



July 28, 2021

Dear Parent/Guardian,

Together, our K-12 schools and Pima County Health Department are working to ensure a safe return to classrooms to kick off the 2021-2022 school year.

First, the Health Department strongly recommends that everyone who can get a COVID-19 vaccine do so. The available vaccines are your best defense against new variants of COVID-19.

Second, the Health Department asks that everyone age 5 and over wear a mask.

Third, the Health Department recently shared updated guidance with our K-12 school partners regarding what campuses can do to lower the risk of COVID-19 spreading. The recommendations include:

- Universal indoor masking for all teachers, staff, students, and visitors to K-12 schools, regardless of vaccination status, in accordance to CDC guidance.
- Universal mask wearing in public indoor settings (including fully vaccinated individuals) for all Pima County residents to help prevent the spread of the delta variant and to protect others.
- Physical distancing – keeping at least 3 feet between students, teachers and staff, or 6 feet if possible for those who are not yet fully vaccinated.
- Testing – the Health Department supports the use of BINAX in schools and recommends pooled testing if possible.
- Grouping students into cohorts
- Improving ventilation and air flow in classrooms
- Handwashing and covering coughs and sneezes
- Staying home when sick with symptoms of any infectious illness (including COVID-19)
- Regular cleaning

Fourth, the Health Department will conduct contact tracing and case investigations for positive COVID-19 cases in K-12 schools. All schools are required to report positive cases to the Health Department. All schools have been given information on contact tracing and can help students, parents and guardians, and staff who test positive or are known to have been exposed to COVID-19 figure out who, if any, their “close contacts” are.

As we’ve seen, COVID-19 can cause major disruptions and we are continuing to work with our State and Federal partners to advise K-12 schools on the local situation as case numbers and variants of COVID-19 change.

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Theresa Cullen, MD, MS, Director

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Our community has come so far since the start of the pandemic in Spring 2020, and we are thrilled that in-person learning is an option for so many students this year. We know in-person education is important and a key to successful learning for our children. Please do your part at home and in the community so Pima County's children can be where they should be – in the classroom.

Signed:



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



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Dustin Williams  
Pima County School Superintendent