



## **STUDENT & FAMILY HANDBOOK**

### **COVID 19 SAFETY**

**2021 – 2022 School Year**

Version 1.0

Updated August 18, 2021

**Novato Unified School District**

Marin County Public Health will update guidance regularly as new evidence emerges.

# Overview

The goal of Novato Unified School District is to ensure a safer return to school for all students and staff. This handbook was developed in partnership with the Marin School Nurses Organization (MSNO) to create healthier school environments during the COVID-19 pandemic. We are implementing enhanced health and safety practices and protocols based on guidance from the Marin County Office of Education (MCOE), Marin County Health and Human Services (MCHHS), the California Department of Education (CDE), the California Department of Public Health (CDPH), and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC).

## Delta Variant

Our primary goal this school year is to re-open all Marin schools, keep schools open and minimize absences due to COVID-19 exposure. Since April, despite high levels of vaccination, Marin County along with the rest of the nation has seen significant increases in cases due to the Delta variant (Marin County now has [high levels](#) of COVID-19 community transmission). Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) has reported the following about the Delta variant based on emerging research:

- The Delta variant is highly contagious.
- Infections with the Delta variant result in higher viral loads.
- Higher viral loads are seen not just in those who are unvaccinated and infected but also in the small proportion of those who are vaccinated and become infected.

Marin County Public Health has a student-focused, data-driven, and science-based approach to school-based policy that aims to reduce COVID-19 disease risk for students, teachers, school staff members, families, and the community at large. We adapt our policies regularly to respond to changes in the local context and to emerging research findings. With the Delta variant circulating in our community, we are continuing more conservative masking recommendations to support schools re-opening while we learn how Delta behaves in the school setting. We are looking forward to moving from a level C to level B (indoor masking only) [mitigation strategy](#) as soon as safely possible.

### **Please follow these guidelines to help us maintain a safe and healthy learning environment:**

- ❑ Instruct your child / children in proper face covering, hand hygiene and respiratory etiquette.
- ❑ Marin County Public Health strongly recommends that all eligible residents get vaccinated. COVID-19 vaccine appointments available at <https://coronavirus.marinhhs.org/vaccine/signup>
- ❑ Face coverings must be used in accordance with [CDPH guidelines](#) unless a person is exempt as explained in the guidelines.
- ❑ Review updated Decision Trees (English/Spanish). Marin County Public Health has created two trees – 1) Fully Vaccinated and 2) Unvaccinated or Partially Vaccinated.
- ❑ Review updated [Marin County School Guidelines](#) (English/Spanish).
- ❑ Review *new* [Marin County School Mitigation Strategies Continuum](#) (English/Spanish).

- Marin County Public Health is launching the 21-22 school year at Level C, with a recommendation for universal masking indoors and outdoors.
- Follow CDC Travel Guidance for [Domestic](#) and [International](#) Travel.
  - Vaccinated and unvaccinated students and staff may return to school after travel but must monitor for symptoms for 14 days and get tested for COVID-19 5 days after return from out-of-state travel. If any symptoms develop, immediately self-isolate and get tested for COVID-19 or be evaluated by a healthcare provider.
  - Unvaccinated students and staff may return to school under *modified quarantine*. *During modified quarantine students cannot participate in any extracurricular, social or community activities (incl. childcare).*
- Plan for possible need to isolate or quarantine at home, including any necessary childcare.
- Review your school's COVID-19 safety plan (CSP). Talk to your child about precautions to take at school.
- Instruct your student(s) to visit the school health office if they feel sick.
- Check your household and students each morning for signs of illness.
  - Do not pre-medicate your child with symptomatic relief medications (e.g., ibuprofen [Motrin], acetaminophen [Tylenol], pseudoephedrine [Sudafed], diphenhydramine [Benadryl]) unless for known, chronic conditions; e.g., seasonal allergies; sinusitis)
  - Do not send your child / children to school if they or anyone in the household (e.g., caregivers, siblings) exhibit any symptoms of COVID-19. Per [CDC](#), people with COVID-19 have had a wide range of symptoms reported – ranging from mild symptoms to severe illness. Symptoms may appear 2-14 days after exposure to the virus.

