use a clear mask (a disposable or cloth face mask with a clear window). If this is not feasible, a face shield with a cloth drape tucked into the shirt may also be used. Staff must wear a face mask at other times, for example, in staff-only areas.
- Do not use face shields in other situations. Face shields have not been shown to keep the wearer from infecting others.
- Consider using a face shield in addition to a face mask. Face shields provide additional protection for the wearer. When used with a face mask, a cloth drape is not needed.
- For more information, see <https://www.cdph.ca.gov/Programs/CID/DCDC/Pages/COVID-19/guidance-for-face-coverings.aspx>

## Hand hygiene

*Frequent handwashing for at least 20 seconds and hand sanitizer use removes COVID-19 germs from people's hands before they can infect themselves by touching their eyes, nose or mouth.*

- Develop routines and schedules for staff, children and youth to wash or sanitize their hands at staggered intervals, especially immediately after arriving, before and after eating, upon entering/re-entering a space, and before and after touching shared equipment such as computer keyboards.
- Every space and common area (staff work rooms, eating areas) must have hand sanitizer or a place to wash hands upon entering.
- Establish procedures to ensure that sinks and handwashing stations do not run out of soap or paper towels, and that hand sanitizer does not run out.

- Post signs encouraging hand hygiene. A hand hygiene sign in multiple languages is available for download at <http://eziz.org/assets/docs/IMM-825.pdf>

## Ventilation and outdoor spaces

*Being outside is much lower risk than being inside. When indoors, increasing outdoor air circulation lowers the risk of infection by “diluting” any infectious respiratory virus in the air with fresh outdoor air.*

### Outdoor spaces

- Do as many activities outside as possible, especially snacks/meals and exercise.
- Stagger use of outdoor spaces to keep cohorts from mixing. If the outdoor space is large enough, consider designating separate spaces for each cohort.
- Outdoor spaces may be covered with a tent, canopy, or other shelter, as long as the shelter complies with CDPH and SFPDPH guidelines for ventilation of outdoor structures, at <https://www.cdph.ca.gov/Programs/CID/DCDC/Pages/COVID-19/Use-of-Temporary-Structures-for-Outdoor-Business-Operations.aspx> and <https://www.sfdph.org/dph/files/ig/Guidance-Shared-Outdoor-Spaces.pdf>
- If used, outdoor playgrounds/natural play areas only need routine maintenance. Make sure that children wash or sanitize their hands before and after using these spaces. When hand hygiene is emphasized, cleaning and disinfection of outdoor structures play is not required between cohorts.
- Limit use of other shared playground equipment in favor of activities that have less contact with shared surfaces

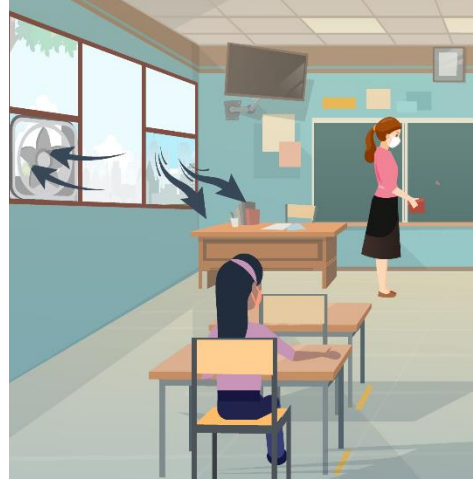
### Make sure that indoor spaces are well-ventilated.

*Ventilation systems can decrease the number of respiratory droplets and infectious particles in the air by replacing indoor air with fresh, uncontaminated air and/or filtering infectious droplets out of the air.*

- Review [SFPDPH Ventilation Guidance](#). Make as many improvements as feasible.
- Note which improvements you made, and keep a copy of your notes.
- Your program can use ventilation guidance from the Centers for Disease Control (CDC), CDPH, or the American Society of Heating, Refrigerating and Air-Conditioning Engineers (ASHRAE) instead of SFPDPH’s guidance.

