



**Texarkana**

Independent School District

*The Place To Be!*

**Return to In-Person Instruction  
& Continuity of Services Plan**

# **Introduction**

For the 2021-2022 school year, we are excited to welcome back our students and staff to In-Person Instruction. This plan provides details about procedures and safety requirements that have been created for the well-being of students, staff, and visitors. This is our top priority. We are also committed to providing excellent academic instruction and support for our students. Despite the challenges with COVID-19, our district will continue to provide an excellent education to our students.

This plan includes guidance on the following information:

- Continuity of Services
- Practices to prevent the virus from entering the school
- Practices to mitigate the spread of COVID-19
- Practices to respond to a test-confirmed case in the school

The situation with COVID-19 is continuously changing, as are the protocols and measures needed to keep students and staff safe. Plans will remain flexible to accommodate potential changes and these guidelines may be modified as needed. As adjustments may be necessary throughout the coming school year, it will be our priority to keep the community informed of those changes and updates. The Texarkana ISD website will provide you with the most up to date information.

This plan describes how Texarkana ISD will provide the safe return to in-person instruction and continuity of services for all schools. This report complies with all reporting requirements of the ARP ACT (Public Law 117-2), The ESSER III grant terms, conditions, and assurances (CFDA Number 84.425U), and the interim final rule established by the United States Department of Education, 86FR 21195.

The planning process has continuously evolved around new information and guidance that we receive from the state. Participants in this planning include, but are not limited to, school personnel, parents, students, community, those with interests in students of special populations, and mental health professionals. Input was gathered through stakeholder surveys and stakeholder meetings.

This plan will be reviewed and updated, as needed, at least every six months. Additionally, stakeholder input will be solicited the month prior to the updates.

# Continuity of Services

Texarkana ISD is returning to full on-campus face to face instruction for 2021-2022. The remote/virtual instruction that was provided last year under a Texas Education Agency waiver is no longer available. All students will return to on-site instruction.

In addition to the high-quality, rigorous Tier I instruction provided to all students in TISD, we are committed to bridging the learning gap created by the COVID-19 pandemic. Additional actions to ensure continuity of services to all students will focus on addressing students' academic, social, emotional and mental health needs. Plans to provide a continuity of services are as follows:

- Increase Response to Intervention Staff
- Professional Development for Educators
- Increase Technology Access
- After School Programming
- Behavioral Support Staff
- Instructional Materials
- Increased Special Education Staff
- Increased Counseling
- Increased Nursing

All of these district support positions, programs, community partnerships, and resources continue to help district staff identify and respond to unique barriers, stigmas, and challenges of student well-being and mental health in ways that ensure students have the support they need to achieve academic success and postsecondary readiness.

# Maintaining Health and Safety

*All guidance is subject to change based on governmental, state, and/or local requirements.*

The prevention practices outlined are designed to significantly reduce the likelihood that a coronavirus outbreak occurs on campus. Implementing the various recommendations of the CDC, health department and Texas Education Agency to the extent feasible is the best way to reduce the potential negative impact of infection.

## **PREVENT**

**Vaccinations** are available for individuals ages 5 and above currently for COVID-19. Any individual wanting information on COVID-19 vaccines may search [www.vaccines.gov](http://www.vaccines.gov), call 1-800-232-0233, or text their zip code to 438829.

All staff, students and stakeholders should **self-screen** for communicable disease symptoms, including COVID-19 symptoms before coming onto campus or entering district transportation each day. Staff, students and stakeholders should not be on campus, district department locations or district transportation if they have symptoms of a communicable disease, including COVID-19.

People with these symptoms may have COVID-19:

- Fever or chills
- Cough
- Shortness of breath or difficulty breathing
- Fatigue
- Muscle or body aches
- Headache
- New loss of taste or smell
- Sore throat
- Congestion or runny nose
- Nausea or vomiting
- Diarrhea

This list does not include all possible symptoms. <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/symptoms-testing/symptoms.html>

Staff, students and stakeholders should not be on a campus, district location or on district transportation if they are lab confirmed positive for COVID-19. Parents must ensure they do not send a child to school if the child is lab-confirmed with COVID-19. More information is provided in the next area about the guidelines and criteria for re-entry.

# MITIGATE

- Masks and Face Coverings are **optional** for students per the Governor's Executive Order GA-36 on June 5, 2021 stating that school districts cannot require students or staff to wear masks. **Masks are highly encouraged and recommended** for students and staff when they are unable to socially distance per the recommendations of the CDC to mitigate and prevent the spread of COVID-19.
- Hand Sanitizer will be available on all campuses and in classrooms.
- Students, teachers, staff and campus visitors should be encouraged to sanitize and/or wash hands frequently.
- Campuses will institute effective cleaning practices including more frequent cleaning and disinfecting of surfaces that are touched in common areas throughout the day.
- Where feasible, without disrupting the educational experience, the district will encourage staff and students to practice social distancing.
- When feasible and appropriate, classes may gather outside, rather than inside, because of likely reduced risk of virus spread outdoors.
- Parents are strongly encouraged to provide transportation for their children, to and from school, if possible.
- In specific special education settings and classrooms, additional cleaning will be provided. Appropriate accommodations for children with disabilities with respect to health and safety will be followed for the student and addressed on a case by case basis.

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01/28/2022

# RESPOND

## Employees

All employees must notify the school if they have COVID-19 symptoms, or if they have tested positive for COVID-19. At home COVID-19 test results will only be accepted in the case of a positive case.