## Test or 10 -

- If a student has any symptoms of COVID-19 (cough • shortness of breath / difficulty breathing • loss of taste or smell, fever [100.4°F/38°C or higher] or chills • sore throat • diarrhea • body ache • fatigue • headache • congestion / runny nose • nausea or vomiting), they must be tested for COVID-19 or evaluated by healthcare provider. If not, they must stay at home and isolate for at least 10 days.
  - Students may return to school after they test negative for COVID-19 with copy of a negative test; *or*, after school receives clearance from a healthcare provider; *and*, their symptoms are improving; *and*, they are fever-free for 24 hours without the use of fever-reducing medications.
  - Prior to receiving test results of healthcare provider clearance, asymptomatic siblings & household contacts may attend school regardless of vaccination status.
  - **Important:** A school nurse may require a healthcare provider evaluation if they suspect COVID-19.
- **Notify the school** immediately if:
  - Your student is being evaluated for COVID-19. They may return to school if they provide proof of a negative test or health provider clearance.
  - A household member is being evaluated for COVID-19. The household member must [isolate](#). If a household member is identified as a close contact to a known COVID-19 case, they must [quarantine](#) as indicated.
  - If the household member tests positive for COVID-19:
    - Unvaccinated siblings & household contacts *must stay home*.
    - Asymptomatic, vaccinated siblings & household contacts may attend school.

- All exposed persons should monitor for symptoms for 14 days and get tested for COVID-19 5 days after last contact with positive case. If any symptoms develop, immediately self-isolate and get tested for COVID-19 or be evaluated by a healthcare provider.
- Your student has had close contact with someone who has tested positive for COVID-19 outside a supervised school setting.
  - Your child must stay at home and [quarantine](#) for 10 days after their last contact with the person who has COVID-19. Quarantine may be discontinued after 7 days IF an exposed person tests negative on Day 5 or later and remains asymptomatic.

**Modified Quarantine for Students Exposed in Supervised School Setting (if both infected and exposed persons were wearing masks) and Students Returning from Out of State Travel:**

- Vaccinated and unvaccinated students and staff may attend school for in-person instruction if they stay asymptomatic, wear a mask (indoors & outdoors), monitor for symptoms for 14 days and get tested for COVID-19 5 days after last contact with positive case (or return from out-of-state travel). If any symptoms develop, immediately self-isolate and get tested for COVID-19 or be evaluated by a healthcare provider.
- Quarantine may be discontinued after 7 days with a negative test completed on Day 5 or later if they remain asymptomatic.
- During modified quarantine students cannot participate in any extracurricular, social or community activities (incl. childcare).

**More resources can be found at:**

[Marin County Health and Human Services Coronavirus Information](#)  
[Marin County Health and Human Services Coronavirus Information - Schools](#)  
[Marin County Office of Education \(MCOE\) website](#)  
[MCOE Rethinking Schools](#)

For questions about COVID-19, please email [COVID-19@marincounty.org](mailto:COVID-19@marincounty.org).

# Preventive Measures at School

## Daily Home Symptom Screening

Marin County Public Health recommends [daily home symptom screening](#) before sending your student(s) to school.

*Students should not be re-tested for COVID-19 within 3 months of initial COVID-19 infection. If they develop symptoms consistent with COVID-19, they should be evaluated by a healthcare provider.*

## Symptom Screening

- Test or 10:
  - If a student has any symptoms of COVID-19 (cough • shortness of breath / difficulty breathing • loss of taste or smell, fever [100.4°F/38°C or higher] or chills • sore throat • diarrhea • body ache • fatigue • headache • congestion / runny nose • nausea or vomiting), they must be tested for COVID-19 or evaluated by healthcare provider. If not, they must stay at home and isolate for at least 10 days.
- Students may return to school after they test negative for COVID-19 with copy of a negative test; *or*, after school receives clearance from a healthcare provider; *and*, their symptoms are improving; *and*, they are fever-free for 24 hours without the use of fever-reducing medications.
- Students with known underlying health conditions may be at increased risk of severe illness. These health conditions may include diabetes (Type I and II), immune system deficiencies, or chronic respiratory conditions. If your child has a chronic health condition, please consult with your child's healthcare provider to determine if/when it is safe to attend school.
- Asymptomatic siblings & household contacts may attend school regardless of vaccination status.

