



SANTA MONICA - MALIBU UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT

October 14, 2021

## Superintendent's Message: COVID update: Vaccination Mandate and Modified Quarantine

Dear Parents, Guardian, Staff, Students and Community Members,

Our School Board engaged in a long and vigorous discussion at our September 22 meeting about many issues facing our school communities that have arisen due to COVID protocols and concerns.

While we have shared important information related to our district protocols, which have been implemented to keep students and staff safe on campus and learning in person on our campuses, we also recognize that there is other district business we must address at meetings. In light of that, the October 7 board meeting was focused on many of the academic presentations that we have had to table due to time constraints and recent meetings.

It is important to provide updates and board direction on topics of interest to our stakeholders. This letter will do that as well as present new information from our Governor.

### Modified In-School Quarantine

We continue to plan the implementation of a modified in-school quarantine option from the LA County Department of Public Health (LACDPH). After taking an in-depth look, **we have selected sixth grade as our initial phase to roll out our plan**. The reason is that a high majority of sixth graders are not yet eligible to be vaccinated and have been subjected to classroom quarantines more frequently compared to their seventh and eighth grade peers. All middle school students rotate through six periods, and that makes quarantining more challenging.

Overall, implementation of a modified in-school quarantine is complex. We have created two teams of three health care staff (recently and temporarily hired), who will mobilize as needed to any of our middle schools to support contact tracing and implementation, with the health and safety of all students as the highest priority.

From there, we will look to expand to seventh and eighth grades, as we continue to encourage youth ages 12 and up to get vaccinated. A reminder that vaccinated and asymptomatic children and adults are not subject to quarantine due to exposure.

As part of the implementation of modified in-school quarantine, **we will simultaneously implement a shortened at-home quarantine for all grades, from the current 10 days to seven days**. Parents and staff have been very interested in this change.

### Vaccine Mandate by Governor Newsom

#### SANTA MONICA-MALIBU UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT

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**Board of Education:** Keith Coleman • Craig Foster • Jon Kean • Maria Leon-Vazquez

Laurie Lieberman • Jennifer Smith • Dr. Richard Tahvildaran-Jesswein

**Superintendent:** Dr. Ben Drati

Governor Gavin Newsom announced a vaccination requirement for students to ensure every opportunity to remain in the classroom learning while still in the midst of a pandemic.

We are reviewing the mandate with our guiding health agencies and the California Department of Education and will keep you informed as we learn more about it. Governor Newsom's announcement of a vaccination requirement for students and possible implications to SMMUSD will be discussed at the October 21 School Board meeting mentioned below. There is no immediate impact to families with this announcement. I support and appreciate the Governor's mandate.

### **School Board Resolution - COVID Vaccination Requirement for All Staff**

The School Board's mandate for all SMMUSD staff to be vaccinated by October 1 has been implemented.

### **SMMUSD School Board Vaccination Requirement for Students**

Our School Board discussed a COVID-19 vaccination requirement for eligible students at the September 22 school board meeting and presented a draft resolution. Follow up to this discussion is planned for the October 21 meeting, where they will consider options that will clearly be informed by the Governor's announcement.

*Vaccines are a major component in the multilayered defense against the spread of COVID-19. By doing all we can to prevent the spread of this disease, we are helping to ensure our schools remain open for teaching and learning.*

### **Upcoming School Board Meeting**

Our second School Board meeting this month is on October 21. Following Governor Newsom's extension of remote meetings, AB 361, we will continue to conduct our board meetings remotely with board members and leadership in person and the public invited to participate via Zoom. We will be evaluating this month to month with the hope to return to an in-person option for the public sometime in the near future.

We also must weigh the fact that while on Zoom, our School Board meetings have had the highest attendance and participation in history, providing for more people to engage with us. School board meeting agendas are posted online prior to each scheduled meeting.

Our October 21 meeting will be predominantly focused on COVID-related matters, including what was mentioned above.

The [Los Angeles Times story on the Governor's mandate](#) provides an overview of his announcement.

The LACDPH has shared [vaccination fact sheet](#) for youth.

### **Share Your Comments / Follow School Site and District Communications**

You are welcome to share your thoughts with us through [Let's Talk](#). We want you to know that we appreciate your comments and questions, despite the fact that with high volume, we may not be able to respond individually to each email we receive.

We want to let you know that we are reading and listening to all stakeholder concerns and take each into consideration. This includes email to our School Board members.

Frequently, questions are answered on your school or district website, or in a recent communication from your Principal or from me.

Stay tuned to our dedicated page: [www.smmusd.org/Coronavirus](http://www.smmusd.org/Coronavirus), including the Frequently Asked Questions, which continue to be updated. [English](#) / [Spanish](#).

Thank you.

Sincerely,

Dr. Ben Drati, Superintendent