

PROMOTING A
HEALTHY AND
SUPPORTIVE
SCHOOL
ENVIRONMENT

Newsletter
Issue 1

SACRAMENTO COUNTY PUBLIC HEALTH FOR SCHOOLS



PUBLIC HEALTH NEWSLETTER UPDATE

Dear School Partners,

Welcome to the first edition of our revamped Public Health Newsletter for schools. Over the past two years Sacramento County Public Health (SCPH) has been working closely with schools and districts to provide COVID-19 guidance, regular communication and resources. Partnerships and collaboration with schools and public health are essential to helping schools secure the resources and support necessary to address the relationship between student learning and health. In this latest edition of the SCPH newsletter we are sharing information and resources on many of our public health programs that collaborate or would like to collaborate with schools in Sacramento County.

Local health departments are one of the community agencies that can be a key partner in school- and district-level efforts to strengthen various aspects of student and staff wellness. Schools may be familiar with SCPH role in schools in the areas of immunization, monitoring of and information about communicable diseases, along with oral health. Our work also extends into many other areas including health promotion and education, community health, nutrition, mental health, policy development and planning, and environmental health. SCPH can often provide valuable expertise, input, support, and evidence-based resources to schools looking to strengthen the health environment for both students and staff.

SCPH has an e-mail box for school and district staff who may have questions or need some resources. You can reach us at SCPHschools@saccounty.net.

BACK TO SCHOOL IMMUNIZATION CLINICS

Sacramento County Immunization Assistance Program is holding additional back- to- school immunization clinics for eligible individuals through 18 years. Please call (916) 875- 7468 for an appointment. California immunization requirements for K- 12th grade can be found [here](#). Pre-kindergarten requirements can be found [here](#). Medical exemptions issued in 2021 and beyond must be issued using [CAIR- ME, the California Immunization Registry- Medical Exemption website](#).

The Shots for School website moved to a new location on the [CDPH website](#). More information about annual school immunization reporting will be available soon including when and how to report for your school and/or Pre-Kindergarten site.

COVID- 19 vaccines have been authorized for ages 6 months and older. More information about vaccinations and testing can be found on the Sacramento County [website](#). Sacramento County community flu clinics will begin in the fall. COVID-19 vaccines will continue to be offered during these clinics:

<https://dhs.saccounty.gov/PUB/Pages/Vaccination-Clinic-Locations.aspx>

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STOP STIGMA SACRAMENTO SPEAKERS BUREAU | THE MENTAL ILLNESS: IT'S NOT ALWAYS WHAT YOU THINK PROJECT

Mental health is always an important topic to address with students. Everyone will experience a range of different experiences with their mental health – whether it is stress, or something that requires professional help and support. Everyone, including students need to be equipped with the tools to take care of it. Over the last few years, social distancing, isolation, incidents of social injustice or school violence may have had significant impacts on the mental well-being of many students, which makes it more important than ever that we come together as a community to support one another. It is natural that many students, parents, and families will feel apprehensive and anxious about returning to classrooms – whether because of COVID-19, school shootings, or just concerns about negotiating the social landscape with peers and friends.

It is known that 1 in 6 US youth aged 6-17 experience a mental health disorder each year and 50% of all lifetime disorders begins by age 14, and 75% by age 24. Further, those living with a mental health challenge may have seen an increase in some of their symptoms, and it's important that they know they aren't alone and that their community is here for them.

SUPPORTING KIDS WHO ARE ANXIOUS ABOUT RETURNING TO SCHOOL?

First, it is important to validate feelings. Children and teens were not immune to the stressors of the last few years, and their mental health may have been impacted just as much as the mental health of the adults in our lives. Second, address concerns with honesty rather than providing blanket statements like “everything will be ok.” Youth need to know you are hearing them, so try to be encouraging about the topics they are most concerned about. Third, acknowledge

their bravery as they enter a new school year! Show that you know it may have been hard for them to return to that first day of class, but that you are proud of them for facing their fears. Lastly, it can help for you to model these behaviors too – show us how you take care of yourself so we can see it in action.

SEPTEMBER IS SUICIDE PREVENTION AWARENESS MONTH

A time to raise awareness on this stigmatized, and often taboo, topic. In addition to shifting public perception, this awareness month to spread hope and vital information to people affected by suicide.

Warning signs that students or parents can look for that may determine if someone is experiencing a mental health issue or is at risk for suicide. Especially if the behavior is new, has increased, or seems related to a painful event, loss, or change, some warning signs may include the following:

- Talking about feeling trapped or in unbearable pain
- Talking about being a burden to others
- Increasing the use of alcohol or drugs
- Changes in work or school performance, or having difficulties with concentration or retaining new information
- Changes in sleep patterns, sleeping too much or too little or having frequent nightmares
- Changes in appetite—eating too much or not eating at all
- Avoiding friends and social activities
- Excessive worry or anxiety
- Hyperactive behavior
- Increased agitation or talking about seeking revenge
- Extreme mood swings

Don't be afraid to reach out if you or someone you know is demonstrating these behaviors. Knowing the signs can help you to understand if you should seek out professional help for yourself or someone who needs your support.





