

# Superintendent's *Weekly* Brief

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*"Preparing and empowering all students for a future of endless possibilities."*

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September 4, 2020

## **First Week of School 2020-21**

Overall, we are very pleased with how the first week of school has gone. Yes, there were students who forgot their passwords and families who needed assistance with how to logon. Yes, there were technology issues. And yes, there struggled with getting back into a routine. However, we expected that this would be the case and support was available. The district provided technology tool tutorials modules for parents before the first day of school in both English and Spanish. In addition, the staff at both school sites and district office were prepared to answer calls to help with technology questions. ASES tutors were also available at elementary school sites to help with calls and onsite in-person support. In addition, our family Community and Family Engagement center offered live zoom tutorials for parents who wanted to ask questions and needed additional guidance. After the 2nd day of school, calls and requests for support slowed down as everyone adjusted.

Site principals have been joining zoom classroom sessions and are reporting that students and teachers are adjusting and are happy to reconnect. Everyone is being flexible, being patient, and giving grace to one another as they adjust to our new educational reality.

The main challenges for staff and parents have been learning how to use our new tools (ZOOM, Canvas). However, we are pleased with how fast our teachers and students are adjusting. Additionally, we are working to address the issue of Zoom not having closed caption.

Feedback we have received indicates students and teachers are happy to get back to some sort of normal routine. Everyone missed interacting and engaging with each other. It feels good to know that we are connecting with our students again and we look forward to when we can all be back in our schools when it is safe again. For now, students and staff are doing their best to continue engaging in learning.

By no means do I want to gloss over the first week. It has been difficult, there have been bumps and set-backs, and distance learning poses a variety of challenges for our students, families, and staff. However, our staff has stepped up to meet and exceed our expectations, and for that I would like to say – Thank You! I am hopeful that we will continue to improve as we move forward.

## **Yolo County Office of Education (YCOE) Task Force Continues Meetings to Discuss Considerations for Small Cohorts/Groups of Children and Youth Related to SPED and EL Services**

This week the YCOE Task Force began meeting again to tackle the issue of creating guidelines for districts to potentially allow small cohort groups of students, in areas such as special education and second language services, to participate in their learning using in-person instruction. We are still early in the process, but I have attached the PowerPoint presentation used to frame the conversation. Please let me be very clear that this is not the

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first step to re-open schools to in-person instruction. The Governor and California Department of Public Health (CDPH) have provided guidance for districts wishing to develop limited learning environments for some targeted groups. Our district is working with a group of approximately 60 educators and health professional to discuss and clarify how this process might work.

# Considerations for Small Cohorts/Groups of Children and Youth

September 3, 2020



# Agenda

- Welcome & Introductions
- Review **List of Guidance Resources**
- Review **Guidance for Small Cohorts/Groups of Children and Youth**
- Q & A
- Determine Next Steps



# Introductions – Name and Position

## Yolo County Public Health

### K-12 Education

- Charter School Representatives
- Private School Representatives
- Davis Joint Unified
- Esparto Unified
- Washington Unified
- Winters Joint Unified
- Woodland Joint Unified
- Yolo County Office of Education





# Links to School Guidance Resources

- **CDPH Guidance for Small Cohorts/Groups of Children and Youth**
  - <https://www.cdph.ca.gov/Programs/CID/DCDC/Pages/COVID-19/small-groups-child-youth.aspx>
- **FAQ from the Governor's Office** - “Providing Targeted, Specialized Support and Services at School”
  - <https://files.covid19.ca.gov/pdf/guidance-schools-cohort-FAQ.pdf>
- **CDPH Guidance for Limited Services**
  - <https://files.covid19.ca.gov/pdf/guidance-limited-services.pdf>



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# Review Guidance for Small Cohorts/Groups of Children and Youth

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# Scope

## From CDPH:

- Applies to **groups of children and youth in controlled, supervised, and indoor environments** operated by local educational agencies, non profits, or other authorized providers, including, but not limited to, public and private schools; licensed and license-exempt child care settings; organized and supervised care environments, i.e., **"distance learning hubs"; recreation programs; before and after school programs; youth groups; and day camps.**





# Purpose

## From CDPH:

- To provide guidance for **necessary in-person child supervision** and **limited instruction, targeted support services, and facilitation of distance learning in small group environments** for a specified subset of children and youth.
- For those programs to **understand the required health and safety practices** needed to prevent the spread of COVID-19 in their settings.





