

CHOWCHILLA ELEMENTARY SCHOOL DISTRICT COVID-19 GATHERING GUIDANCE

Greetings Chowchilla Elementary Community,

We would like to update you on new ongoing developments around COVID-19 health concerns facing the nation and our state. This is a fluid situation that changes by the hour. That is why Chowchilla Elementary, along with our neighboring school districts, remain vigilant in following guidance and direction from health experts both at the California Department of Public Health and the Madera County Department of Public Health.

To assist school districts in these changing conditions, Governor Newsom issued new guidance yesterday involving group gatherings of over 250 people. Gatherings that do not meet the 250 threshold should only be conducted when they are essential—that is, if the activity is both an essential function and could not be postponed or achieved without gathering in person (meaning that some other means of communication could not be used to conduct essential function). We are defining essential functions as anything that is essential to the operation of a school site, student learning and/or governance of our district.

Governor Newsome's message reiterated that school is essential for students and his purpose was to help provide strategies in assisting staff, students and communities to reduce potential risk, especially those identified as a higher risk—the elderly and those with pre-existing health conditions. While the health risk to the general public in California from COVID-19 continues to **remain low**, and especially here locally, we are following this newly released guidance.

Effective immediately, Chowchilla Elementary is postponing all non-essential group gatherings through at least April 13th, 2020.

Those non-essential gatherings being postponed include but are not limited to:

- Athletic competitions and tournaments, but practices can continue as planned
- All field trips including camps
- VAPA (Visual and Performing Arts) events, assemblies, open houses, dances and award ceremonies
- Large parent and community gatherings
- Civic contracts, including all outside community organizations that utilize district space

Gatherings with less than 250 persons, accompanied by social distancing practices will be considered on a case-by-case basis. Parents will be notified as events are being postponed or cancelled. The District is in the process of updating the website to reflect the status of events. (<https://www.chowchillaelem.k12.ca.us/>).

We are encouraging school site leadership to be creative in how to provide for the best social distancing practices for our students. Each site is incredibly different, and we recognize that your expertise in this area will be best for your students.

Please realize that families must mitigate their own personal risk and they have every right to make the decisions that they feel are best for their families. We will continue to operate based upon guidance from the CDC, CDPH and MCDPH and will update frequently as the situation continues to be very fluid and fast-moving.

Respectfully,



Dr. Charles Martin,
Superintendent