



January 26, 2022

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Manteca Unified Staff and Community:

Re: COVID-19 Health and Safety Update/Group Notification in Schools

In Manteca Unified student and staff safety is our top priority. With COVID-19 cases impacting San Joaquin County and the increase in testing accessibility, school districts throughout the state are seeing an influx in confirmed cases. As such, the California Department of Public Health (CDPH) has updated their [K-12 school framework](#) to align guidance with current conditions. Since the start of the pandemic, the state, county, and MUSD have adapted to new challenges presented and responded with strategies harnessing available tools.

MUSD's determination to use every available tool to keep schools safe during this pandemic allows us to keep classrooms open. Since October 2020, MUSD has prioritized and operated in-person learning for student success, none of which would be possible without the commitment from our staff, students, and families.

First, the CDC, CDPH, and San Joaquin County Health Services shortened the isolation period. Individuals who have tested positive may now release from isolation 6 days into their isolation period with a negative test result and resolved symptoms. If unable to test, isolation can end after the normal 10 days.

Second, CDPH has strongly recommended a *new* approach to contact tracing which allows for a quicker and broader response to confirmed cases in school settings through prompt notification, testing, and isolation protocols. The new shorter isolation period and increased transmissibility of variants currently circulating San Joaquin County requires a faster approach to contact tracing. This new strategy to a critical mitigation measure is now known as **group tracing notification of exposure** and will be *effective in MUSD beginning Monday, January 31.*

Group notification of exposure will identify students who spent more than a cumulative total of 15 minutes (within a 24-hour period) in a shared indoor airspace (e.g., classroom) with an individual who has tested positive for COVID-19. Similarly, students who belong to the same sports team, band or choir cohort, theater ensemble, or extracurricular club. Students occupying this shared space with a COVID-19 confirmed individual will receive a group exposure notification via email, including those who are fully vaccinated or recently infected.

The group exposure notice will indicate that your child **may** have been exposed to a confirmed case at school. Group tracing notifications aim to identify groups vs. individuals. As part of this strategy, the group of students receiving the notice will be encouraged to **test** and closely **monitor for symptoms**, however, are **not** required to quarantine at home and may **continue to come to school** and participate in all extracurriculars. If an exposed student becomes



symptomatic and/or tests positive for the virus, this student will need to isolate immediately and indicate symptoms/positive test on their daily self-screening survey.

Third, to keep current with new guidance relating to contact tracing, vaccination status, and isolation/quarantine procedures, MUSD has **updated the daily self-screening survey** to ask questions that will better identify each student's health status and exposure risk. *This daily self-screener is pivotal to the health of a school campus.* From at-home exposures to symptoms to positive test results, or no concerns at all, please participate in the survey each morning before arriving to school. Your survey results will indicate if it is safe for your child to report to campus that day and provide you with official guidance if it is unsafe. The survey will be updated effective Monday, January 31.

Lastly and importantly, the CDPH notes that being exposed to somebody with COVID-19 does not necessarily mean that you will become infected. In fact, they note scientific research and experience from around the country – [including from California](#) during this school year – demonstrate that schools remain among the safest places for children to be.

Our day-to-day operations continue to follow state and local guidance as outlined in our COVID-19 Safety Plan: [www.mantecausd.net/csp](http://www.mantecausd.net/csp). Mitigations such as universal mask wearing, indoor air filtration systems, daily self-screening, and clear communication with families help to prevent school outbreaks while keeping student learning at the forefront.

We are grateful for everyone's continued commitment to education and taking important steps to protect the health and well-being of our entire school community.

Should you have questions relating to this new group notification approach, please contact your school administration.