## Isolation

*Isolation separates sick people and those who have tested positive with COVID from people who are not sick. If you test positive for COVID-19, you must [isolate](#).*

- Inform school immediately of positive COVID-19 test result(s) [incl. students and household contacts]
- Persons infected by COVID-19 must [isolate](#). They need to stay at home for 10 days from time symptoms started (or date of positive test) until feeling better **AND** fever-free for > 24 hours without fever reducing medications.

## Quarantine

*Quarantine separates and restricts contact with others, for people who were exposed to COVID, to see if they become sick. Someone who may have been exposed to COVID but does not know it, or they may have the disease but do not show symptoms. Unvaccinated and partially vaccinated persons exposed to a person infected with COVID-19 must [quarantine](#).*

### Fully Vaccinated Persons

- *Asymptomatic, vaccinated persons & household contacts may attend school.*

If you've been [fully vaccinated](#) and you've been around someone who has COVID-19, you do not need to stay away from others (quarantine).

However, fully vaccinated people should get tested 3-5 days after their exposure, even if they don't have symptoms, and wear a mask indoors in public (indoors and outdoors on school campus) for 14 days following exposure or until their test result is negative.

### Unvaccinated or Partially Vaccinated Persons

- *Unvaccinated siblings & household contacts must stay home.* All exposed persons should monitor for symptoms for 14 days and get tested for COVID-19 5 days after last contact with positive case. If any symptoms develop, immediately self-isolate and get tested for COVID-19 or be evaluated by a healthcare provider.

If you have NOT been fully vaccinated, and you have been in close contact with people who have tested positive for COVID, you MUST quarantine.

Close contact means you have been exposed to someone with active COVID infection for over 15 minutes in a 24-hour period or had contact with them when no masks were worn.

# Health and Hygiene Practices

## Face Coverings

Due to high community transmission of COVID-19 caused by the Delta variant, Marin County has [mandated](#) that face coverings will be required in indoor public settings for everyone over the age of two. This is part of a regional effort to help stop the spread of COVID-19. Every Marin County resident > 2 years old must wear a mask or face covering in all public and workplace settings, unless exempt for medical reasons, in which case a healthcare provider's note is required. If a student does not have a face covering or has lost theirs, one will be provided. Students who refuse to wear their face covering will be sent home.



**Mitigation Level C: All students and staff should wear face coverings when on the school campus (effective August 16, 2021).**

Face coverings may be removed for meals, snacks, or when it needs to be replaced. When a face covering is temporarily removed, it should be placed in a sealable plastic container or bag provided by parents (clearly marked with the student's name).



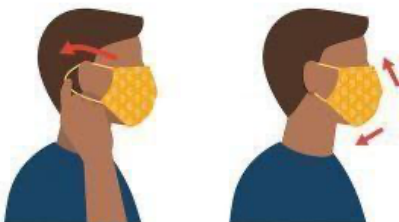
[Face coverings](#) should not be placed on:

- Children younger than 2 years old
- Anyone who has trouble breathing or is unconscious
- Anyone who is incapacitated or otherwise unable to remove the face-covering without assistance

Marin County Public Health strongly recommends regular mask breaks for students.

## [Acceptable face coverings](#)

A face covering means: a covering made of fabric that covers only the nose and mouth and surrounding areas of the lower face. Early research shows a high thread-count cotton outperforms low thread-count and synthetic materials.



