



## Sebastopol Union Reopening Update

July 29, 2020

Dear Sebastopol Union school community,

You may have heard that Governor Gavin Newsom provided new state guidance for schools. This guidance impacts our school district's plans for the fall. I am writing to share an update on what we know about school reopening based on this guidance. Also, this letter will outline the next steps that we will be taking to prepare for a safe and successful school year. As we near the beginning of the school year, Sebastopol Union will continue to provide regular updates. Thank you for your ongoing patience and understanding during these challenging and quickly-changing times. Together, we will provide our children with the best education possible!

Sincerely,

Linda Irving, Superintendent

### New State Guidelines

#### Beginning in Distance Learning

The governor announced that any district whose schools are in a county that is on the state "watch/monitoring" list will not be able to open for in-person learning until they are off that list for 14 days. **For our school district, this means that we will begin classes in distance learning on August 17<sup>th</sup>.**

#### Masks

The governor provided new statewide mask requirements for schools (once in-person learning resumes). These include:

#### Student Face Covering Requirements

Age	Face Covering Requirement
2 years - 2nd grade	Strongly encouraged. Face shield can be worn instead of mask
Third grade and above	Yes, unless exempt according to <a href="#">CDPH guidelines</a>



1. All staff must wear face coverings unless exempt.
2. Children can remove their masks for meals, naps, and outdoor recreation.
3. Schools are being required to exclude students from campus if they are not exempt and refuse to wear a mask provided by the school. If you do not feel comfortable sending your child to school in a mask, please contact Linda Irving, Superintendent, to discuss independent study learning options for your child in the event we reopen for in-person classes.

### Learn More

- Following are links to the new guidance documents for schools:
  - [COVID-19 and Reopening In-Person Learning Framework for K-12 Schools in California, 2020-2021 School Year](#)
  - [Industry Guidance for Schools & School-based Programs](#)

### Our Next Steps

Because we were already preparing for distance learning, we are well-prepared to respond to the state's new requirements. Sebastopol Union teachers, administrators, and other school staff are preparing a strong distance learning program to begin on August 17th date.

As the new school year approaches, here are some ways that you can help your child prepare and understand what to expect:

- School hours will be as follows:
  - **Kindergarten-** 8:50 am-11:50 am
  - **1<sup>st</sup>- 3<sup>rd</sup> Grades-** 8:40 am-1:40 pm
  - **4<sup>th</sup>-8<sup>th</sup> Grades-** 8:30 am- 1:40 pm
- Afternoon Enrichment activities for all students
- Block schedule for grades 6-8, that will include an advisory period and 3 classes per day
- Social Emotional Learning (SEL) K-8
- Parent education training opportunities to understand technology and strategies to help at home.



## Week At A Glance

Below are weekly components of our Distance Learning program. More specific individualized schedules will be provided by the classroom teachers.

- **Monday-Thursday:**
  - 60-90 Minutes of live interaction with teachers, may include:
    - Daily morning meeting for wellness check-in and overview of the day
    - Daily lesson(s)
    - Small group session(s)
  - 120-150 Minutes of independent work daily, may include:
    - Reading
    - Independent work, submitting assignments online
    - Enrichment
    - Physical Education
- **Friday:**
  - 30 Minutes of live interaction with teachers, may include:
    - Daily morning meeting for wellness check-in and overview of the day
  - 150-210 Minutes of independent work daily, may include:
    - Reading
    - Independent work, submitting assignments online
    - Enrichment
    - Physical Education
- **Daily:**
  - Ability to reach teacher virtually during office hours
  - Additional intervention support provided by teacher, aide, or specialist based on teacher recommendation.

## Q: When will our schools reopen for in-person instruction?

A: Under the new guidelines, schools cannot open for in-person learning as long as their county is on the state's monitoring/watch list. The county must be off the watch list for 14 consecutive days before a school can consider offering in-person learning. It is not yet clear whether Sonoma County will be removed from the watch list, but even if it is, schools must still wait two weeks to reopen beyond that date. In order to provide families and staff clarity around what they can expect, we are planning to begin the year in distance learning until at least September 29, when the Board will review data around a safe reopening. Once that decision is made, a date for Hybrid schedules will be set, if safe to do so. Sample schedules can be found in the Sebastopol Union Reopening Plan on the district website: <https://www.sebastopolschools.org/>



**Q: How is my school/district ensuring high-quality distance learning?**

A: The state has clearly outlined how all schools should ensure high-quality distance education.

This includes:

- Access to devices & connectivity for all students
- Daily live interaction with teachers and other students
- Challenging assignments equivalent to in-person classes
- Adapted lessons for English language learners and special education students

Sebastopol Union teachers are receiving training on Distance Learning August 10-14. They are also working to plan and collaborate with grade level partners.

**Q: Will my child need to wear a mask to school under the new policy, once in-person learning resumes?**

A: All children who are in third grade and higher are required to wear a mask unless they are medically exempt. Children between age 2 and second grade are strongly encouraged but not required to wear a mask. They can also wear a face shield with a mask.

**Q: Will the school provide a mask for my child once in-person learning resumes?**

Each school will have a supply of child-sized masks for any student who needs one or forgot to bring a mask. However, we encourage you to get some masks for your child as part of their back to school supplies. Getting masks in a design that your child likes and using them often can make it easier for them to wear the mask.

**Q: Once in-person learning resumes, will students have to stay six feet apart?**

A: The state guidelines say that children should remain six feet apart where possible, but recognize that this may be hard to strictly enforce at all times. Adults are asked to stay six feet apart from other adults and children.



**Q: Will school staff and students need to be tested for COVID-19 once school campuses reopen?**

A: According to the state, school districts and schools shall test staff periodically, *as testing capacity permits and as practicable*. Examples of recommended frequency include testing all staff over two months, where 25% of staff are tested every two weeks, or 50% every month to rotate testing of all staff over time. The guidance does not require testing for children. We are working with the Sonoma County Office of Education and the Sonoma County Health Department to determine how testing will be conducted.

**Q: Once schools reopen, will they need to close again if there is a confirmed case among a student or staff member?**

A. The new state guidance clearly outlines what should happen if there is a confirmed case of COVID-19 on a campus, which is outlined in the chart below. In each case, the school district will work closely with the Sonoma County Department of Health Service’s contact tracing team.

**Confirmed COVID-19 Case:**

Classroom	School	District
Close class if one or more children/employees have a confirmed case	Close school if multiple classes OR 5% of total student/staff population have confirmed cases	Close if 25% of all schools are closed due to COVID-19