

Parent COVID Session FAQ

Are LJA faculty and staff required to have the COVID vaccine?

At this time, the vaccine is not a requirement of employment; however, LJA's employee vaccination rate is 83% and climbing, which makes it arguably our most effective mitigation strategy. We will continue to monitor trends and take appropriate action should data indicate that transmission on campus is occurring and originating with staff, which is not the case so far.

Did LJA consider implementing weekly COVID testing as part of its mitigation strategy?

Yes, LJA considered this but did not find a strong case given our risk profile, very low infection rate, and high staff vaccination rate and therefore no surveillance testing is planned. If we were to experience an increase in cases, this strategy will be reevaluated. Surveillance testing does not add value when infections on campus are low, but it can be useful when spread is likely. Our most effective strategies at this time are to diligently: vax, pre-screen, ensure airflow, distance, wash hands and mask that we already have in place.

When FDA licenses the vaccine, will LJA be mandating vaccinations for staff?

Yes, once the FDA licenses the vaccine and the Health Department mandates, we will be ready to roll out our vaccination policy, which would be mandatory vaccination, likely with a few exceptions.

When the vaccine for students 3-12 is available under an emergency use authorization (EUA), will you be mandating that all students get vaccinated in order to attend LJA?

Our current thinking is that LJA would not impose any vaccine mandate for a vaccine that is still under EUA until it is fully approved. Moreover, before the School's Vaccination Policy is finalized, rest assured that parents will be given an opportunity to weigh in prior to its taking effect.

Is there any consideration on the student travel policy for students to test each morning upon return to O'ahu following out-of-state travel?

No, all families are asked to comply with the current policy, which is as follows:

Vaccinated Students

May provisionally return to campus, subject to strict distancing and masking requirements, until they submit results of an approved PCR/Antigen test 3-5 days after return to O'ahu. With a negative result, they may return unconditionally to campus.

Unvaccinated Students

Students must 1) register planned travel with their division and notify the School nurse 2) take an approved, pre-travel PCR test and register through the State's Safe Travels App 3) with a negative pre-travel test and a second, negative, on-island, approved PCR or antigen test 3-5 days following return to O'ahu, students will be permitted to return to campus without condition. Until these results are known, however, the student should remain at home.

Which kinds of COVID tests will be accepted by the School prior to a student's return to campus?

LJA's COVID Policies and Procedures call for a PCR or physician-approved antigen test. We will provide a list of approved antigen tests, and in the meantime urge you to consult with your healthcare provider.

Will parents be notified if there is a COVID positive case in their child's grade only if their child is a first-degree contact?

LJA's best practice calls for all first-degree contacts to be notified immediately followed by a general notification to all parents (school-wide) of a positive case on campus. Second-degree contacts are not notified.

What is the thinking behind allowing vaccinated 1st degree contacts to return to school immediately despite what we are learning about Delta breakthrough cases?

School policy mirrors CDC and HDOH guidelines based on current science. Our current understanding about breakthrough cases is that while widely reported they are a fraction of 1% of new cases nationally. They may constitute a larger percentage of new cases in a particular locality, but the point is that the real risk lies with unvaccinated or otherwise risk-prone individuals. Because of this low likelihood, the CDC, HDOH and LJA permit vaccinated individuals to return to campus, provisionally, after travel.

Since Delta is affecting children far more than earlier variants, and young children are the only completely unvaccinated community, will we develop guidelines for tiers that address this more exposed population? At this time, tier-based precautions in the primary divisions that do not exist at the secondary divisions include: self-contained classes/pods and a tendency for more controlled social interactions outside of school. As long as members of the pods are careful with interactions outside of school, the entire group has an added layer of protection not afforded secondary divisions. Given the kōkua of LJA staff and families, we have been successful in keeping the virus at a distance; however, we will remain vigilant and will not hesitate to take additional precautions should our mitigation efforts show signs of weakening.

If my child or a member of my household has had a COVID exposure or positive test result, how can I find out how long my child needs to be away from school?

We urge you to view LJA COVID Policies and Procedures for the latest guidelines on COVID testing, exposure, isolation, and reporting. You should also contact school.nurse@lejardinacademy.org.