



July 29, 2021

Dear Parent or Guardian:

Your school is committed to helping your child stay safe during the upcoming school year. The Pima County Health Department continues to partner with schools to incorporate appropriate public health measures in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. PCHD will be offering immunizations as part of returning back to school safely.

Please refer to pima.gov/covid19vaccine for our PCHD clinic hours, or schedule an appointment with your primary care provider.

In addition, PCHD recommends the following actions to help ensure safety of students, faculty and staff at our school:

Vaccinate your student if they are 12 or older.

All leading infectious disease and pediatric experts – including the [Arizona Department of Health Services](#) – continue to reinforce that the best way to stop the spread of COVID-19 and the delta variant is to be vaccinated. Check with your physician if you have questions about your child and/or the vaccine. You can also call PCHD at 520-222-0119 if you have questions about the vaccine.

Send your student to school with a mask.

CDC recommends universal indoor masking for all teachers, staff, students, and visitors 5 years and older to K-12 schools, regardless of vaccination status. Children should return to full-time in-person learning in the fall with layered prevention strategies in place. PCHD agrees with this guidance. Encourage your child to wear masks.

Talk with your child about what to say if a classmate asks “Why are you wearing a mask?”

It can simply be, “Because I’m protecting myself and my friends from getting sick,” but have that conversation with your student to ease any insecurities about wearing a mask. If you choose to send your student to school without a mask, talk to them about how some students might be wearing a mask and why they and their families chose to make that decision.

Please do not send your student to school if your child is ill or if they have been exposed to COVID-19.

Pima County can require classroom closures based on the number of cases in the classroom.

Get tested for COVID-19.

COVID-19 testing is readily available at PCHD clinics, local testing sites, community health providers, local pharmacies, and other facilities. Visit pima.gov/covid19testing or [Arizona Department of Health Services](#) for a list of these facilities. Regular testing is a safe and easy way to ensure your child and their classmates are healthy and ready to learn.

Theresa Cullen, MD, MS, Director

3950 S. Country Club Road, Suite 100, Tucson, AZ 85714 • Phone: 520-724-7765 • Fax: 520-838-7420

Your child's school may offer free pooled testing through a [partnership with the Arizona Department of Health Services](#) and the Arizona Department of Education. Pooled testing is when a group of people – often a class – have their COVID-19 nose swabs combined into one sample and tested. If the results of the pool testing are negative, then all students are cleared to continue their in-person learning as normal. If it is positive, it is recommended that your student obtain a free individual diagnostic test. Talk to your school leaders about what they plan to offer.

Thank you for your cooperation. Feel free to reach out to the PCHD school team if you have specific questions at 520-724-7794 or email us at EOCEducation@pima.gov.

Signed,



Theresa Cullen, MD, MS
Pima County Health Department
Public Health Director