



SANTA MONICA - MALIBU UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT

March 26, 2021

Superintendent's Message: Plan to Fully Reopen and Required Return Plan Form

Dear Parents, Guardians, Staff and Community Members,

We know that many families are very excited to have their students return to school five days a week following spring break, while some families are still hesitant. With the Los Angeles County Department of Public Health distancing guidance reduced to three feet in classrooms announced on Monday, this opens up tremendous opportunities for fully reopening for those students who are ready for return.

We will reopen full-time in-person: Elementary, April 19 / Secondary, April 26

We are excited to announce our planned full reopening dates. Elementary students will return full-time on April 19 and secondary students will return full-time on April 26. Secondary students will have a week of hybrid as a transition the week of April 19. Distance learning will be an option.

School resumes on April 12 with distance learning for all.

Why are we not reopening fully in-person on that date?

- Current travel quarantine requirements will prevent some students and staff from returning to in-person on April 12. Our reopening focus is the health, safety and wellbeing of students and staff.
- We are still in a pandemic and need to take all precautions to ensure we do not end up with cases that require a school to shut down and quarantine, sending hundreds of students and staff home. This delay of one week will provide an extra measure of safety for our return.
- Principals and teachers will need adequate time to create new bell schedules and campus protocols to accommodate both the educational needs and safety requirements for students, and this cannot take place until April 12 when staff returns. Again, these are complicated issues that are unique to the new position in which we are finding ourselves, but we believe that this careful planning will lead to a safe and engaging school experience for all students.
- Principals and staff have spent the past few months planning for a hybrid return on April 12, and our site facilities will be ready for students by this date. However, this shift to full reopening cannot be achieved without time needed for many complex logistical concerns, including: providing new virtual classrooms with certificated SMMUSD teachers for those students remaining in distance learning-only; creating outdoor eating areas for students to eat / drink with six-foot distancing due to masks off; activating child

care programs; and restructuring transportation schedules to accommodate strict bus capacity guidelines.

- For elementary, the week of April 12: students will engage in a modified distance learning model with both synchronous and asynchronous work. Your principal will provide you with more information.
- For secondary, the week of April 12 will engage in a modified distance learning model, followed by a week of hybrid for the week of April 19, as we ramp up to reopen on April 26. Your principal will provide you with more information.

We are confident that this is the best decision to ensure everything goes smoothly upon return. We are committed to reopening our schools and remaining open.

Distance learning option

For elementary students not returning for in-person, you will be assigned a new teacher and new class with other distance learning-only students in the same grade. This is the only way we can continue offering a high-quality distance learning Zoom experience with similar scheduling and a fully-focused return to on-campus learning. Distance learning teacher assignments will be provided the week of April 12.

For secondary students continuing with distance learning only, students will keep their same teachers and participate with the class via Zoom. There may be a few exceptions for teachers who are unable to return in person.

Decision form

As we turn this corner we have all looked forward to, we require that you fill out this [decision form](#), so we know who is returning and who is continuing with distance learning only. It's critical that all families submit this form, so we may plan accordingly.

(Direct link: <http://bit.ly/SMMUSDreturnPlans>)

Special education students

For students with IEPs, please work with your special education team in order to better understand how your child's services can be delivered per the LACDPH guidelines. We will fulfill the minutes in your child's IEP, but we will need to look at the safest way to provide services. If your child will be continuing in Distance Learning, services will continue to be delivered online.

After school care

- We will do our best to support elementary school families with childcare needs upon our return to full in-person instruction beginning on April 19. For information or questions about childcare in grades TK-3 at all sites, please visit our website at <https://www.smmusd.org/Page/4110> or email SAP@smmusd.org.
- CREST Club for 4th/5th graders will operate at Edison, Franklin, Roosevelt, and Will Rogers. For information about childcare in grades 4/5, please visit the city [website](#) or call (310) 458-8540. For 4th/5th graders at the remaining sites, please also email SAP@smmusd.org for more information. CREST Enrichment will continue to be offered virtually. Please visit the city [website](#) for more information.

Local health experts provide ongoing support

Our health symposium featuring a panel of local medical professionals on March 25 shared medical information and insights that further support this decision. The symposium also provided valuable guidance for families who want to continue in distance learning or are uncertain about what is best for their student. If you missed it, you can view the [recording](#).

Stay vigilant

All of us are responsible for following current [health department travel guidelines](#). We recognize that some families and staff may travel during non-school days. We expect any staff or students who have traveled outside of California to abide by the required 10-day quarantine. This is for the health and safety of all staff and students.

This is not the time to let our guard down. We must all continue to do our part to keep COVID-19 away from our staff and families. To accomplish that upon return, we will continue with strict health protocols, including wellness screenings, mandatory and proper mask wearing, except when eating or drinking, regular hand washing / sanitizing and six-foot distancing while eating / drinking. It will be critical to keep sick children at home so as not to risk an entire class, or worse, an entire school having to shut down. Your principal will inform you of the consequences for students who will not wear their mask properly, as this is a serious issue during this time.

In addition, we will be announcing a COVID testing protocol for our school sites, as well as other safety measures that we view as important elements in keeping all individuals safe while building confidence for families uncertain about sending their students back to in-person school.

We are in this together, and together we can fully return to school safely and continue delivering distance learning to those students who are not returning at that time. We look forward to enjoying the remainder of the school year to the fullest extent possible.

Please have a safe and enjoyable spring break.

Sincerely,
Dr. Ben Drati, Superintendent