

Pandemic Mitigation Plan

The following policy establishes actions that may be taken by the Yolo County Office of Education (“YCOE”) to provide a safe learning and working environment during a pandemic, and shall supersede any conflicting language in existing YCOE policies or administrative regulations until the Superintendent determines that the need for this policy no longer exists. The Superintendent acknowledges that, due to the evolving nature of pandemics, federal, state, and local orders impacting YCOE operations are subject to change without notice. In the event that any federal, state, or local orders impacting YCOE operations are subject to change without notice. In the event that any federal, state, or local order may conflict with this policy, the order shall govern.

The Superintendent recognizes that students have the right to a safe campus that protects their physical and psychological health and well-being.

(cf. 0400 – Comprehensive Plans)

(cf. 0450 – Comprehensive Safety Plan)

Staff shall provide a caring and nurturing educational environment for students. The YCOE may provide instruction on social-emotional well-being to all students, including information on how to deal with stress and anxiety in healthy ways and the importance of emotional well-being for academic success.

Staff shall pay attention to students’ potential increased mental health concerns. Counseling, other support services, and/or referrals to other agencies shall be proactive considering in assisting student in dealing with the social and emotional effects of the pandemic, such as stress, anxiety, depression, grief, social isolation, and post-traumatic stress disorder.

(cf. 5141.52 – Suicide Prevention)

(cf. 6164.2 – Guidance-Counseling Services)

(cf. 6164.5 – Student Success Teams)

As needed, the YCOE may provide referrals of students and families to basic needs assistance or social services, and may assess students for eligibility for the free and reduced-price meal program or assistance under the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act.

(cf. 6173 – Education for Homeless Children)

The Superintendent or designee shall seek to ensure that staff understand their obligations as mandated reporters to report suspected child abuse or neglect, whether the student is on campus or participating in distance learning.

(cf. 5141.1 – Child Abuse Prevention and Reporting)

The Superintendent or designee may provide information to staff and parents/guardians regarding how to provide mental health support to students, recognizing that the YCOE’s counselors and trained mental and emotional support personnel should be the primary source of actual mental health support. The Superintendent or designee, by and through the trained mental and emotional support personnel, may also provide counseling to staff who are experiencing emotional difficulties as a result of the pandemic.

Instruction/Schedules

The YCOE may offer a combination of on-campus instruction and distance learning to meet the needs of all students.

(cf. 6157 – Distance Learning)

(cf. 6158 – Independent Study)

The Superintendent or designee shall work with school principals, teachers, other staff, students, and parents/guardians to determine a schedule of on-campus instruction or instructional support for each school. If all students cannot attend on-campus instruction for the entire school day due to space limitations as a result of physical distancing requirements, the Superintendent or designee may consider arrangements for rotating groups of students, such as on a daily or weekly basis, and/or shall provide on-campus instruction to students with the greatest need for in-person supervision.

(cf. 6112 – School Day)

Priority for on-campus instruction shall be given to the lowest performing students, students with disabilities, elementary level students, students at risk of child abuse and neglect, homeless students, foster youth, and English learners. To the extent practicable, the County Office shall also consider the needs of essential workers, as designated in executive orders, for child care during normal school hours.

(cf. 6173.1 – Education for Youth in Foster Care)

(cf. 6174 – Education for English Learners)

On-campus instruction may be prioritized for subjects that are difficult to deliver through distance learning, such as laboratory science, art, or career technical education. Distance learning shall be provided via independent study in accordance with applicable legal requirements.

Evaluation of Academic Progress Following Campus Closure

Upon return to on-campus instruction following an extended campus closure, the Superintendent or designee shall evaluate the impact of the campus closure on students’ academic progress. Such evaluation may:

1. Address student-specific needs arising from the transition back into on-campus instruction
2. Consider whether or not a student has experienced a regression of skills and/or a lack of purpose
3. If regression and/or a lack of progress is present, identify opportunities for recovery, including supplemental educational services and/or new or different support services

(cf. 6179 – Supplemental Instruction)

For students with disabilities, the evaluation of academic progress shall also be used to determine whether an additional or revised individualized education program (IEP) or Section 504 plan is needed for the student to be academically successful when returning to on-campus instruction. The Superintendent or designee may prioritize urgent student needs in scheduling initial and triennial assessments and annual IEP meetings. The Superintendent or designee shall ensure YCOE compliance with all procedural timelines for IEP's and Section 504 plans as required, unless amended by executive order.