SCHOOLS VITAL ROLE IN PROMOTING ORAL HEALTH

Children need healthy teeth in order to eat properly, speak, smile, feel good about themselves, and do well in school. The Sacramento County Oral Health Program (SCOHP) collaborates with school partners and dental providers to promote good oral health for all Sacramento County school children. SCOHP's outreach in this area includes:

- Working with school staff and families to promote compliance with AB 1433, the Kindergarten Oral Health Assessment (KOHA) mandate that requires children entering public school for the first time (either kindergarten or first grade) to have a dental screening or dental exam by a licensed oral health professional. The KOHA mandate ensures that children entering public school are free of dental disease and have access to important preventive dental services such as sealants.
- Collaborating with school-based programs, such as the Center for Oral Health's Early Smiles Sacramento, that provide dental screenings and fluoride varnish applications. School-based program navigators assist families in accessing dental care using a web-based medical/dental referral and navigation system (MDRAN) and licensed oral health professionals employed by school-based programs can also complete the KOHA form required for kindergarteners. SCOHP maps school-based program activities to identify gaps and promote expansion of services.
- Promoting passive consent policies that allow children to receive dental screenings in a manner consistent with other routine health screenings such as vision and hearing.

When children enjoy good oral health, they come to school ready to learn, grow, play and smile! For more information and additional resources, visit the "School Partners & KOHA" page at www.saccountyoralth.net.

COVID-19 RESPONSE TESTING

COVID-19 response testing will continue to be a valuable mitigation tool in the coming school year. CDPH is continuing to offer rapid professional testing in California K-12 schools using Abbott BinaxNow antigen tests.

For schools or districts not already enrolled, find out more about the Testing Task Force program by filling out their [Rapid Antigen Testing Onboarding Form](#). Additional State allocations of home test kits for schools are expected to be distributed through SCOE. **Schools/Districts Already Enrolled in Testing**, please complete the [Preparing for Fall- Professional Antigen Test Inventory and Training Survey](#) as soon as possible. This will help CDPH prepare for testing and training needs for the fall.

- Other helpful resources related to testing:
 - <https://schools.covid19.ca.gov/#testing>
 - [Binax Expiry Update – March 2021 | Binax Expiry Extension – May 2021](#)
 - [OTC Expiration Extension](#)
- The August 11, 2021 [CDPH Health Officer Order regarding Vaccine Verification for Workers in Schools](#) remains in effect until rescinded or modified by the State.

SACRAMENTO COUNTY FREE TESTING LOCATIONS CAN BE FOUND AT:

https://www.saccounty.net/COVID-19/Pages/Symptom-Screening_MobileTestingSite.aspx

SACRAMENTO COUNTY MONKEYPOX INFORMATION

Stay up to date with the latest information on Monkeypox in Sacramento County by visiting our webpage at: <https://mpx.saccounty.gov>

WILDFIRE SMOKE EVENTS AND SCHOOLS

Wildfire smoke events have become more routine in Sacramento County in recent years. Wildfires now occur throughout the year and scientists predict “longer, hotter, and drier fire seasons” that increase the risk of severe wildfires.

Poor air quality has negative health impacts and can disrupt normal school operations. Due to Sacramento County’s large and varying geography, some areas of the county may be more impacted by a wildfire smoke event than others, which underscores the need for schools to be able to assess air quality in their immediate area.

The Sacramento Metropolitan Air Quality Management District is preparing to release a *Wildfire Smoke Air Pollution Emergency Plan for Sacramento*. The plan includes information on preparing for wildfire smoke events, how to access air quality data, and what to do during a wildfire smoke event. It will also include a [chart](#) that includes recommended actions for schools during wildfire smoke and other unhealthy air quality events. Depending on severity of an unhealthy air quality event, schools may need to consider modifying, postponing, or even canceling some activities or events.

For more information on air quality in the Sacramento area and to view the full plan when it is released, visit airquality.org.

NATIONAL CHILDHOOD OBESITY AWARENESS MONTH – SEPTEMBER

Childhood obesity can be prevented. Communities, health professionals, and families can work together to create opportunities for kids to eat healthier and get more active. Make a difference for kids: spread the word about strategies for preventing childhood obesity and encourage communities, organizations, families, and individuals to get involved.

There are many more activities that teachers can incorporate into their curriculum available on the [Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics website](#).

There are also several guides that you can distribute to students or encourage them to read on their with tips for a healthy diet and lifestyle.



COVID-19 TRAVELING RECOMMENDATIONS

These are general recommendations for international flights. When traveling by air, check if your airline requires any testing, vaccination, or other documents. For international travel make sure you are aware of current COVID-19 requirements at your destination.

01

MAKE SURE YOU'RE UP TO DATE WITH YOUR COVID-19 VACCINE:

Bring your vaccination card or make sure you have access to your digital records.

02

WEAR A MASK:

It is strongly recommended that everyone aged 2 years or older—including passengers and workers—properly wear a mask in indoor areas of public transportation.



03

BE AWARE OF CURRENT COVID-19 REQUIREMENTS:

Research your destination's requirements. Bring any required documents with you to the airport.

04

DO NOT TRAVEL IF YOU HAVE COVID-19 SYMPTOMS:

Do not travel if you have COVID-19 symptoms, tested positive, are waiting for results of a COVID-19 test, or had close contact with a person with the virus and are recommended to quarantine.

05

BE FLEXIBLE:

Prepare to be flexible during your trip as restrictions and policies may change during your travel.

Vaccinate ALL 58

Check out cdc.org to read more about the CDC's travel guidelines. Visit myturn.ca.gov or call 1 (833) 422-4255 to find a vaccination location near you.