Ventilation recommendations include:

- Open windows to increase natural ventilation with outdoor air when health and safety allow. When possible, consider also leaving room doors slightly open to promote flow of outdoor air through the indoor space.
- Do not prop or wedge open fire doors. Continue to follow fire and building safety requirements.
- If open windows pose a risk of falls for children, use window locks to keep windows from opening more than 4 inches, or other safety devices to prevent falls.
- If your program has an HVAC system (sometimes called mechanical ventilation, forced air, or central air), follow the recommendations in [SFDPH Ventilation Guidance](#). Prioritize maximizing the intake of outdoor air and minimizing recirculated air during the COVID-19 pandemic. Recommendations include:
  - Make sure the HVAC system is checked by a professional and is working properly.
  - Open outdoor air dampers and close recirculation dampers (“economizers”). This will maximize the amount of outdoor air that the HVAC system takes in, and minimize the amount of indoor air that is recirculated.
  - If you can use higher-efficiency air filters without reducing airflow or damaging your HVAC system, use air filters rated MERV13 or better.
  - Disable “demand-control ventilation controls” so fans keep running even when a room doesn’t need to be heated or cooled.
  - Keep the HVAC system running even when the building is not being used, if you can. If your HVAC system has a timer, set it to run, at a minimum, from 1-2 hours before the building opens until 2-3 hours after everyone has left the building, including custodial staff.
  - Consider installing portable air cleaners (“HEPA filters”).
- If your program uses fans, adjust the direction of fans to so that air does not blow from one individual’s space to another’s space.



For more information about ventilation, see [www.sfdcp.org/COVID-ventilation](http://www.sfdcp.org/COVID-ventilation).

## Limit sharing

- Consider suspending or modifying use of drinking fountains. Encourage the use of reusable water bottles instead. [Water bottle filling stations, or “hydration stations,” may remain open.](#)
- Limit sharing of individual art supplies, manipulatives, and other high-touch materials when possible.
- [Students may use shared supplies and equipment such as computers, books, games, play areas, and area rugs. Have students wash or sanitize their hands before and after using shared supplies and equipment.](#)

## Cleaning and disinfection

*Routine cleaning should continue, but routine disinfection is no longer recommended. Contaminated surfaces are not thought to be a significant route of transmission, and frequent disinfection can pose a health risk to children due to the strong chemicals often used.*

- Clean frequently touched surfaces daily and between stable cohorts. Routine cleaning focuses on frequently touched surfaces like door handles, shared desks and tables, light switches, sink handles, and keyboards.
  - Desks and chairs that are only used by one person do not need to be cleaned daily.
  - Paper-based materials like books, magazines and envelopes do not need routine cleaning between uses.
- After a known case of COVID-19, clean *and* disinfect the areas where the person with COVID-19 spent a large proportion of their time (classroom, or an administrator's office). Take the following steps:
  - Open windows and use fans to increase outdoor air circulation in the areas to be cleaned.
  - Wait 24 hours, or as long as practical, before cleaning and disinfection.
  - Clean and disinfect all surfaces in the areas used by the ill person, including electronic equipment like tablets, touch screens, keyboards, and remote controls. Use a disinfectant effective against COVID-19. See EPA's List N for EPA approved disinfectants effective against COVID 19.
  - Vacuum the space if needed.
- For more information, see CDC guidelines on "Cleaning and Disinfecting Your Facility" at <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/disinfecting-building-facility.html> and CDPH COVID-19 and Reopening In-Person Instruction Framework & Public Health Guidance for K-12 Schools, section on Cleaning and Disinfection at <https://www.cdph.ca.gov/Programs/CID/DCDC/Pages/COVID-19/COVID19-K12-Schools-InPerson-Instruction.aspx>

## Specific situations

### Transportation

*Since vehicles are small enclosed spaces that do not allow physical distancing, it is easier for COVID-19 to spread between people in a vehicle, especially if everyone inside does not wear a mask. Biking and walking are lower risk than shared vehicles.*

- Public transportation: Wear face coverings, maintain at least 6 feet of physical distancing as much as possible, and practice hand hygiene upon arrival.
- Carpools and shared rides: Advise staff and families to carpool with the same stable group of people. Open windows and maximize outdoor air circulation when feasible. Everyone in the vehicle must wear a face covering.

## Drop-off and pick-up

*If children, youth and parents/caregivers from different households gather and interact with each other during arrival and dismissal, this creates an opportunity for COVID-19 to spread in the program.*

- Limit staff contact with families at drop-off and pick-up
- Stagger arrival and dismissal times to minimize contact, using different entrances/exits for each cohort when possible.
- Mark spaces at least 6 feet apart for children and youth waiting to enter the building and for adults waiting to pick up children. Post signs to remind family members to stay at least 6 feet away from people from other households when dropping off or picking up their child or youth.
- Require face coverings for family members who are dropping off or picking up children and youth.