(cf. 6159.1 – Procedural Safeguards Complaints for Special Education)

(cf. 6146.6 – Identification and Education under Section 504)

Grading

For each grading period, student progress shall be reported in accordance with SP 5121 – Grades/Evaluation of Student Achievement. However, in the event that school campuses are closed for an extended period of time during any grading period, the Superintendent or designee may adopt one or more alternative grading policies which may vary by grade level or type of course. Options for such grading include, but are not limited to:

1. Assignment of final grades based on the student's grades when the campus shutdown occurred, with opportunities to increase the final grade based on progress through distance learning or other assignments and assessments
2. Assignment of pass/no pass grades for all courses
3. Grading based on students' understanding of applicable course content through assessments, projects, portfolios, or other appropriate means

(cf. 5121 – Grades/Evaluation of Student Achievement)

Health Screening of Students

During a pandemic, to the extent feasible, and as permitted by law, students shall be screened for symptoms before boarding a school bus and/or upon arrival at school each day. The Superintendent or designee shall work with local health officials to determine the appropriate means of screening, which may include temperature checks with a no-touch thermometer.

If the screening indicates symptoms, or if the student exhibits symptoms at any time during the school day, the student shall be placed in a supervised isolation area until the student's parent/guardian is contacted and the student can be transported home or to a health care facility. School staff may provide the parent/guardian with referrals to school or community health centers for further testing.

(cf. 5141 – Health Care and Emergencies)

(cf. 5141.3 – Health Examinations)

Student Absence and Attendance

The Superintendent recognizes that a pandemic may impact the attendance of students following the reopening of school campuses. The Superintendent or designee shall notify students and parents/guardians of expectations regarding school attendance. Such notification shall direct any student who contracts the virus or lives with someone who has been diagnosed with the virus to stay home in accordance with state and local health directives so as to curtail the spread of the disease.

Students infected during a pandemic shall be excluded from on-campus instruction until a medical provider states in writing that the student is no longer contagious. (Education Code 49451; Health and Safety Code 120230; 5 C.C.R. 202)

Students who are identified as being in a high-risk population for serious complications from the pandemic because of a medical condition may request assessment and reasonable accommodations under the Americans with Disabilities Act and/or Section 504, potentially including an alternative instructional method that allows the student to continue receiving instruction off campus.

When a student is absent, the student's parent/guardian shall notify the school of the reason for the absence. A physician's verification of a student's illness or quarantine may be submitted, but is not required.

(cf. 5113 – Absences and Excuses)

If a student would otherwise be required to attend on-campus instruction but is kept home by the parents/guardians due to concerns for the welfare of their child, the principal or designee shall work with the student and parent/guardian to determine if reasonable, alternative means of instruction are available, which may include distance or blended learning, independent study, printed class assignments, or other reasonable means.

The Superintendent or designee shall maintain enrollment and student attendance data, including the participation of students in independent study, and shall report data in accordance with state requirements.

The YCOE employee designated as the attendance supervisor pursuant to Education Code 48240 shall track patterns of student absence throughout the YCOE and regularly report such information to the Superintendent. When a student who is participating in distance learning repeatedly fails to

check in with the teacher when required, the teacher and/or attendance supervisor shall attempt to contact the student or parent/guardian to resolve the issues leading to the absence.

(cf. 5113.1 – Truancy)

Physical Distancing

In order to maintain a campus environment that allows for physical distancing in compliance with a public health order, the YCOE shall assess the capacity of school facilities, including classrooms, cafeterias, multi-purpose rooms, gyms, and outdoor areas, and determine the means by which the facilities can best be utilized considering space and time alternatives. To the extent reasonably possible, the YCOE may:

1. Within classrooms, space desks at least six feet apart and position them in a way that limits students facing each other
2. Stagger students in areas of high traffic, such as when students are using lockers, lining up for class, or passing between classes
3. Mark six-foot boundaries within classrooms, common areas, outdoor spaces, and places where students are likely to gather so that students and staff are more readily aware of and can more easily abide by physical distancing requirements
4. Utilize restroom stalls and sinks in a manner that allows for physical distancing, such as limiting the number of students and/or staff who may use the restroom at a time, blocking off every other stall or sink from use, and/or marking six-foot boundaries
5. Minimize the mixing of students from different classrooms in common spaces, such as in cafeterias and libraries
6. Conduct recess and physical education classes in a manner that allows for physical distancing and minimizes the use of physical education equipment
7. Assess the capacity of school buses and develop a plan for bus routes and bus seating consistent with physical distancing objectives
8. Encourage students to walk, bicycle, or travel by private vehicle to reduce the number of students traveling on school buses. Schools may provide designated areas with proper distancing for bicycles to be stored during the school day, and may mark spaces for private vehicle drop-off and pick-up zones.

