

COUNSELOR CONNECTION

COMMUNITY NEWSLETTER



Return to In-Person Learning

As COVID-19 infection rates have continued to drop in Los Angeles County, the Lancaster School District is now able to begin the return to in-person instruction opportunities for our students. Our schools will be utilizing a hybrid partial day model where some students are able to return in person for a few hours during the day.

We understand that a return to in-person learning may cause anxiety for our students and families. As school counselors, we want to provide resources to support the success of our students who are returning to our campuses as well as the students who are remaining virtual.

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Preparing your child and easing anxiety around their in-person return

Develop a nighttime routine (brush teeth, get into pajamas, read a book and get off electronics) and help your child get at least 9 hours of sleep. Children need quality sleep to be ready to learn and adjust to a new environment.

Talk to your child about what school is going to look like. School is going to look a little different for a while and you may want to discuss:

- Wearing a mask the entire time
- Social distancing
- Staying on area markers and following guided floor paths
- Remaining at their desk & following teacher instructions.
- School hours and how long they will be at school.
- Drop-off & pick-up routines

Some children are visual, finding a picture of a classroom online to show may be helpful. Practice wearing a mask properly over the weekend (example; wearing a mask above the nose)

Check out this video for tips on talking to your child before returning to in-person learning - [Helping Kids Return to School During COVID-19](#)



Check-in with your child by asking and showing support. Tell them that you want to hear what they are thinking about and that you are ready to listen and be supportive.

- How do you feel about going back to school?
- What are your worries?
- What do you need from me to help support you through this?

Be mindful and aware if your child is displaying anxiety and changes in behaviors and ask for support from your school/teacher/school counselor or doctor.

- Difficulty falling asleep or staying asleep
- Changes in eating habits
- Fear of being alone
- Changes in behaviors (aggressive, hyperactive, a decrease of energy or motivation, moodiness, irritability, difficulty getting along with others)

Preparing for in-person (continued)

Be aware of your own feelings and worries about school. If you are worried or anxious, talk to your child that those feelings are normal but also model how to cope with them

Examples of coping strategies:

- taking deep breaths-slowly in through your nose and out through your mouth
- taking a walk
- singing a song

Children are very observant and model after a trusting adult.

Prepare your child before school starts. Ensure that your child has eaten a meal before school. Help your child have weather appropriate and clean clothes for school (Example: jacket when it is cold outside). Remind them that school is fun and that you are excited to hear about how it went when they come home!



If you have questions and or need support in helping prepare your child for school, please contact your school to speak with the principal, assistant principal, school counselor, or school psychologist.



Practice Wearing a Mask

If your child has special needs or is not used to wearing a mask, prepare your child by talking about the reason why masks are used and practicing wearing a mask.

You may also watch a few videos together that promote mask-wearing. Here are some links to some videos:

- [For Kids: Why Do I Have to Wear a Face Mask?](#)
- [Fluffster Wears a Mask](#) - for students with Autism (Sesame Street)
- [Kids and Masks: How to Properly Wear a Face Covering During COVID-19](#)
- [Wear it Well: A Mask How-To for Kids](#)



Remaining in Distance Learning

As we slowly begin to reopen our campuses, not all of our students will be able to return in-person and some families will choose to have their students continue in the virtual learning format.

The weight of this decision is heavy on all of our minds and hearts as parents and educators. The feelings you have are valid as you are trying to navigate a pandemic while also ensuring your children receive the best education possible.

Make sure your children are comfortable with your choice and provide reasoning for your decision.

Reasons to remain in distance learning is a personal choice and reasons can vary from family to family.

Children may not understand why some of their classmates are no longer in their virtual class or why some students are back in the physical classroom. It's important for children to understand the changes and the decisions made for them.

Be clear and honest about the reasons they are remaining in distance learning. Remember affirm their feelings, and dispel any misunderstanding of what the return to in-person will look like.



Keeping your student engaged during distance learning

- **Look for virtual opportunities from the school and district:** lunch bunch, counseling groups, attendance incentive activities, Saturday social groups, and virtual clubs.
- **Create a fun learning space at home**
- **Create incentives** for positive behavior and academic achievements
- **Establish routines and expectations.** It is important to develop good habits.