## Meals and snacks

*Eating together is especially high risk for COVID-19 transmission because people must remove their face masks to eat and drink. Children often eat with their hands, and people often touch their mouths with their hands while eating. In addition, meals are usually considered time for talking together, which further increases risk, especially if they must speak loudly to be heard.*

- Do not eat with other staff. This is a common way that staff are exposed to COVID-19 at work.
- Eating outdoors is safer than eating indoors.
- Designate an eating area for each group, and mark places to sit at least 6 feet apart. Without marked spaces, children and youth may sit more closely.
- Outdoor eating areas may be covered (e.g. with an awning)
- Space children and youth as far apart as possible, and at least 6 feet apart, when eating. Try to seat them so they do not sit face-to-face. Physical distancing is especially important when eating, since face masks cannot be worn.
- Use individually plated or bagged meals or snacks instead of family-style meals.
- Make sure that children, youth and staff wash their hands or use hand sanitizer immediately before and after eating. Pay special attention to children who like to suck/lick food off their hands.
- Consider starting lunch with silent eating time, followed by conversation time, to discourage talking while masks are off.
- Stay at least 6 feet away from children and youth when their face masks are off, especially when indoors. Be sure to wear your own face mask while others are eating.
- Clean and disinfect tables and chairs between different cohorts. If eating outdoors, sidewalks and asphalt do not have to be disinfected.

## Staff break rooms, work rooms and offices

*Break rooms are a common source of COVID-19 exposure in all work settings. Staff often do not view themselves and colleagues as sources of infection, and may forget to take precautions with coworkers,*



*especially during social interactions such as breaks or lunch time, in the copy room, when checking mailboxes, etc.*

- Strongly discourage staff from eating together, especially indoors.
  - Programs must notify staff that they should not eat indoors when possible.
  - Programs must provide an outdoor break area, if feasible, for staff to eat.
- Discourage staff from gathering in break rooms and other indoor staff spaces.
- Limit the number of people in indoor break rooms and other staff spaces to the lesser of a) 25% of the maximum occupancy or b) the number of people allowed by 6 foot distancing.
- Post the maximum occupancy for break rooms and other staff areas.
- Post required signs in break rooms, including signs reminding staff to stay 6 feet apart, keep their facemasks on unless eating, and wash their hands before and after eating.
- Open windows and doors to maximize ventilation, when feasible, especially if staff are eating or if the room is near maximum occupancy.

## Field trips

- Outdoor field trips are allowed as long as they do not require shared vehicles or public transportation. For example, field trips that involve walking to a nearby park are allowed.
- Do not let children and youth mix with people outside their cohort on field trips. Specifically, programs cannot go to a public playground during times when the playground is open to the public, per SFDPH playground guidance. However, if the playground operator permits, a program may reserve a time for the exclusive use of the playground.

## Sports, dance, wind instruments, singing, and related activities

*Sports and activities involving singing, chanting, shouting, cheering, and performing with wind instruments are higher risk for spreading COVID-19 because people breathe more air and breathe out more forcefully when doing these activities. The risk is much higher indoors than outdoors, and higher without face masks than with face masks. Programs that offer these activities should take all possible steps to lower the risk of COVID-19.*

### Sports, dance and group exercise

- OST programs must follow CDPH and SFDPH health and safety requirements for sports, dance and group exercise. See the SFDPH Health Directive 2021-01 at <https://www.sfdph.org/dph/alerts/files/Directive-2021-01-Sports-Youth-and-Adult.pdf>
- Physical movement and activity in the classroom are still allowed. For example, “air writing” and other movement designed to help children learn letters, or distinguish left from right; clapping hands or stomping feet, standing, stretching, meditation, and doing the “hokey pokey” to recorded music are all acceptable activities.

### Wind instruments, singing and related activities

- Band, drumline, choir and drama are considered low contact youth recreational activities, and must follow all relevant requirements and recommendations per CDPH and SFDPH. See the

SFDPH Health Directive 2021-01 at <https://www.sfdph.org/dph/alerts/files/Directive-2021-01-Sports-Youth-and-Adult.pdf>

- The following table summarizes additional health and safety requirements for singing, chanting, shouting, cheering, and performing with wind (woodwind and/or brass) instruments. These requirements apply to band, orchestra, chamber music, theater, drama, chorus, choir, a cappella, and other similar activities.

Table: Health & Safety Guidance for Wind Instruments, Singing, and Related Activities

Setting	Outdoors	Indoors
Risk Profile	Lower Risk	Higher Risk (activity is discouraged, but permitted)
Minimum required physical distancing from other performers	At least 6 feet	At least 12 feet
Face coverings and covers for wind instruments*	Encouraged at all distances, and required if less than 12 feet apart	Required at all times
Maximum group size	25 participants	16 participants (youth and staff), but may be further limited by (1) the number of people who can maintain physical distancing and/or (2) a 25% occupancy limit in the performance space
Audience	Allowed; must use face coverings; stay 12 feet from performers; stay 6 feet apart from other non-household audience members	No general audience allowed; as needed age-appropriate supervision only; must use face covering; stay 12 feet apart from each other and performers
Ventilation	Not applicable	Optimize ventilation. See <a href="https://www.sfdcp.org/ventilation">https://www.sfdcp.org/ventilation</a>

\*Instrument covers should be made of materials similar to those required for face coverings. Review Directive on Face Coverings at <https://www.sfdph.org/directives>. To cover their nose, individuals performing with wind instruments may wear a face covering with a mouth-slit in addition to, but not in place of, an instrument cover.

