

## **ACUSD Board COVID-19 Update**

Submitted by Dr. Rita Kerr, Amador County Health Officer

January 13, 2020

### **COVID-19 Situation Report:**

Amador Resident Confirmed Cases to Date: 1,315

Active Cases as of Tuesday evening: 141 (cases are released from Isolation when they are no longer contagious)

Current Amador test positivity rate is currently 10.9%

Current Amador County Tier Assignment: Purple (Widespread)

In Amador County, along with the rest of the Greater Sacramento Region, the Regional Stay-at-Home Order based on ICU availability was lifted yesterday. We remain under the Purple Tier restrictions.

Contact tracing of school-related cases in Amador County to date has not confirmed any classroom transmission of COVID-19. Close contacts are advised to get tested during quarantine at 5-7 days after their exposure, or anytime if they develop symptoms. As of today, no school contacts of classroom cases have become positive.

Amador County's community no-cost COVID-19 nasal swab testing site has moved, effective today. It will be open Mondays, Wednesdays and Saturdays from 7 a.m. – 7 p.m. at the Health and Human Services Building, back entrance. Children can be tested at this site. Appointments may be made by visiting [lhi.care/covidtesting](https://lhi.care/covidtesting) or calling 1-888-634-1123.

Public Health has been coordinating with the school nurses to ensure that students and staff who have any symptoms, and those who are in isolation or quarantine, are not on site at school campuses. It is very important in order for schools to stay open that anyone who is sick, even with a mild symptom, stay home. During our Contact Tracing calls, Public Health frequently hears stories from people who have tested positive that they didn't think their mild symptoms could be COVID-19. Often, they believed they had allergies, a cold, or food poisoning. Although the symptoms and the course of the illness may be mild for that individual, they are at risk of spreading to others who may be vulnerable to more severe illness if they continue to work, attend school or interact with others.

Consistently practicing proper use of face coverings, maintaining physical distance of at least 6 feet from others, and frequent hand hygiene are crucial to minimize risk of virus spread.

The following information is from the California Safe Schools for All Plan:

## **With the Right Precautions, We Can Minimize Transmissions in Schools—Especially in Elementary Grades**

Research across the globe shows that children get COVID-19 less often than adults, and when they do get sick, they get less sick than adults. Population-wide studies in Italy and Spain using antibody tests, which indicate whether a person has been infected at any point previously, find that children have lower rates of infection compared to adults.

In studies of open schools in America and around the world, children do not seem to be major sources of transmission—either to each other or to adults. In fact, the greatest risk in school settings comes from adults transmitting it to other adults, often in settings like breakrooms where we sometimes let down our guard. One study in Australia of 10 early childhood centers and 15 schools (>6000 people) found low rates in the schools overall (1.2%), and an adult-to-adult transmission rate almost 15 times higher than child-to-child transmission.

The growing body of evidence is particularly strong for lower risks associated with elementary schools. For example, a study analyzing elementary schools in a heavily impacted region of France found that the risks of transmission inside schools were approximately the same as outside schools. The lower risks associated with younger grades is likely due to, among other reasons, the fact that younger people produce fewer ACE-2 receptors—COVID's doorway into human cells.

Even in communities with many COVID cases, we do not see many outbreaks in schools. That's because the right precautions can stop outbreaks before they start. Evidence shows that schools with the right mitigation strategies have been able to prevent in-school transmission among students and staff.

Another development that gives us hope is the arrival of vaccines for COVID-19. Teachers and school staff are in the high priority group as California moves into Phase 1b of vaccination. Public Health is currently collaborating with ACUSD to arrange vaccine clinics for teachers and staff beginning next week.

We know what works. We can stop the spread of COVID in schools by layering and carefully implementing mitigation strategies, including masks, cohorting, proper ventilation, washing hands, testing and symptom screening. The vaccine will add another layer of protection on top of these measures, which even those who have received vaccine need to continue practicing at this time.