In the event of pandemic, large gatherings, such as assemblies, rallies, field trips, extracurricular activities, and athletic events, shall be suspended until the Superintendent determines, consistent with guidance from state and local health officials, that it is safe to resume such activities. The Superintendent or designee may grant an exception if an activity can be arranged to take place in phases or per class, or modified in a manner that would keep participants from violating physical distancing recommendations. When deciding whether an activity may resume, the Superintendent or designee may consider the size of the group that participates, the extent to which the students

and other attendees have physical contact, whether the activity can be modified to avoid physical contact, if shared equipment is required for the activity, and if physical distancing can be maintained.

(cf.6145 - Extracurricular and Cocurricular Activities)

(cf. 6153 - School-Sponsored Trips)

Personal Protective Equipment (“PPE”) and Hygiene Practices

During a pandemic, the Superintendent encourages students, staff, and visitors to wear PPE while on school campuses or school buses, especially in high-traffic areas and/or when physical distancing is not possible. If the use of PPE in schools is required by state or local health officials, the YCOE shall provide PPE to students and staff who do not bring their own personal PPE. Students and staff shall be provided instruction in the proper use, removal, disposal, and cleaning of PPE.

Reasonable accommodations shall be made for anyone who is unable to wear a face covering for confirmed medical reasons.

The Superintendent also encourages students and staff to practice good hygiene, such as appropriate covering of coughs and sneezes and regular hand washing of at least 20 seconds, including before eating and after blowing one's nose, coughing, or sneezing. The YCOE shall provide adequate time and opportunity for students to wash hands, and shall make hand sanitizer available in areas where handwashing is less accessible. Signage regarding healthy hygiene practices and how to stop the spread of disease may be posted in and around school facilities.

Sanitization of Facilities and Equipment

School facilities, school buses, and shared equipment such as desks, tables, sports/playground equipment, computers, door handles, light switches, and other frequently used equipment and supplies shall be cleaned and disinfected daily with appropriate cleaning agents in accordance with public health orders. Disinfectants and cleaning agents shall be stored properly and in a manner not accessible to students.

The Superintendent or designee shall ensure that ventilation systems are operating properly and that air flow and ventilation within YCOE facilities is increased, to the extent possible, by opening windows and doors and using fans and air conditioning. To the extent possible, garbage shall be removed daily and disposed of safely.

Food Services

The Superintendent or designee shall ensure that students have access to clean drinking water other than through a drinking fountain, and food which is procured, stored, and served in a manner that reduces the likelihood of disease transmission and follows state and national guidelines for nutrition.

For meals that are consumed on school grounds, the Superintendent or designee shall seek to ensure that students will be able to maintain proper physical distancing while eating. In order to do so, the Superintendent or designee may consider the consumption of meals in classrooms, gyms, the outdoors, and/or other YCOE grounds.

Meal service shall also be available to students participating in distance learning, which may include and/or entirely consist of a "grab and go" service or delivery.

Due to the changing financial circumstances of many families as a result of a pandemic, the Superintendent or designee shall regularly provide information to students and parents/guardians regarding the free and reduced-price meal program, eligibility, and how to apply for the program.

Follow-Up with Infected Persons/Contact Tracing

The Superintendent or designee shall work with county health officials in accordance with applicable health orders to track confirmed cases of students and staff with the pandemic disease, including, but not limited to, following up with students, their parents/guardians, and staff who exhibit symptoms while at school and those who report an absence or miss work due to illness.

If a student, family member of a student, or staff member has tested positive for the pandemic disease, the YCOE shall assist local health officials in conducting contact-tracing to identify potentially exposed individuals and ask them to self-quarantine, including not participating in on-campus instruction for the required quarantine period mandated by local health officials. While maintaining the privacy of the infected person, the YCOE shall inform other students and staff with whom the infected person may have had contact in school.