## Children and youth receiving special services

- Therapists and other support staff are considered essential staff and should be allowed onsite to provide services.
- Accommodations and related services for special education, learning disabilities and medical conditions should be met, even if it creates cross-over between cohorts. Provide supervision for children who need additional support maintaining physical distancing, wearing a face covering, or handwashing.
- Additional accommodations may be needed for children and youth to safely participate in the program. For example, a child who cannot tolerate a face covering due to a medical or developmental condition may need a desk with clear screens or privacy barriers.

## What to do when someone has COVID-19 symptoms or confirmed COVID-19

Refer to the [Quick Guide](#) for Suspected or Confirmed COVID-19 Cases.

- First, see [“When someone has suspected or confirmed COVID-19: Quick Guide for Schools, Childcares, and Programs for Children and Youth”](#) at <https://sfcdcp.org/CovidSchoolsChildcare> for the following summary charts:
  - Steps to take when staff, children or youth have COVID-19 symptoms, confirmed COVID-19, or were exposed to COVID-19 (for example, a parent or sibling has tested positive)
  - Returning to the program after COVID-19 symptoms, confirmed COVID-19, or exposure to COVID-19.

## When staff or students have symptoms of COVID-19

- Staff who develop symptoms at work must notify their supervisor and leave work as soon as they can.
- Send students with symptoms home. Keep ill students who are waiting to be picked up in a separate area, away from others. Make sure that they keep their face masks on.
- When a parent or guardian arrives to pick up a child, have the student walk outside to meet them if possible instead of allowing the parent or guardian into the building. Since children with COVID-19 may have been infected by a parent or other adult in their home, the parent may also have COVID-19.

## When there is a confirmed COVID-19 case

Take these steps. All documents listed below are online at [sfcdcp.org/COVIDSchoolsChildcare](https://sfcdcp.org/COVIDSchoolsChildcare).

1. Use the [Exposure and Investigation Tool](#) to collect the important details about the case BEFORE contacting the SFPD Schools and Childcare Hub.
2. If possible, obtain a copy of the lab report and attach it to *Exposure and Investigation tool*. If your program does not have the test results yet, please note the test results are pending. Send the lab result to the School/Childcare team when you receive it.

3. Report the case **within 1 hour** to the SFPD Schools and Childcare Hub by emailing [schools-childcaresites@sfdph.org](mailto:schools-childcaresites@sfdph.org) (please put SECURE: in the subject line) OR calling (628) 217-7499. An on-call public health professional will get back to you as soon as possible.
4. The Schools and Childcare Hub may ask you to identify people who had close contact with the COVID-19 case and may have been infected. When interviewing people to determine if they had close contact, and informing them that they may have been exposed, **do not disclose the identity of the person with COVID-19**, as required by law.
5. Use the [List of Close Contacts](#) template to collect details of any close contacts.
6. Email the *List of Close Contacts* to [schools-childcaresites@sfdph.org](mailto:schools-childcaresites@sfdph.org) **within 24 hours**. Please put SECURE: in the subject line of the email.
7. Communicate to staff, families and participants in your program **within one business day** as indicated in the [Quick Guide](#). SFPD has developed standard notification letters for programs for children and youth. Translations are at [sfcdcp.org/CovidSchoolsChildcare](https://sfcdcp.org/CovidSchoolsChildcare).
  - [Close Contact Advisory — Children and Youth under 18](#)
  - [Close Contact Advisory — Adult](#)
  - [General Exposure Advisory — Children and Youth under 18](#)
  - [General Exposure Advisory — Adult](#)
  - [Notification of a student or staff in quarantine for exposure to COVID-19](#)

#### Clean and disinfect areas where the person with COVID-19 spent significant time

- Open windows in areas used by the sick person to maximize outdoor air circulation.
- Clean and disinfect the classroom and other areas where the person spend significant time. This does not have to be done until children, youth and staff have left for the day.
- If needed, find alternative locations for cohorts whose regular room is being cleaned or disinfected.

