



PRESS RELEASE

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Dec. 8, 2020

School Status Unchanged by State's Regional Stay-Home Order

On Thursday, Gov. Newsom announced a new Stay-at-Home order that tightens restrictions on business and personal activities in regions of the state where hospital ICU capacity drops below 15 percent.

Sonoma County is part of the Bay Area region, which has the highest ICU capacity in the state. If trends continue, the state projects ICU capacity in our county to fall below 15 percent in mid- to late-December. The rest of the state will mostly likely trigger these restrictions in early December. While some Bay Area counties have opted to adopt the order early, **Sonoma County has not and is not currently subject to these restrictions.**

However, should this order take effect in Sonoma County, the status of school operations will remain largely unchanged. The order would not modify [existing state guidance regarding K-12 schools](#). Schools that are already open are able to continue to provide in-person instruction on school sites. In Sonoma County, the only schools currently open are those that applied for and received an elementary school waiver or those operating small cohorts for at-risk students.

Specifically, the Stay Home order allows:

- Schools that are currently operating under an elementary school waiver are able to continue to provide instruction to students on school sites.

- All schools that have not yet reopened for in-person instruction are able to continue to serve small cohorts of students (e.g., students with disabilities) following [CDPH Guidance](#).

“The state’s intent is to allow schools to continue their current operations so that students and families experience some stability with their education,” said Dr. Steve Herrington, Sonoma County Superintendent of Schools.

Additionally, as long as Sonoma County remains in the purple tier and/or under a Stay Home order, no additional schools will be able to open for in-person instruction. Furthermore, per State recommendation the school waiver application process is being put on hold until the County’s 7-day average daily county case rate is below 14 cases per 100,000.

Schools are eligible to reopen for in-person instruction without a waiver once the county enters the red tier—something that schools around Sonoma County are working hard to prepare for.

“The Sonoma County Office of Education is working closely with our local school districts and the Department of Health Services to ensure that schools are able to open their doors as soon as it is safe to do so,” said Herrington.

“We continue to be concerned about the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic on education and are eager to see our children back in classrooms,” said Sonoma County Health Officer Dr. Sundari Mase. “The State relies on health data to decide when schools can safely welcome students back on campuses. In the meantime, the County is working with the Sonoma County Office of Education to prepare schools to reopen for in-person instruction as soon as the State allows.”

Learn more

[This video explains when schools are eligible to reopen.](#)

[This video explains what schools are doing now to prepare for a safe and successful reopening.](#)

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