



Date: March 8, 2020

Re: Coronavirus (COVID-19) Update to Families

Dear Santa Cruz County families:

Yesterday we were notified by Santa Cruz County Public Health of the first confirmed COVID-19 diagnosis in Santa Cruz County. Santa Cruz County Public Health is conducting a thorough investigation to identify any potential exposures that may have occurred.

While COVID-19 represents a serious public health threat, the risk to Santa Cruz County residents remains low. However, as the outbreak continues to spread, Santa Cruz County Public Health anticipate there will be additional reported local cases and is prepared to investigate potential exposures, and continues collaborating with local, state and federal agencies to implement containment efforts while providing notifications to the public and community agencies as the situation evolves.

On March 6, Public Health Officer, Dr. Gail Newel met with leaders and health personnel from school districts, the County Office of Education, charter schools, and private schools to provide an update, answer questions, and review response plans. Earlier this week, Dr. Newel declared a local health emergency, and the County activated its Emergency Operation Center (EOC) to bolster response efforts. The school districts continue to work collectively to address the novel coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak and are in frequent contact with the County.

Cleaning, Disinfecting, and Sanitizing Protocols

Districts met Friday to review and update our cleaning, disinfecting and sanitizing protocols. We reviewed the materials, equipment, training, and proper protective equipment as part of a broad approach to preventing infectious diseases in schools in line with recommendations from the CDC. Our protocols include the daily sanitizing of surfaces and objects that are touched often within classrooms, public spaces, and school buses. Cleaning agents being utilized are approved by the Environmental Protection Agency and rated as effective against COVID-19. This countywide team reaffirmed our commitment to support every school district to ensure these protocols are implemented consistently and effectively.

School Closures

At this point no school closures are taking place in Santa Cruz County. Closing schools is a difficult decision as it has impacts on students, families and employers. In accordance with guidance from the California Department of Public Health and our County Health Officer school closure will be a measure to be taken if **one student, teacher or staff member tests positive for COVID-19 and exposed others at the school**. The length of time of the closure will be based on the risk level as determined by the local public health officer, though it is expected that such closure would be for a minimum of 14 days. During this time, the school will undergo deep cleaning and sanitizing. We are making preparations for continuity of education through distance learning solutions for students in the advent of school closure. It is important for parents to prepare for the possibility of a school closure.

Field Trips and Student Competitions

Out of an abundance of caution, we have made the difficult decision to cancel all field trips with destinations outside of Santa Cruz County. Travel restrictions to athletic and music competitions will be handled on a case by case basis to minimize risk to students and staff.

Preventative Measures

We are continuing our efforts to help ensure students and parents/guardians have accurate information about how they can help protect themselves and their families. We are urging students and families who are sick to **please stay home and contact their health care provider** if necessary.

The Santa Cruz County Public Health Division continues to advise the following steps to prevent the spread of flu will also guard against the spread of COVID-19:

- wash hands frequently with soap and water, for at least 20 seconds;
- use hand sanitizer with at least 60% alcohol if soap and water are not available;
- get your flu shot to protect against flu or symptoms similar to COVID-19;
- avoid close contact with people who are sick;
- cover your cough or sneeze with a tissue, then throw the tissue in the trash;
- avoid shaking hands;
- clean and disinfect frequently touched objects and surfaces using regular household cleaning supplies;
- avoid touching your face with unwashed hands;
- stay home from school or work when you are sick; and
- call your primary care provider for instructions BEFORE seeking in-person care for flu-like symptoms

This is an emerging situation where information and circumstances can evolve quickly. For the latest updates, visit the Centers for Disease Control 2019 novel coronavirus

website at: <https://www.cdc.gov/COVID19>. The Santa Cruz County Office of Education continues to update its web page at www.sccoe.link/coronavirus.

For local information, residents may visit www.santacruzhealth.org/coronavirus, call 211 or text "coronavirus" to 211211. Messaging rates may apply. Thank you.

Sincerely,

Laurie Bruton, Superintendent, San Lorenzo Valley Unified School District
Lorie Chamberland, Superintendent, Live Oak School District
Eric Gross, Superintendent, Pacific Elementary School District
Mike Heffner, Superintendent, Bonny Doon Union Elementary School District
Tanya Krause, Superintendent, Scotts Valley Unified School District
Michelle McKinny, Superintendent, Happy Valley Elementary School District
Diane Morgenstern, Superintendent, Mountain Elementary School District
Kris Munro, Superintendent, Santa Cruz City Schools
Michelle Rodriguez, Superintendent, Pajaro Valley Unified School District
Faris Sabbah, County Superintendent of Schools
Scott Turnbull, Superintendent, Soquel Union Elementary School District