



## OPEN SCHOOLS CA STATEMENT REGARDING THE CENTER FOR DISEASE CONTROL GUIDANCE FOR COVID-19 PREVENTION IN SCHOOLS

(OAKLAND, CA – July 9, 2021) OpenSchoolsCA issued the following statement regarding the release of the Center for Disease Control's (CDC) guidance:

"OpenSchoolsCA (OSC) is pleased to see the CDC acknowledge that students benefit from in-person learning and safely returning to in-person school this fall must be a priority. However, the CDC continues to ignore the overwhelming data, including from their own studies, that show that children are at very low risk from becoming infected with COVID, transmitting it to others, or becoming seriously ill from COVID. A return to as normal a school year as possible is crucial to the mental health recovery for students across California who endured months of isolation and a majority who spent last school year entirely in distance learning.

OSC hoped that when issuing guidance for schools, the California Department of Public Health (CDPH) would take a more nuanced approach that is informed by both the data around student risk from COVID and likelihood of transmission, as well as community vaccination and hospitalization rates when recommending or mandating masks. That does not appear to be the case given the announcement that masks will be required inside schools for all individuals regardless of vaccination status.

In communities with high vaccine adoption and low hospitalization rates due to COVID, including most of California, masks should be optional for all students. Additionally, vaccinated teachers, staff, and students should not be required to wear masks inside school buildings, consistent with current CDPH guidance statewide regarding indoor mask wearing for vaccinated individuals. Continued mask mandates for vaccinated individuals undermines confidence in our highly effective COVID vaccines and may increase vaccine hesitancy, as the benefits from vaccination become less clear.

We are privileged in California to have high vaccine adoption and low hospitalization rates, and we must let science and data inform our policy decisions regarding reopening, not politics. While it is clear that a return to in-person learning for all students must be an option this fall, this return should also be as normal as possible, which includes the removal of masks mandates for vaccinated individuals and for others when local vaccine rates are high and hospitalizations low. Children have paid a high price during this pandemic and deserve to accrue some of the benefits from high vaccination rates among adults which includes education without masks, distancing, or cohorts."

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### **OpenSchoolsCA**

*We are a group of parents from across California who are committed to public education and to giving parents and kids a seat at the table when it comes to making policy decisions in TK-12 public education. Learn more at [www.OpenSchoolsCA.org](http://www.OpenSchoolsCA.org)*

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