# Purpose

- From FAQs: The Cohorting Guidance authorizes **small-group, in-person services in controlled, supervised, and indoor environments**, such as those operated by local educational agencies (LEAs).
- From FAQs: The purpose of this guidance is to establish minimum parameters for **providing specialized services, targeted services and support for students while schools are otherwise closed for in-person instruction** in ways that maintain the focus on health and safety to minimize transmission.





# Discussion Questions

- ? From FAQs: If a school is closed for in-person instruction, is it permissible for a small set of students to receive in-person targeted, specialized support and services on campus?
- ? From Yolo: Does this apply to Special Day Classes? If so, would a maximum amount of time on campus be recommended?

- **Answer From FAQs:** Yes. In-person targeted, specialized support and services in stable cohorts is permissible when the school is able to **satisfy all of the conditions detailed in the Cohorting Guidance**, including:
  - Limiting cohort size
  - Restricting cohort mixing
  - Maintaining proper physical distancing, masking, cleaning and other safety measures





# Definition - Cohort

- From CDPH: A cohort is a stable group of **no more than 14 children or youth** and **no more than two supervising adults** in a supervised environment in which supervising adults and children stay together for all activities (e.g., meals, recreation, etc.), and avoid contact with people outside of their group in the setting.





# Definition – Supervising Adult

## From CDPH:

- An adult assigned to one cohort of children or youth, **who does not physically interact with any other cohorts.**
- This includes child care staff, certificated or classified school staff, volunteers, participating parent or caregiver, or other designated supervising adult(s).