In order to maintain health and safety and stop the spread of a disease, YCOE will provide information on test positivity and contacts to the local health officer for the purposes of contact tracing. FERPA permits educational agencies and institutions to non-consensually disclose Personally Identifiable Information from education records in the form of contact information of students to the public health department in specific circumstances, including in connection with a health or safety emergency (20 U.S.C. section 1232g(b)(1)(I); 34 C.F.R. sections 99.31(a)(10) and 99.36).

In making notifications related to disease reports to staff and students, YCOE will maintain the confidentiality of students, family members of students, and staff at all times. YCOE will not identify any employees or students by name, nor will YCOE, where possible, disclose information that could individually identify a student, family member of a student, or employee. In issuing notifications, YCOE will not reveal the personal or health related information of any student, family member of a student, or employee.

Nondiscrimination

The Superintendent prohibits discrimination based on actual or perceived medical condition or disability status. (Government Code 11135)

(cf. 0410 - Nondiscrimination in YCOE Programs and Activities)

Individual students and staff shall not be identified as being infected by the pandemic, nor shall students be discriminated against, harassed, retaliated against, or denied access to a free and appropriate public education because of their medical condition. Staff shall not disclose confidential or privileged information, including the medical history or health information of students and staff. (Education Code 49450)

The Superintendent or designee shall investigate any reports of harassment, intimidation, and bullying targeted at any student based on medical status, exposure, or high-risk status.

(cf. 1312.3 - Uniform Complaint Procedures)

(cf. 5131.2 - Bullying)

(cf. 5145.3 - Nondiscrimination/Harassment)

Community Relations

The Superintendent or designee shall endeavor to use a variety of methods to regularly communicate with students, parents/guardians, and the community regarding YCOE operations, school schedules, and steps the YCOE is taking to promote the health and safety of students. In addition, the Superintendent shall communicate with the community regarding matters of public interest in a manner that is consistent with YCOE policies and bylaws regarding public statements.

(cf. 9010 - Public Statements)

The Superintendent or designee will maintain the confidentiality of students, family members of students, and staff related to a pandemic in all communications with the public. YCOE will not identify any employees or students by name, nor will YCOE, to the extent possible, disclose information that could individually identify a student, family member of student, or staff member.

The YCOE shall seek to collaborate with local health officials and agencies, community organizations, and other stakeholders to ensure that YCOE operations reflect current recommendations and best practices for keeping students, staff, and visitors safe during a state of emergency. The Superintendent or designee shall keep informed about resources and services available in the community to assist students and families in need.

While the Superintendent recognizes the rights of parents/guardians to participate in the education of their children and the critical importance of parental involvement in the educational process, all visitors and volunteers are encouraged to respect guidelines regarding physical distancing and large gatherings consistent with any applicable public health orders. School visitors and volunteers shall be limited in number and expected to observe all YCOE protocols for disease control. The Superintendent or designee may place signage around the school advising that visitors and volunteers may be required to use PPE while on school sites and interacting with school personnel, and may keep a supply of such equipment available for their use.

(cf. 1240 - Volunteer Assistance)

In a pandemic situation, use of school facilities by persons or organizations for community purposes involving large gatherings may be suspended until the Superintendent determines, consistent with guidance from state and local health officials, that it is safe to resume such activities. The Superintendent or designee may grant an exception if the number of participants in the activity will be limited and the person or organization follows the processes and protocols established by the YCOE to minimize the health risks associated with the disease.

(cf. 1330 – Public Use of Conference Center and School Facilities)

Potential Re-closure of Campus

The YCOE shall monitor student and staff absences and data provided by local health officials to determine if there is a risk of resurgence of a disease and a need to reclose school campuses for the protection of students, staff, and the community. The Superintendent or designee shall develop plans and procedures for alternative methods of operations to the extent possible in the event that re-closure becomes necessary.

If any person diagnosed during a pandemic is known to have been in YCOE building(s), as required by law or regulation, the Superintendent or designee shall seek to timely notify local health and/or occupational, safety and health officials, and seek to comply with any directive for action. The building may be closed until cleaning and disinfecting of the building can be completed. If state and county officials permit the reopening of campuses, the YCOE shall continue to take reasonable preventative measures described in this policy.

If local health officials report substantial community transmission of the disease, campus closures of more than two weeks may be necessary, and the Superintendent or designee shall cancel group activities and events during that period. Campuses shall not reopen until recommended by local health officials.

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