



March 22, 2021

Message from Sweet Home Superintendent Tom Yahraes

Today Governor Kate Brown and the Oregon Department of Education (ODE) released updated guidance stating “3 Feet Physical Distancing Allowed under Certain Conditions.” The new school guidelines can be a game-changer so schools can begin to take bigger steps back toward normalcy. [ODE Press Release](#)

Key updates to ODE [Ready Schools, Safe Learners](#) include:

- Elementary schools must maintain at least 3 feet of physical distance between students to the maximum extent possible.
- Middle and High School must maintain at least 3 feet of physical distance between students to the maximum extent possible, when the county case rate is <200 (green level on the metrics chart in Section 0).
- Middle and High School must maintain at least 6 feet of physical distance between students to the maximum extent possible, when the county case rate is ≥ 200 (yellow and red levels on the metrics chart in Section 0).
- All schools must maintain 6 feet between staff at all times and 6 feet between staff and students to the maximum extent possible.
- Removal of the 35 sq ft per person requirement and other physical distancing changes are documented in the RSSL guidance.
- [Research Informing Changes in K-12 COVID-19 Guidance](#)

The Sweet Home School District Team will thoroughly review today’s new guidance and work with parents, educators, and staff to fine-tune plans at the local level.

We are guardedly optimistic: this welcome news will not be like flipping a switch to a “back to normal” school schedule and routine. However, the good news is Sweet Home has already developed multiple operational scenarios to scale up our in-person learning. We are up to the task to incorporate and maximize the new guidance to get our students more learning time in our schools, while not sacrificing health and safety protocols. Also, we will continue to offer comprehensive distance learning to students and families who wish to continue with the 100% distance learning model.

Next week, we will communicate via email, district web-pages, and FB posts steps we will take to comply with the new guidance to build our way back toward normalcy.

With this great news, I hope staff and students enjoy the remainder of Spring Break. Please remember to follow health and safety guidance, for as key elements of the new ODE guidance puts forth, we need to keep county case counts under 200 for middle and high school students to be eligible for a reduction in 6-foot physical distancing. It takes a community to open our schools, keep them open, and increase classroom time!

Together we are Sweet Home strong!

Sincerely,

Tom Yahraes, Superintendent