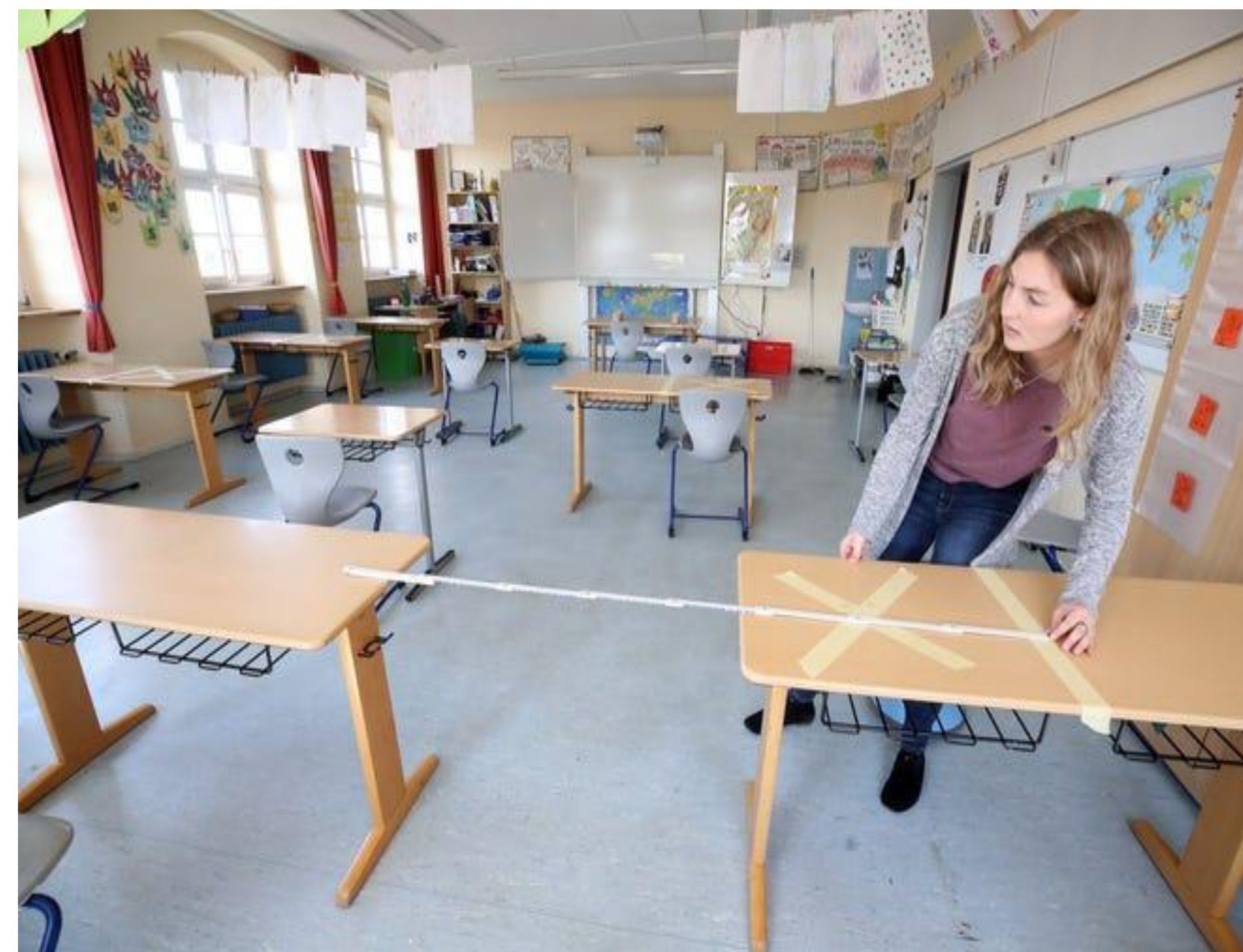




# Definition – Supervised Care Environment

## From CDPH:

- An environment where **multiple children or youth, from multiple families or households, are being supervised simultaneously by an adult.**
- This includes, but is not limited to:
  - Licensed child care facilities
  - Licensed exempt child care programs
  - **Supervised programs on a school site while a school is not in session or is providing curriculum in a distance-learning format,**
  - **Where some educational services are being offered to a subgroup of students** as identified by a local educational agency on a school campus.





# Considerations for Cohorts – Cohort Size

- Cohorts must be limited to **no more than 14 children and youth**.
- Cohorts must be limited to **no more than two supervising adults**.
- Requirements for **adult to child ratios continue to apply for licensed child care programs**.
- **Cohorts can be divided**, as needed, into subgroups of children and youth from the same cohort, as long as the 14-to-2 ratio is not exceeded.
- The **maximum cohort size applies to all children and youth in the cohort**, even when all children are not participating at the same time. For example:
  - A cohort may not include 6 children or youth who attend full-time, 6 children on Mon/Wed/Fri, and 6 children on Tue/Thu (total of 18).
  - A cohort may not include 8 children or youth who attend for the entire day, 4 who attend mornings only, and 4 who attend afternoons only (total of 16).



# Discussion Question

- ? From FAQs: Which students can be served in cohorts during school closures?



## Answer From FAQs:

- The **determination is made at the LEA- and school-level** based on the needs of students.
- **Students with disabilities** should be prioritized by the LEA and school for receiving targeted supports and services.
- In addition, **English learners, students at higher risk of further learning loss or not participating in distance learning, students at risk of abuse or neglect, foster youth and students experiencing homelessness** may also be prioritized.





# Discussion Questions

- ? From Yolo: Is a 1:1 para professional considered a “supervising adult” who is part of the 2:14 ratio?
- ? From Yolo: Is a 1:1 nurse considered a “supervising adult” who is part of the 2:14 ratio?





# Discussion Question

- ? From FAQs: How many cohorts can be established on a single school site?



## Answer from FAQs:

- Local school officials – in collaboration with local health departments and school-based staff – should **determine the number of cohorts that can be safely established to avoid interactions between cohorts.**
- In general, given the need for physical distancing and separation of cohorts, **the number of students on a given school site should generally not exceed 25% of the school's enrollment size or available building capacity.**





# Discussion Question

- ? From FAQs: What is the maximum size of cohorts?



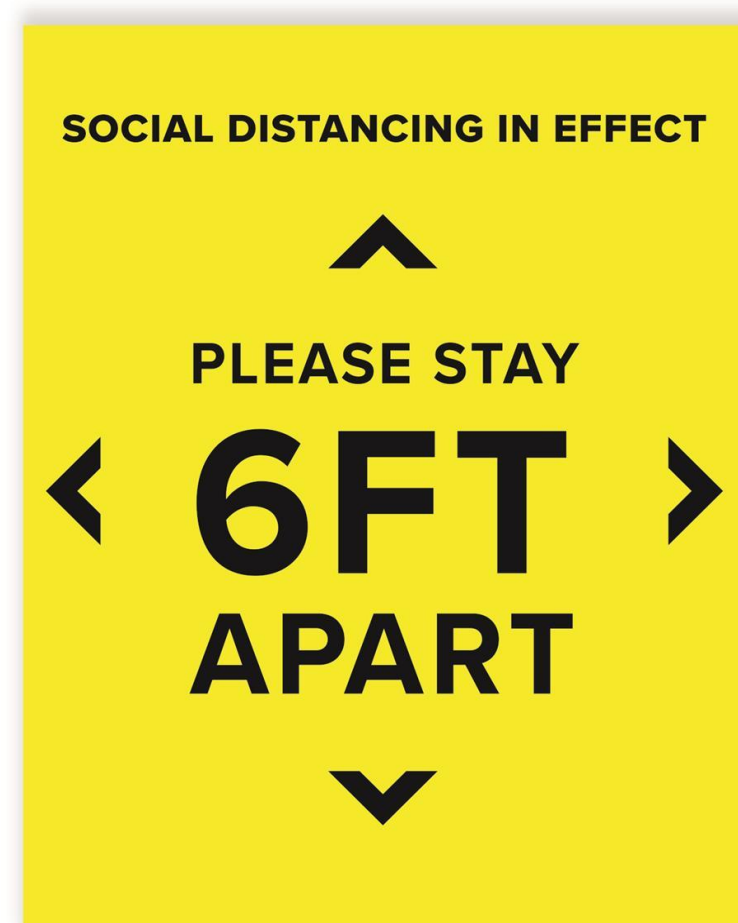
## Answer from FAQs:

- 14 students and 2 adults. A cohort could be 6 students with 1 adult or 8 students with two adults that **stay together throughout the day**.
- **A cohort can be divided into subgroups of students** that may interact with one another during the day, as long as there are no more than 14 students and no more 2 supervising adults in that cohort overall.



# Discussion Questions

- ? From FAQs: How will physical distancing be maintained within cohorts?
- ? From Yolo: Is 6 foot distancing must?



## Answer from FAQs:

- Groups must be no larger than can be accommodated by the space available in the facility to **provide at least 6 feet of distance between each person**, including staff.
- As cohort groups increase in size, or as they have any contact with other cohorts, the risk of spreading disease increases.





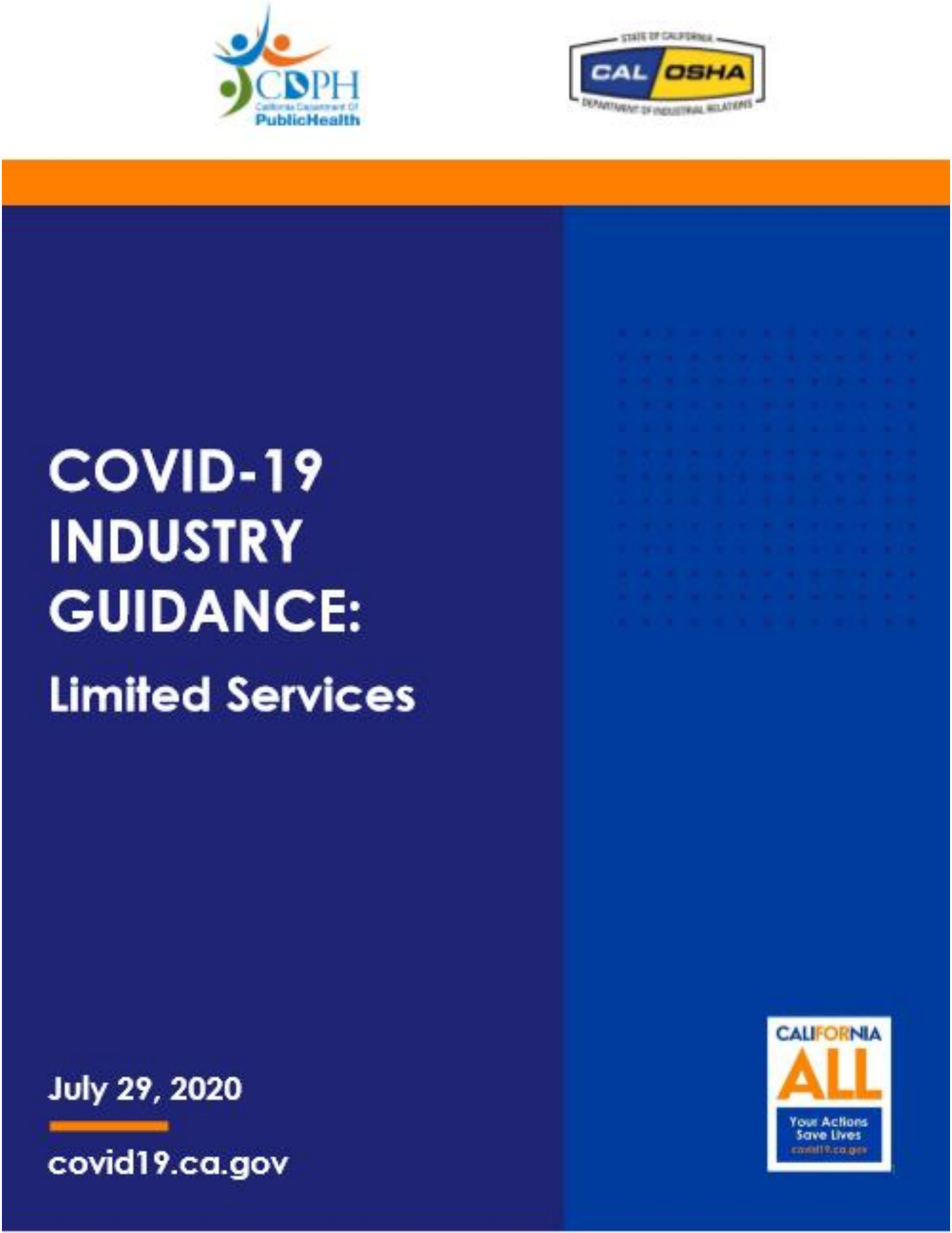
# Considerations for Cohorts – Cohort Mixing