## Unacceptable face coverings

- Halloween or plastic masks, ski masks with holes for the nose or mouth, or masks that have a one-way valve designed for easier breathing (the valves are often a raised plastic disk about the size of a quarter, on the front or side of the mask)
- Face coverings worn by students must be appropriate and meet district dress code requirements (*e.g.* no inappropriate fabric patterns, no Halloween masks, no hate symbols, *etc.*)

## Wearing face coverings correctly

- Wash your hands before putting on your face covering
- Put it over your nose and mouth and secure it under your chin
- Try to fit it snugly against the sides of your face
- Make sure you can breathe easily
- Avoid touching the face-covering while it is on. If you do need to touch or adjust the face covering, wash your hands right away.

## Removing face coverings correctly

Be careful not to touch your eyes, nose, and mouth when removing. Wash hands immediately after removing. Consult the CDC's guidance, "How to Safely Wear and Take Off a Cloth Face Covering" ([English](#)) ([Spanish](#))

- Untie the strings behind your head or stretch the ear loops
- Handle only by the ear loops or ties
- Fold outside corners together
- Place covering in the washing machine (learn more about [how to wash face coverings.](#))



## Hand Hygiene

Frequent hand hygiene is one of the most important preventative practices to help slow the spread of COVID-19 and will be encouraged at school. Hand hygiene stations will be accessible on campus.

Students and staff will be required to wash or sanitize their hands upon arrival to school each day before entering the classroom. Time for hand hygiene will be scheduled throughout the day including before eating and before returning to the classroom after recess.

### Five steps to proper handwashing

1. Wet your hands with clean, running water (warm or cold), turn off the tap, and apply soap.
2. Lather your hands by rubbing them together with the soap. Lather the backs of your hands, between your fingers, and under your nails.
3. Scrub your hands for at least 20 seconds. Need a timer? Hum the "Happy Birthday" song from beginning to end twice.
4. Rinse your hands well under clean, running water.
5. Dry your hands using a clean towel or air dry them.

### [Handwashing is a Family Activity](#)



### How to use hand sanitizer

- Apply the hand sanitizer to the palm of one hand (read the label to learn the correct amount).
- Rub the sanitizer over all the surfaces of your hands and fingers until your hands are dry. This should take around 20 seconds.

### Cough Etiquette and Other Important Health and Hygiene Practices

Please help us teach your child / children these important preventative measures to reduce the spread of COVID-19 and other illnesses.

- Cough and sneeze away from other people, and into a tissue or into the crook of the elbow, throw the tissue into the trash right away and wash hands.
- Avoid touching the eyes, nose, and mouth with unwashed hands.
- Avoid close contact with anyone who is sick.
- Maintain a six (6) foot physical distance from others outside your home. Keeping distance from others is especially important for individuals at higher risk for severe illness.

- Please discuss the importance of physical distancing measures while not at school, including discouraging students from gathering elsewhere.

*Encourage your child to ask questions and express their feelings with you and their teachers. Remember that your child may have different reactions to stress; be patient and understanding. Prevent stigma by using facts and reminding students to be considerate of one another.*

## Immunizations

Immunization requirements for admission to school remain unchanged for the 2021-2022 school year.

### **COVID-19 Vaccine**

Marin County Public Health strongly recommends that all Marin County eligible residents (12 years and older) get a COVID-19 vaccine. Visit <https://coronavirus.marinhhs.org/vaccine/signup> to find out where to get vaccinated.

All eligible students and staff should get vaccinated as soon as possible. Per the [State Public Health Officer Order of August 11, 2021](#), staff are required to verify their vaccination status. Staff that are not fully vaccinated are required to be tested weekly. Parents / guardians should report their student's vaccination status no later than September 17, 2021. Staff and student vaccination rate data (the percentage of staff and students who are fully vaccinated) should be published and posted on the school website no later than October 1, 2021 and should be updated no less than on a monthly basis. Vaccination status of individual students and staff will not be made public.

# School Health Office

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If a child develops symptoms at school, parents / guardians will be contacted to pick up their child within 30 minutes. If the school is unable to reach the child's parents within 5 minutes, the emergency contact will be called to pick up the child. The student cannot wait in an isolation area for the rest of the school day.