#### Deciding if your program should close due to COVID-19

Programs should avoid unilaterally closing due to community surges in COVID-19, without direction from public health officials. Doing so may not decrease the risk to staff and participants. In fact, it could lead to more COVID-19 infections if it results in staff, children and youth spending more time in settings where the risk of COVID-19 is higher than in your program.

Even when COVID-19 is widespread in the general community, spread of COVID-19 in schools and programs for children and youth has remained rare. Almost all cases of COVID-19 in programs for children and youth in San Francisco have been in staff and children who were infected outside of the program. Routine testing of elementary school staff and students has also provided reassuring evidence of the lack of transmission in supervised programs for children.

This reflects the success of programs for children and youth in implementing precautions like face masks, physical distancing, and staying home when sick. When these basic precautions are enforced, they are very effective at keeping COVID-19 from spreading. In contrast, people not following these precautions in informal or unsupervised settings has been largely responsible for community spread of COVID-19.

The decision to close a program should be based on COVID-19 cases in the program, not on community COVID-19 rates, which may not reflect the conditions at the program. Any decisions should be made in consultation with the SFPDPH Schools and Childcare Hub. In general, programs with smaller, more contained cohorts are less likely to require closure.

Situations where SFPDPH may recommend closing a program may include the following:

- 25% or more of the cohorts in a program have had outbreaks<sup>1</sup> in the last 14 days.
- At least three outbreaks have occurred in the last 14 days AND more than 5% of the staff and participants are infected.
- Investigation of an outbreak by SFPDPH suggests ongoing COVID-19 transmission within the program.

A more common situation is that **programs that do not limit interactions between staff assigned to different cohorts may be forced to close due to staff shortages after a staff member tests positive**, if a number of other staff were exposed and must quarantine.

Closures are generally for 14 days, and are meant to prevent further transmission within the program as well as to better understand how transmission in a program occurred, in order to prevent repeat outbreaks.

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<sup>1</sup> An **outbreak** is 3 or more COVID-19 cases in a program in a 14-day period, where the transmission likely happened at the program. For example, 3 cases in 3 siblings would not constitute an outbreak. Similarly, 3 cases in participants or staff who do not have contact (or overlap in shared spaces) in the program would not be considered an outbreak.

## Resources

### San Francisco Department of Public Health (SFDPH)

- **SFDPH Schools and Childcare Hub** for COVID-19 consultation and guidance (628) 217-7499 or email [Schools-childcaresites@sfdph.org](mailto:Schools-childcaresites@sfdph.org)
- COVID-19 guidance for the public at <https://sfcdcp.org/covid19>
- COVID-19 guidance for child care programs at <https://sfcdcp.org/CovidSchoolsChildcare>
  - [“What to do when someone has suspected or confirmed COVID-19: Quick Guide for Schools, Childcares, and Programs for Children and Youth”](#)
  - [“Parent and Caregiver Handout: COVID-19 Health Checks/If Your Child has Symptoms”](#)  
Instructions for parents on health screenings and returning to childcare after symptoms.
  - [“Frequently Asked Questions \(FAQ\): COVID 19 Contact Tracing at Schools, Childcares, and Programs for Children and Youth”](#)
- Outreach Toolkit for Coronavirus. Signs and flyers on physical distancing, hand hygiene, face masks, health screenings, getting tested, and other COVID-19 topics  
<https://sf.gov/outreach-toolkit-coronavirus-covid-19>
- “Leaving Isolation or Returning to Work for Those Who Have Confirmed or Suspected COVID-19” at <https://www.sfcdcp.org/rtw>
- [“Interim Guidance: Ventilation for Non-Healthcare Organizations During the COVID-19 Pandemic”](#) at <https://www.sfcdcp.org/COVID-ventilation>

### California Department of Public Health (CDPH)

- “Outdoor and Indoor Youth and Recreational Adult Sports” issued 2/19/2021  
<https://www.cdph.ca.gov/Programs/CID/DCDC/Pages/COVID-19/outdoor-indoor-recreational-sports.aspx>
- “Youth Sports Questions and Answers” updated 3/19/2021  
<https://www.cdph.ca.gov/Programs/CID/DCDC/Pages/COVID-19/Youth-Sports-FAQ.aspx>
- “COVID-19 and Reopening In-Person Instruction Framework & Public Health Guidance for K-12 Schools in California, 2020-2021 School Year” updated 3/20/2021  
<https://www.cdph.ca.gov/Programs/CID/DCDC/Pages/COVID-19/COVID19-K12-Schools-InPerson-Instruction.aspx>

### Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC)

- Guidance for Schools and Childcare  
<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/schools-childcare/index.html>
- Cleaning and Disinfection for Community Facilities  
<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/clean-disinfect/index.html>