

Liberty Union High School District

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Eric L. Volta, Superintendent

January 12, 2022

Dear LUHSD Community,

I write this letter not only to our families, but also to our faculty and staff as well. It is imperative that we continue to work together to keep as many students and employees in our schools as possible, facilitating the paramount function of our schools: teaching and learning. I would like to thank those families and employees that have tested and stayed home due to illness. By reducing the number of positive cases on our sites, before they are symptomatic, we can reduce the number of mandated close contact quarantines of our students and staff.

Below are the abbreviated revised isolation (positive case) and quarantine (close contact) orders released earlier this week by the Contra Costa Health Service Department. In short they are:

- **Isolation:** Students and staff that test positive must isolate for 5 days. They may return to school on the sixth day after a negative rapid antigen test on day 5 of isolation or later. If a student chooses to not test they may return after their tenth day of isolation, as long as symptoms are resolving and fever is gone.
- **Staff Quarantine:** Due to staffing concerns, symptomatic staff that have been deemed a close contact to a positive case must test within 3-5 days after exposure. Asymptomatic Staff that have received the booster must test on day five after exposure. Unvaccinated staff must quarantine home.
- **Student Quarantine, students that are a close contact fall into multiple categories:**
 - Fully vaccinated students that are a close contact should monitor for symptoms. Recommendation is to test after five days.
 - Unvaccinated students that were masked at time of exposure are still eligible for modified quarantine for 10 days, 7 days if a negative test is taken on day 6.
 - Unvaccinated students where one party was not wearing a mask must quarantine at home for 10 days, 7 days if a negative test is taken on day 6.

The full Contra Costa Health Order Grid may be found [here](#).

I have been asked repeatedly over the last week, “Are you going to stay open?” New laws have prohibited the return to our previous format of Distanced Learning. Thus, under the current laws, we may have to make up instructional time lost due to a potential staffing shortage. Fortunately, over the past year and a half, we have found that the best remedy for these frustrating surges have been the reopening of schools with the multiple safety layers we have put in place at our sites. These layers include mandated indoor masking, updated HVAC filters, air purifiers, PPE availability, rapid testing, isolation and quarantine orders, outdoor lunches, and contact tracing, to name a few.

In closing, health experts are predicting that the Omicron surge will be a relatively short one based upon case studies around the world. Additionally, the studies are showing that if fully vaccinated, the dangers of the current variant are significantly less based upon hospitalization rates. If we remain diligent this spring will bring brighter days both literally and figuratively.

Sincerely,

Eric Volta



NEWS RELEASE

January 11, 2022
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Contact: Marcus Walton (925) 942-3420 or
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CONTRA COSTA COUNTY’S SUPERINTENDENT OF SCHOOLS AND DEPUTY HEALTH OFFICER URGE SCHOOLS TO REMAIN OPEN DURING OMICRON SURGE

PLEASANT HILL, CA –Contra Costa County Superintendent of Schools Lynn Mackey and Contra Costa County Deputy Health Officer Dr. Ori Tzvieli today reaffirmed the importance of keeping students in full-time, in-person learning environments during the latest COVID-19 surge.

Students learn best when they have access to school resources and can physically interact with their peers, evidence from the pandemic has shown.

“We have seen that students are better off in school than in distance learning,” County Superintendent of Schools Lynn Mackey said. “The county office of education continues to work with the health department and our school districts to maintain in-person learning and do it safely. The safety of students, staff, and families remains our top priority during this pandemic.”

Unlike earlier in the pandemic, public schools in California may no longer offer remote or virtual learning in lieu of in-person instruction. Schools in the county are working with CCCOE and CCHS to implement the latest California Department of Public Health school guidance and are practicing the best risk mitigation strategies.

“We have learned a lot of hard lessons over the last two years as we have worked through this pandemic,” said Dr. Tzvieli. “For many students, remote learning does not support student mental health, emotional health, and academic well-being the way that in-person learning does. There are very few instances where closing schools is the best option from a public health perspective.”

Contra Costa County, the state and the nation are seeing a record number of new COVID-19 cases due to the omicron variant. While the omicron variant is highly contagious, it seems to cause milder symptoms than earlier strains of the virus, Dr. Tzvieli said. He added that children are less likely to be infected in supervised settings such as schools with masking and testing requirements.

Both Superintendent Mackey and Dr. Tzvieli acknowledge that each individual school and community is different, and the response to an outbreak depends on a number of factors, including vaccination rates, and access to health resources.



“We stand ready to support local school board members and superintendents with the information and resources they need to take the steps necessary to keep students in school safely,” Superintendent Mackey said.

Ultimately, the key to safety is a multi-pronged approach, Dr. Tzvieli said.

“The best way to keep people healthy during this latest surge is to continue all the proven layers of protection: vaccinations and booster shots for eligible people, masking, testing, hand washing and remaining home when sick,” Dr. Tzvieli said.

For more information regarding COVID-19 testing, vaccines and boosters please visit www.cchealth.org.

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