- **Prevent interactions between cohorts**, including interactions between staff assigned to different cohorts.
  - Assign children and youth who live together or carpool together to the same cohort, if possible.
  - **Avoid moving children and youth** from one cohort to another, unless needed for a child's overall safety and wellness.
  - Cohorts must be kept separate from one another for special activities such as art, music, and exercise. **Stagger playground time and other activities** so that no two cohorts are in the same place at the same time.



# Considerations for Cohorts – Cohort Mixing

- **One-to-one specialized services can be provided** to a child or youth by a support service provider that is not part of the child or youth's cohort.
  - Specialized service includes but not limited to **occupational therapy services, speech and language services, and other medical, behavioral services, or educational support services** as part of a targeted intervention strategy.
- Services must be provided consistent with the industry guidance for **Limited Services** (PDF).





# Discussion Questions

- ? From FAQs: Can students receive additional specialized services or targeted support and services if they are not part of a cohort or outside of their cohort from a different supervising adult(s)?
- ? From Yolo: Is there an upper limit to the number of students a related service provider can serve?

## Answer from FAQs:

- Students **may receive one-on-one services and supports** from other qualified adults (must be done individually and cannot be done with other students).
- Staff who are providing specialized services or targeted support – such as speech or occupational therapy or intensive tutoring -- **should be assigned to work with students in as few cohorts as possible.**





# Discussion Questions

- ? from FAQs: Can schools have different cohorts on different days?
- ? from FAQs: Can students change cohorts?



**Answer from FAQs:** Schools can have cohorts of students who participate only on certain days or certain times during the day. **Proper cleaning** must be done in between different cohorts of students occupying the same space.

**Answer from FAQs:** **Students changing cohorts must be avoided**, unless a change is needed for the student's overall safety and wellness.



# Discussion Question & Example Schedule

• ? From Yolo: If you split a class of 10 students into 2 cohorts that are coming in on separate days of the week, can the same teacher be present across all days of the week?

## Monday / Wednesday

- Teacher A – In person instruction
- Para Professional A – In person instruction
- *Para Professional B – Distance learning*
- Students 1-5 – In person instruction
- *Students 6-10 – Distance learning*

## Tuesday / Thursday

- Teacher A – In person instruction
- *Para Professional A – Distance learning*
- Para Professional B – In person instruction
- *Students 1-5 – Distance learning*
- Students 6-10 – In person instruction

## Friday

- *All engaged in distance learning*





# Considerations for Staff

- **Supervising adults should be assigned to one cohort** and must work solely with that cohort.
- **Avoid changing staff assignments** to the extent practicable.
- **Substitute providers who are covering for short-term staff absences are allowed** but must only work with one cohort of children per day.





# Considerations for Staff

- Meetings among the staff from different cohorts must be **conducted remotely, outdoors, or in a large room in which all providers wear cloth face coverings and maintain at least 6 feet distance** from other providers.
- **Outdoor meetings and meetings in large rooms with the windows open** are preferred over meetings in small rooms with windows closed.





# Precautions and Considerations



**STUDENTS**

- **Physical distancing** between adults must be maintained as much as possible.
  - Physical distancing between young children in the same cohort should be **balanced with developmental and socio-emotional needs** of this age group.
- **Adults and students must use face coverings at all times**, pursuant to the [CDPH Schools Guidance](#) regarding face coverings.

Age	Face Covering Requirement
Under 2 years old	No
2 years old – 2 <sup>nd</sup> grade	Strongly encouraged**
3 <sup>rd</sup> grade – High School	Yes, unless exempt



# Discussion Question

? From FAQs: How often should cleaning be done while students are on campus?



## Answer from FAQs:

- Cleaning and wiping surfaces (e.g., desks, door handles, etc.) **must be maintained between multiple student uses, even in the same cohort.**
- For additional guidance around health and safety standards including cleaning and masking, refer to **CDPH and local health guidance.**





# Q & A



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# Determine Next Steps

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# THANK YOU

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