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Parents / guardians, teachers, and staff should instruct students to visit the school health office only if they are sick or injured. The school health office is a high-risk area that should only be used if medical assistance is necessary. If the health concern is not urgent, teachers and staff will attempt to resolve the matter with first aid interventions before sending a student to the school health office.

**If you or your children are feeling worried or anxious, they can sometimes present with physical symptoms (e.g., headache, abdominal pain). Help your child learn how to deal with that anxiety in a healthy way.**

## Isolation Protocol: If a Student Develops Symptoms at School

If a student develops a fever of 100.4°F or higher and/or symptoms consistent with COVID-19, your student will be placed in an isolation area and observed until they are picked up. Students must be picked up within 30 minutes by you or your identified emergency contact.

- Parents / guardians must always have a plan for picking up their student (s). Siblings and/or other household members attending school may also require pick-up (see below).
- If a student starts exhibiting symptoms, staff will assure the student is wearing a mask. If not, the student will have a mask placed on them and isolated.
  - Symptomatic students should be picked up **within 30 minutes** by their parent or guardian (or the emergency contact if the school is unable to reach the parent after 5 minutes). **The student cannot wait in an isolation area for the rest of the school day.**
- Siblings and other household contacts may stay at school unless student tests positive for COVID-19 (school-based, symptomatic testing). If student tests positive for COVID-19 at the school site, siblings and other household contacts will be sent home.
- Students may return to school after they test negative for COVID-19 (with copy of a negative test) or after they are evaluated by a healthcare provider and given an alternate diagnosis (with clearance from healthcare provider to return to school).
  - If they are not tested or evaluated by a healthcare provider, they must stay at home and isolate for at least 10 days (**Test or 10**). Siblings and household contacts may not return to school until 10 days after last contact with the sick person (unless the sick person tests negative for COVID-19 or the healthcare provider provides an alternate diagnosis).
- Please **inform the point of contact** at your school as soon as possible if your child / children are diagnosed with COVID-19.
- *Important Note: Students who are isolating or quarantining at home cannot participate either in in-person instruction or in any extra-curricular activities (incl. youth sports).*
  - Isolation (Separating from others if you have COVID-19): People who are in isolation should stay home until it's safe for them to be around others. In the home, anyone sick or infected should separate themselves from others by staying in a specific "sick room" or area and using a separate bathroom (if available).
  - Quarantine (Staying home if exposed to COVID-19): People in quarantine should stay home, separate themselves from others, and monitor their health.
    - Quarantine may be discontinued after 7 days with a negative test completed on Day 5 or later if they remain asymptomatic.
- *New.* Modified quarantine: Unvaccinated students identified as close contacts (more than 15 minutes over a 24-hour period within 0-6 feet indoors) in a supervised school setting may undergo a modified quarantine if both they and the infected case were wearing masks. They may attend school for in-person instruction if they stay asymptomatic, wear a mask, monitor for symptoms for 14 days and get tested for COVID-19 5 days after last contact with positive case (or return from out-of-state travel). If any symptoms develop, immediately self-isolate and get tested for COVID-19 or be evaluated by a healthcare provider.

# Attendance Policies

## To report an illness or absence, please contact your school office.

- Parents / guardians should inform the school immediately if their student *or household member* (incl. caregiver):
  - 1) is being evaluated for COVID-19; or
  - 2) if they test positive for COVID-19; or
  - 3) if they may have been exposed to COVID-19.

Contact the School Nurse, School Principal, Administrative Assistant, or Director of Student Services at the [modifies to your program] District Office. This information will be kept confidential.

- Student absences related to illness or quarantine are considered excused absences (Ed Code 48205).

## Community Clinics in Marin County

You can find a list of community health centers and clinics in Marin County on the [Redwood Community Health Coalition's website](#). These health centers and clinics are dedicated to providing high quality, affordable health services to families and children and will serve uninsured/underinsured families.