



The Winston School COVID-19 Protocols

July 2023

This plan is based on the **California Department of Public Health COVID-19 Public Health Guidance for K-12 Schools to Support Safe In-Person Learning, 2023-2024 School Year**, as well as the relevant school guidance from San Diego County.

COVID-19 is here to stay, but we have learned methods and gained tools to decrease its impact on our health and well-being. The plan is subject to change based on recommendations or regulations made by CDPH, San Diego education and health agencies, and the Centers for Disease Control. The Winston School will remain nimble and responsive to dynamic challenges.

The following protocols are intended to support safe, in-person learning at **The Winston School** and mitigate the spread of COVID-19. These disease management strategies are guided by the principle that safe, in-person learning is critical to student well-being and development.

Since the emergence of COVID-19, we have learned methods and gained tools to decrease its impact on our health and well-being by being adaptive to changing conditions. Additionally, many strategies to address COVID-19 can protect school communities from other diseases and support healthy learning environments.

General Considerations:

1. When deciding whether additional measures are warranted to mitigate in-school transmission of COVID-19, The Winston School will look to local health and education officials to review this guidance, relevant local considerations, CDPH, and [CDC guidance](#).
2. As stated in the CDPH Public Health Guidance, consideration will be given to The Winston School's population and the surrounding community. Factors include
 - CDC community-level [indicators](#) of COVID-19 and their trajectory;
 - [COVID-19 vaccination coverage](#) in the community and among students, teachers, and staff;

- local COVID-19 outbreaks or transmission patterns;
- indoor and outdoor air quality at relevant facilities; and
- availability and accessibility of resources, including masks and tests.

Mitigation Strategies:

1. Staying Up to Date on Vaccinations:

California strongly recommends that all eligible individuals get vaccinated against COVID-19 and remain up-to-date to protect themselves and reduce virus transmission. Though The Winston School does not require the COVID-19 vaccine for students or employees, it strongly recommends that all eligible individuals consider vaccinating [against COVID-19](#) and [remaining up-to-date](#) to protect themselves and reduce virus transmission.

2. Optimizing Indoor Air Quality:

The risk of getting COVID-19 is greater in indoor settings with poor air quality. Adequate ventilation and filtration can curb the spread of COVID-19 and other infectious diseases. It may also protect students and staff from exposure to wildfire smoke and other airborne allergens and pollutants.

The Winston School remains committed to excellent indoor air quality by opening doors and windows to produce cross drafts and using air purifiers with HEPA filters in classrooms and offices. In circumstances where outdoor air quality is poor (such as from wildfire smoke), The Winston School will confer with local health officials to determine the best approach forward.

3. Using Facemasks:

Masks, particularly high-quality and well-fitting masks, remain highly effective, inexpensive, and dynamic tools to protect oneself and mitigate transmission of COVID-19 and other respiratory pathogens.

The Winston School will provide masks to students and employees who inadvertently fail to bring a face covering to school and want to use one.

- Wear a mask around others if you have respiratory symptoms (e.g., cough, runny nose, and/or sore throat) or have been exposed to someone with COVID-19.
- When wearing a mask, ensure your mask provides the best [fit and filtration](#) (respirators like N95, KN95, and KF94 are best).

In addition, wearing a mask is increasingly important for those that are [at higher risk of getting very sick from COVID-19](#), and as the risk for transmission increases in the community:

- Examples of settings to consider wearing a mask include indoor areas of public transportation (such as in airplanes, trains, buses, ferries) and transportation hubs (such as airports, stations, and seaports), and other crowded indoor settings, especially where higher risk individuals are present.

Local health jurisdictions and other entities may have requirements in specific settings based on local circumstances.

For more tips and resources for face masks, visit the CDPH resource hub here: [Get the Most Out of Masking \(ca.gov\)](#).

4. Getting Tested for COVID-19:

Testing remains a critical mitigation layer to detect and curb the transmission of COVID-19. It will continue to provide free access to **over-the-counter tests**. The Winston School continues to require testing of individuals as directed by the [K-12 Decision Tree](#) from San Diego County.

Following [CDPH K-12 School COVID Guidance](#) and [Senate Bill No. 1479](#), The Winston School has adopted the California Department of Public Health's COVID-19 [Testing Framework for K-12 Schools](#) for the 2022-23 School Year. Updates for the 2023-24 School Year are pending. Our designated **COVID-19 Testing Point of Contact is Maureen Kendrick**, maureen.kendrick@thewinstonschool.org, The Winston School COVID-19 School Liaison.

5. Maintaining Clean Hands:

Hand hygiene can prevent the spread of infectious diseases, including COVID-19. As such, The Winston School continues to teach and reinforce proper [handwashing](#) to lower the risk of spreading viruses, including the virus that causes COVID-19. The School also teaches and reinforces covering [coughs and sneezes](#) to help keep individuals from getting and spreading infectious diseases, including COVID-19.

The Winston School provides supplies to support hand hygiene behaviors, including soap, tissues, and hand sanitizers with at least 60 percent alcohol for staff and students who can safely use hand sanitizer.

Managing Individuals with Symptoms:

Staying home when sick can lower the risk of spreading infectious diseases, including COVID-19, to other people. Thus, students who develop symptoms of contagious diseases, including COVID-19, while at school will be evaluated to determine whether or not the student should be sent home.

In most situations, any student who develops new, unexplained symptoms should only return to campus once it is clear that symptoms are mild and improving or are due to a non-infectious cause (e.g., allergies). This includes waiting until 24 hours after the resolution of the fever without using fever-reducing medications.

Additionally, if students are experiencing COVID-19 [symptoms](#), they will be required to get tested immediately. Students should also follow the [K-12 Decision Tree](#) for retesting and/or isolating if results are positive. Teachers will work with students absent for an extended period on a learning plan through Schedule Q.

6. Reporting COVID-19 to local health authorities:

The Winston School will notify local health authorities of the disease burden to manage illness and contain transmission and outbreaks when required.

7. Managing Students Diagnosed with COVID-19:

Prompt management of students with COVID-19 can prevent further spread and, in some cases, allow for early treatment.

Students diagnosed with COVID-19 should follow recommendations in the [K-12 Decision Tree](#), including staying home for at least five days and wearing a well-fitting mask around others for ten days, especially indoors.

8. Managing Students Exposed to COVID-19:

All students with known exposure to persons with COVID-19 should follow the recommendations in the [K-12 Decision Tree](#). If they remain without symptoms, students may continue to attend school. As recommended by San Diego County, they should wear a well-fitting mask around others for ten days and get tested per guidance.

9. Managing COVID-19 Outbreaks:

CDPH will continue to support local health and education officials in managing [suspected or confirmed outbreaks](#) of COVID-19. Based on CDPH findings, broad disruptions to in-person learning, such as temporary school or

classroom closures due to COVID-19, should remain a last resort and be considered only after all available resources have been exhausted and only after conferring with local health officials.

10. Cleaning Facilities:

The Winston School employs a combination of employee and professional outside services for routine cleaning to remove the virus that causes COVID-19 from surfaces sufficiently. When disinfectants are used, the School uses [asthma-safer products](#).

A water filling station is available on campus and maintained for student and employee use.