

March 12, 2020

Dear Lowell Joint Families:

Please allow us to start by thanking every single Lowell Joint family for your extreme patience, kindness for each other, and support as we all carefully walk through this unprecedented challenge of COVID-19. We stand in faith that we will work through this challenging time and come out stronger at the other end. It is your faith and hard work that makes Lowell Joint the special family that we are. We want to constantly remind ourselves to pause and take a breath as we manage each day and each new challenge that comes our way; we will overcome and succeed.

Lowell Joint continues to be in constant contact with the Orange & LA County Department of Public Health (DPH) as well as the Orange & LA County Department of Education. As we are all aware there is new information coming out minute-by-minute and is ever changing day-by-day; we follow the direction of both Orange & LA County Department of Public Health (DPH).

We have received information that has been developed by: John Hopkins University, Centers for Disease Control, World Health Organization, Statista, China Center for Disease Control & Prevention, Google News, New York times, The Guardian and can be found at:

<https://informationisbeautiful.net/visualizations/covid-19-coronavirus-infographic-datapack/>

The **safety and care of our students and staff continue to be our #1 priority.** Our focus continues to be on preventing the spread of the illness by following basic sanitary practices. As we previously shared, we have added a number of additional steps to help support our existing protocols:

- Daily sanitizing of all surfaces and objects that are touched often (bathrooms, counter tops, doorknobs, faucet handles, light switches, etc.)
- We have hired **six** additional custodians each day alongside our current staff to ensure that all school surfaces are cleaned and sanitized at each campus.
- Additional hand sanitizer for all students and staff is being provided.
- Custodial staff are cleaning and sanitizing our eating surfaces during/between lunch times. Cafeteria staff continue their rigorous cleaning protocols in all kitchens.
- The entire staff is focused on keeping a clean, healthy, and safe educational classroom and school; which is what they have always done.
- All campuses have enhanced signage to remind students and staff to follow common sense hygiene standards; we all need reminding no matter how old/young we are. 😊

The topic of **new enrolling students** has come up and we want to reassure/remind our families that we continue to follow our existing protocol for all new enrollees:

- They must have completed a physical by a physician.
- They must have all of their immunization shots.
- All paperwork is reviewed by office staff to ensure full compliance.
- We have **added** that our district nurse must review all health paperwork to ensure that every step of clearance has been followed and the student is cleared to start school.
- We have **added** that any new student, who might come from out of the country, will also need to have been cleared by a doctor and sit-out for the 14-day clearance window.

It is absolutely **crucial** that our students are safe and that our new Lowell Joint family members feel cared for and respected as we lovingly work through this process.

In collaboration with the Department of Public Health, and in an abundance of caution Lowell Joint will immediately make the following **additional precautionary adjustments to instructional programs and schedules**:

- All field trips are postponed until at least April 11, 2020.
- All large on-campus events (Boot Camp, Senior Friends Day, etc.), where outside people come onto campus, are postponed until at least April 11, 2020.
- We will still have on campus award assemblies for students, but the addition of off-campus guests will be limited including parents.
- Any events after April 11, 2020 will be addressed as we get closer to those events.

We will continue to follow any additional guidelines provided by the Department of Public Health and Department of Education.

Lowell Joint is beyond blessed to have one of the strongest instructional staff who already provide online learning through the Google Classroom platform for our normal instructional process. Google Classroom, along with our online curriculum resources, will make any potential adjustments easily possible if in the **rare** situation the Department of Public Health were to direct us to close schools. If that rare situation were to actually occur, we would provide our families with structured guidelines and protocols. Again, we **do not** anticipate this occurring, but we are prepared to handle whatever challenge might come our way; that is what families do 😊.

There currently are no school closures in our area and we will continue to rely on both Orange and LA County Department of Public Health if they ever determine any school closures would be required. DPH will work with schools to assess and determine, on a case by case basis, if a school needs to dismiss or close. There are no current incidents of the virus in our local areas.

As COVID-19 cases and concerns increase, it is critical that families and staff understand and follow the DPH guidelines aimed at preventing a viral outbreak; it's a good time for all of us to become prepared, but **not to panic**. It is still the flu season and we are following the best disease-prevention practices in our schools and in your homes. Sorry, I realize that this is overly repetitive:

- Frequently washing your hands with soap and water (20 seconds).
- Keeping surfaces clean.
- Sneezing or coughing into a tissue or your elbow.
- Most importantly, keeping your child home when they are sick with flu-like symptoms, including a fever of 100-degrees Fahrenheit or 38-degrees Celsius or higher, shortness of breath, and coughing. Call your school to let them know if your child is staying home sick.
- If students or staff start to show symptoms at school, we will have them head home immediately.
- Students and staff should not return to work until they have been fever-free for 24 hours without taking medication, which is our normal practice/protocol for illnesses.
- If a student is sick – call in the absence and stay home.

Again, these are the same precautions we have always followed just like with any cold or flu.

