August 26, 2020

Re:  ADVISORY ON NEW STATE GUIDANCE FOR INDOOR CHILDREN/YOUTH SUPERVISED LEARNING AND CARE SETTINGS

To Whom It May Concern:

On August 25, 2020, the California Department of Public Heath (CDPH) issued new guidance on 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.

This guidance includes the following documents:

- Guidance on Returning to Work or School Following COVID-19 Diagnosis.¹
- Guidance for Small Cohorts/Groups of Children and Youth.²
- COVID-19 Case and Contact Management with Child Care Facilities.³

The new guidance applies to all counties including those on the Monitoring List like the County of Riverside. Guidance and directives related to schools, child care, day camps, youth sports, and institutions of higher education are not superseded by the new guidance and still apply to those specified settings.

The Guidance for Small Cohorts/Groups of Children and Youth provides information 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.

¹ Guidance on Returning to Work or School Following COVID-19 Diagnosis: https://www.cdph.ca.gov/Programs/CID/DCDC/Pages/COVID-19/Guidance-on-Returning-to-Work-or-School-Following-COVID-19-Diagnosis.aspx

² 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

³ COVID-19 Case and Contact Management with Child Care Facilities: https://www.cdph.ca.gov/Programs/CID/DCDC/Pages/COVID-19/contact-management-childcare-facilities.aspx
youth, and for those programs to understand the required health and safety practices needed to prevent the spread of COVID-19 in their settings.

Within this guidance, CDPH defines a “Cohort” as a stable group of no more than 14 children/youth and no more than 2 supervising adults who stay together for all activities and avoid contact with people outside of their group. It further provides direction about how to operationalize cohort sizing and limitations on cohort mixing. The purpose of a cohort is to minimize the number of people exposed if a COVID-19 case is identified in a child or youth attendee, provider, other instructional support provider, or staff member of a particular cohort.

In addition, the guidance allows for one-on-one specialized services by a provider who is not part of the cohort, for activities that include but are 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. The guidance also provides direction for staffing including, allowances for substitutes when needed. In addition, 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. Meetings outside or in large rooms with the windows open are preferred.

Physical distancing between adults must be maintained as much as possible, and adults and students must use face coverings at all times pursuant to CDPH School Guidance regarding face coverings. Physical distancing between young children in the same cohort should be balanced with developmental and socio-economic needs of this age group.

For further information on the CDPH guidance and directives regarding the operation of schools and indoor children/youth supervised learning and care settings we encourage you to refer to the COVID-19 Industry Guidance for Schools and School-Based Programs, Framework for K-12 Schools in California, and all other documents referenced and linked throughout this advisory letter. Should you have any questions, contact Kelly Moran, Supervising Deputy County Counsel, at kmoran@rivco.org, for assistance.

Sincerely,

Gregory P. Priamos

GREGORY P. PRIAMOS
County Counsel

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