



## COVID-19 Health & Safety Update: Letter to the Families of Amador County Public Schools

March 16, 2020

The safety and wellness of students, families, and school personnel are the highest priorities of all Amador County Public Schools. In recognition of the statewide COVID-19 situation and the potential impact in Amador County, ACUSD Superintendent Dr. Amy Slavensky and ACOE Superintendent Dr. Steve Russell have decided in concurrence with Dr. Rita Kerr, Amador County Public Health Officer, to close all public Amador County Public Schools during the week of March 23-27, 2020.

We will continually reassess whether an extension of school closures beyond March 27, 2020 will be necessary. Dr. Rita Kerr reported while there is no community transmission of COVID-19 in our county at this time, the Amador County Public Health Department expects to begin seeing an increase in cases in the coming days and weeks which may require a continued response. Several counties in California and states across the country have made similar choices, including the counties of Placer, Sacramento, Calaveras, El Dorado, and Tuolumne. The states of Michigan, Ohio, Pennsylvania, Washington, and Wisconsin have decided to close all public schools.

While we recognize this decision will pose challenges and hardship to many families in our county, the most effective way to slow and disrupt the transmission of this pandemic is by implementing social distancing practices. During the time of the school closure, we ask that students and families follow the County Public Health Officer's directive to stay home and minimize social contact to the extent possible.

Protecting public health requires a community-wide response, and we will need the help of families to remain united in our response. Dr. Kerr emphasizes that, "We need everyone to take social distancing seriously if we are to achieve the benefit of protecting vulnerable individuals in the County from COVID-19." While children have not been shown to be a high-risk group for serious illness from COVID-19, they are still able to transmit the virus to populations who are most vulnerable to serious illness, such as older adults and those with compromised immune systems.

To achieve the greatest effect in reducing COVID-19 transmission in Amador County, we encourage students and families during this time to:

- Avoid large public gatherings such as malls, movie theaters, and other spaces, especially those that are indoors.
- Plan to spend the dismissal week with just your immediate family and a few friends.
- Use social media and phone to keep in touch with the rest of your family and friends.
- Postpone visits to older adult relatives and neighbors, and to people with compromised immune systems.

- Avoid traveling out of the county to other locations where COVID-19 is circulating more widely.
- Athletic practices for non-contact outdoor sports may be held, in keeping with social distancing guidance and subject to the rules and edicts of the Mother Lode League and the CIF Sac-Joaquin Section.

We understand that implementing these changes with such limited notice is challenging and disruptive, and we appreciate your patience and cooperation. We are grateful to community members throughout our county for their tremendous efforts during these challenging times. School and district leaders are meeting this week to develop plans to address continued learning and the provision of meals during this time of school closure. More information will be provided later this week.

This is a dynamic situation where information and circumstances can evolve quickly. For the latest updates, visit:

- Centers for Disease Control COVID-19 website: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/infection-control/index.html>
- Amador County Public Health website: <https://www.amadorgov.org/services/public-health>
- Amador County Public Schools website: <https://amadorcoe.org/coronavirus-disease/>

For ideas on how to talk to your children about COVID-19 please visit [https://www.nasponline.org/resources-and-publications/resources-and-podcasts/school-climate-safety-and-crisis/health-crisis-resources/talking-to-children-about-covid-19-\(coronavirus\)-a-parent-resource](https://www.nasponline.org/resources-and-publications/resources-and-podcasts/school-climate-safety-and-crisis/health-crisis-resources/talking-to-children-about-covid-19-(coronavirus)-a-parent-resource).

Sincerely,

Dr. Steve Russell, Superintendent, Amador County Office of Education  
Dr. Amy L. Slavensky, Superintendent, Amador County Unified School District  
Dr. Rita Kerr, Amador County Public Health Officer