We understand that the continuing information about the coronavirus creates fear. We also know that there is a lot of misinformation circulating in our community. Both of these factors can result in stigmatization. We want to help combat these fears by staying informed and ensuring that we are creating welcoming environments for all our students and staff. We encourage you to stay informed with accurate information provided through the

Department of Public Health's website:

<https://www.cdph.ca.gov/Programs/CID/DCDC/Pages/Immunization/ncov2019.aspx> or
<https://www.cdph.ca.gov/Programs/OPA/Pages/NR20-014.aspx>

and

OCDE Newsroom Link:

<https://mail.google.com/mail/u/0/#inbox/FMfcgxwHMGLRZNBqNHHtbHzRFCCztGSK> or
<https://newsroom.ocde.us/coronavirus-update/>

As we have shared previously, this is what we know at this point and we all understand the entire situation is ever-changing. We stand in clear faith that together our Community, State, and Country will once again overcome any challenge that comes our way. If you have questions about employee attendance as it relates to the coronavirus, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Thank you,

Jim Coombs,
Superintendent of Schools

Nancy White,
District School Nurse

Please see the guidelines from California Department of Public Health below



To protect public health and slow the rate of transmission of COVID-19, gatherings as described below should be postponed or canceled across the state of California for at least the remainder of the month of March.

The California Department of Public Health finds the following:

- Large gatherings that include 250 people or more should be postponed or canceled.
 - This includes gatherings such as concerts, conferences, and professional, college, and school sporting events.
- Smaller gatherings held in venues that do not allow social distancing of six feet per person should be postponed or canceled.
 - This includes gatherings in crowded auditoriums, rooms or other venues.
- Gatherings of individuals who are at higher risk for severe illness from COVID-19 should be limited to no more than 10 people.
 - This includes gatherings such as those at retirement facilities, assisted living facilities, developmental homes, and support groups for people with health conditions.
- A “gathering” is any event or convening that brings together people in a single room or single space at the same time, such as an auditorium, stadium, arena, large conference room, meeting hall, cafeteria, or any other indoor or outdoor space.

This applies to all non-essential professional, social, and community gatherings regardless of their sponsor. Gatherings that do not meet the aforementioned criteria should only be conducted when they are essential—that is, if the activity is essential and could not be postponed or achieved without gathering, meaning that some other means of communication could not be used to conduct the essential function.

What will this achieve?

The timely implementation of aggressive strategies that create social distance and those that reduce close contact of people not regularly together, including limiting gatherings, has proven effective in prior pandemics at delaying rates of transmission and reducing illness and death.

By decreasing the prevalence of disease across California we will:

- Reduce the number of Californians who contract COVID-19 before an effective treatment or vaccine is available.
- Protect those most likely to experience severe symptoms, such as older Californians and those with underlying chronic conditions.
- Preserve and protect our health care delivery system, including our health care workforce, so they can care for the least healthy individuals in the community for any medical condition, not just COVID-19.
- Minimize the social and economic impacts of COVID-19 over the long run.

How long will these limitations apply?

This guidance will remain in place at least through the month of March. As with all guidance that relates to COVID-19 response, authorities will revisit this guidance on a regular basis to evaluate the continued public health need for it and to evaluate if any elements need to be changed. To stay informed, continue to monitor this link:

<https://www.cdph.ca.gov/Programs/CID/DCDC/Pages/Guidance.aspx>

What is Social Distancing and how is it achieved?

Social distancing is a practice recommended by public health officials to stop or slow down the spread of contagious diseases. It requires the creation of physical space between individuals who may spread certain infectious diseases. The key is to minimize the number of gatherings as much as possible and to achieve space between individuals when events or activities cannot be modified, postponed, or canceled.

Although the Department expects most events with more than 250 attendees to be postponed or canceled, we emphasize that the venue space does matter. Achieving space between individuals of approximately six feet is advisable. Additionally, there is a particular focus on creating space between individuals who have come together on a one-time or rare basis and who have very different travel patterns such as those coming from multiple countries, states or counties.

What can be done to a make a gathering safer if it is essential or small?

Stagger activities.

- Add frequency of an event to spread out attendance, e.g. hold more, smaller gatherings.
- Add distance between where individuals sit or stand around tables.
- Add additional hand washing stations and restrooms.
- Limit the number of people in lines.
- Avoid direct physical contact, such as hand-shaking, holding hands, and hugging.
- Extend hours to allow for staggering of attendance or participation.
- Use phones, videos or video conferencing to reduce the need for close interactions.
- Consider ways to encourage anyone with fever and respiratory symptoms to stay home when sick, such as
 - Offering refunds or support reselling of tickets for persons who become ill.
 - Placing messages on websites, tickets, and venue entrances reminding people to protect one another by staying home if sick.

Examples of Essential Events This Does Not Apply To

The goal of this recommendation is to prevent people physically coming together unnecessarily, where people who have the infection can easily spread it to others. This guidance does not apply to activities such as attendance at regular school classes, work, or essential services.

Please see the [guidance for schools](#) document for additional information.

Certain activities are essential to the functioning of our state and must continue. Hence, this does not apply to essential public transportation, airport travel, or shopping at a store or mall. Other [Specific guidance](#) can be found on the CDPH website to help people take actions that can protect them in those settings.