



ORCUTT Union School District

Where a Dedicated Staff Means Kids Come First

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Orcutt USD families and community:

Throughout the two years of the COVID-19 pandemic, the Orcutt Union School District has been steadfast in our commitment to the safety and wellbeing of our students, staff members, and community at large. A key part of this commitment has been our adherence to the COVID-19 health and safety requirements established by county and state officials.

As you are aware, on Monday, February 28, Governor Newsom announced that California's requirement for student masking in schools will expire at 11:59 p.m. on Friday, March 11. Therefore, beginning on Monday, March 14, students and staff will no longer be required to wear a mask at school, regardless of vaccination status. Students and staff may still opt to wear a mask, and masks will remain available.

The California Department of Public Health has also published new K-12 Schools Guidance which goes into effect at the same time. This new guidance changes COVID-19 testing for students exposed to a positive COVID-19 case and as a result we will no longer be conducting contact tracing of students or testing students during the school day. If your student is exposed to a positive case, more information will be provided to you. Student testing will remain available on school days through our drop-in testing program.

This new chapter is focused on continuing the mitigation strategies we are all familiar with - the availability of testing, high quality ventilation systems, cleaning protocols, frequent hand washing, etc. - with a great deal of focus on personal responsibility and respect. Accordingly, during this transitional period it is paramount that we treat each other with grace and dignity. Let us model the type of community we want our students to thrive in.

Along these lines here are some polite requests:

- Please do not make assumptions regarding someone's beliefs or health status based upon their choice to wear or not wear a mask, and please refrain from commenting on them.
- Please understand that this will be a time of transition for the population of our students, some of whom have never been on our campuses without wearing a face mask. Our dedicated staff will be ready to provide support to these students.
- For young children, please let our site administrators/teachers know your wishes for your child(ren) and they will do their best to reinforce them. The schools will discuss the change with students in a developmentally appropriate manner, including how to respect everyone's personal choice.
- If your child(ren) expresses any anxiety, please reach out to your school site for additional support as needed, or visit our [Social and Emotional Wellness](#) webpage

- If students experience any COVID-19 symptoms, please keep them home and review our [COVID-19 protocols](#) on our webpage which will be updated as soon as we receive them from the Santa Barbara County Public Health Department.
- The COVID-19 protocols have changed for students exposed to a positive case in school. We are awaiting new protocols from the Santa Barbara County Public Health Department. Once we receive them, they will be posted to our District Website.

Free COVID-19 testing continues to be available for students and staff at Orcutt Junior High School between 7:00 a.m. and 8:15 a.m. daily. For additional testing sites, please visit our [website](#). We expect to distribute an additional round of at-home testing kits prior to Spring Break so students can test prior to returning to school on April 25th.

We are in the process of updating our volunteer/visitor blueprint which will go into effect along with the new guidance, we plan to post that to our district website later today.

Thank you for your collaboration as we continue to navigate new guidance. Every single member of our community has an important part to play in keeping our students and schools as safe and healthy as possible. Thank you for your commitment to this goal and for working together to achieve a new normal for our students and our school campuses.

Sincerely and respectfully,

Dr. Holly Edds
District Superintendent