

July 30, 2021

Subject: Information Regarding Upcoming School Year Health Measures

Dear SDUHSD Community:

As the upcoming school year approaches, you may have questions about the recent directives from the California Department of Public Health (CDPH) setting forth requirements for schools and what they will mean for our students and site teams. Superintendents throughout the County have met with each other and Dr. Wooten (San Diego's public health officer) to clarify what is considered mandatory for our districts. This letter is to share the most recent information applicable to our schools and to assure you we are closely monitoring developments to keep you apprised of changes as they occur.

The two most restrictive prevention measures that were included in last year's guidance are no longer required: physical distancing and cohort scheduling. The elimination of these measures will allow districts to provide full-time in-person instruction for every student enrolled in our schools. CDPH has also created new options that will reduce, and in some cases eliminate, absences required for quarantine following a close contact with someone who has COVID-19. This will allow us to avoid sending full classrooms of students home for quarantine.

With the elimination of these requirements, the CDPH and our district are relying on a multi-layered prevention strategy approach. Per the CDPH, the requirements were devised in an effort to bring all students back to our campuses full time, in-person and in class as much as possible, and to reduce absences and be proactive given the increased presence of contagious variants of COVID-19.

Highlights of the CDPH's updated mandates regarding facial coverings include:

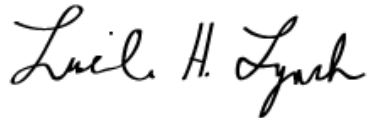
- **Outdoors:** Masks are optional for all persons in K-12 school settings.
- **Indoors:**
 - 1) **Students:** Masks are required, with exemptions per [CDPH mask guidance](#).
 - 2) **Adults in K-12 school settings:** Masks are required when sharing indoor spaces with students. Even if a student is not present, as of [7/28/21](#), the CDC and CDPH recommends masks for indoor public places due to the Delta variant and how contagious it is.
 - 3) **Exempted Persons:** Persons exempt from wearing a face covering due to a medical condition must wear a face shield with a drape on the bottom edge, *as long as their condition permits it*.
- **Alternative Educational Options:** Pursuant to the requirements in AB 130, SDUHSD will offer independent study options for the 2021-22 school year, which will have attendance and engagement requirements.
- In limited situations where a face covering cannot be used for pedagogical or developmental reasons, (e.g., communicating or assisting those with special needs) a face shield with a drape (per [CDPH guidelines](#)) can be used instead of a face covering while in the classroom **as long as the wearer maintains physical distance from others**. Staff must return to wearing a face covering outside of the classroom if indoors (e.g. hallways).

I understand that members of our community may consider the face covering requirement unnecessary, while others may believe the guidance does not go far enough. After a summer of not wearing masks, the idea of having to wear masks in order to attend school in-person has caused debate and mixed emotions among our community. But, County health officials have emphasized that all school districts must comply with the requirements set forth for schools in the CDPH notice included in the [State Public Health Officer Order of June 11, 2021](#), which derives its authority from Health and Safety Codes 120125, 120140, 120175, 120195 and 131080 and other applicable laws. We as a district do not have the discretion to change the mandated provisions.

The [San Diego County public health order](#) includes a similar requirement, as does [Cal/OSHA](#), which requires employers to follow the mandates of the [CDPH](#). The CDPH will review the masking requirement no later than November 1, 2021.

In addition to the continued monitoring of developments throughout the State of California, we are also creating a COVID-19 Information webpage on our district website to keep our community updated as best we can.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Lucile H. Lynch". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Lucile H. Lynch
Interim Superintendent