Masks are not required per GA-38, but are encouraged and can protect individuals from exposure and possible quarantine requirements.

- An employee experiencing COVID-19 symptoms must provide a doctor's release with an alternate diagnosis or negative COVID-19 test to return to work.
- If the employee experiencing symptoms is unable to provide a doctor's release with an alternate diagnosis or negative COVID-19 test, he/she may not return to work for 5 days. Designated district personnel will determine the date that the employee may return to work.
- If an employee tests positive for COVID-19, he/she may return to work when 5 days have passed since the start of symptoms, they are fever free for 24 hours without the use of fever-reducing medications, and their symptoms have improved. Designated district personnel will determine the date that the employee may return to work.
- For staff who are not fully vaccinated, who meet the close contact threshold with a COVID-19 positive individual, it is recommended that the staff remain off campus during the stay-at-home period. Staff members who wish to continue working on campus must consent to rapid testing performed periodically for 5 days post-exposure as determined by designated district personnel. Following guidelines set forth by TEA and the CDC, any staff member who is determined to be in close contact with a COVID-19 positive individual may opt to quarantine but is not required to do so. Staff members without symptoms and without known exposure to COVID-19 do not need to quarantine while awaiting screening test results. If a person tests positive on a rapid test and is referred for a PCR/send off test, they should quarantine until they receive the results of their PCR/send off test.

## **RESPOND (con't)**

- Any employee who has been **FULLY vaccinated (must provide proof) OR has tested positive for COVID-19 within the last 90 days OR was properly masked during close contact is not required or encouraged to quarantine, as long as the employee is not experiencing any symptoms of COVID-19.**
- There is no special federal leave available for COVID-19 illness, testing or symptoms. Employees will be required to use their own accrued leave for any absences.

## **TEA GUIDANCE UPDATED JANUARY 7, 2022**

### **Staff Who Have COVID-19 or Who Are Close Contacts**

Similar to students, school systems must exclude staff from attending school in person who are actively sick with COVID-19, who are suspected of being actively sick with COVID-19, or who have received a positive test result for COVID-19. Based on recent updates from the CDC, staff may return when:

- If symptomatic, at least 5 days have passed since symptom onset, and fever free\*, and other symptoms have improved.
- For those with no symptoms, at least 5 days after the day they tested positive.

\*Fever free for 24 hours without the use of fever suppressing medications. Fever is a temperature of 100° Fahrenheit (37.8° Celsius or higher).

Staff who meet the close contact threshold with a COVID-19 positive individual and are in one of the following groups, do not need to stay at home.

- Ages 18 or older and have received all recommended vaccine doses, including boosters and additional primary shots for some immunocompromised people.
- Was confirmed COVID-19 positive within the last 90 days and has fully recovered.

For staff who meet the close contact threshold with a COVID-19 positive individual who are not in one of the above groups, it is recommended that the school system require that staff remain off campus during the stay-at-home period, but this is a local employment policy decision. If these staff continue to work on campus, rapid testing must be performed periodically for 5 days post-exposure, with testing on the 5<sup>th</sup> day recommended.

# RESPOND (con't)

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## Students

Parents must notify the school if their student has COVID-19 symptoms and/or if their student has tested positive for COVID-19. At home COVID-19 test results will only be accepted in the case of a positive test.

- Masks are not required per GA-38 but are encouraged and can protect individuals from exposure and possible quarantine requirements.
- Any student who is exhibiting or complains of any **ONE** of the following symptoms while at school will be immediately separated from the other students, and parent/guardian will be notified to pick up the student within 30 minutes:
  - Fever (Temp greater than 100°F)
  - Vomiting
  - Diarrhea
  - Shortness of breath/difficulty breathing (New onset)
  - Loss of sense of taste or smell
- Any student who is exhibiting or complains of any **TWO** of the following symptoms while at school will be immediately separated from the other students, and parent/guardian will be notified to pick up the student within 30 minutes:
  - Cough
  - Fatigue
  - Muscle or body aches
  - Headache
  - Sore throat
  - Congestion or runny nose
  - Nausea
- A student experiencing COVID-19 symptoms must provide a doctor's release with alternate diagnosis or a negative COVID-19 test to return to school.
- If the student experiencing symptoms is unable to provide a doctor's release with an alternate diagnosis or a negative COVID-19 test, he/she may not return to school until 10 days have passed since symptoms began, they are fever free for 24 hours without the use of fever-reducing medications, and other symptoms of COVID-19 are improving. The campus Health Aide will determine the date that the student may return to school.
- If a student tests positive for COVID-19, they may return to school when 10 days have passed since the start of symptoms, they are fever free for 24 hours without the use of fever-reducing medications, and other symptoms of COVID are improving.  
The physician clearance must be turned in to the campus health office upon the student's return to school.
- If a student has been determined to be a close contact because an individual who lives in the same household is COVID-19 positive, the student is required to stay at home during the stay-at-home period.
- If it is discovered that a student has been in close contact with a lab confirmed COVID-19 positive individual who does not live in the same household as the student, TEA states that a parent/guardian may opt to keep that student at home during the recommended 10 day stay-at-home period. If a parent/guardian chooses to send the student to school, it is recommended by the CDC and strongly encouraged that they wear a mask until the 10 day infection period has passed.

## RESPOND (con't)

- Following guidelines set forth by TEA and the CDC, any student who is determined to be in close contact with a COVID-19 positive individual can end the stay-at-home period if they receive a negative result from a PCR acute infection test after the close contact exposure ends, as long as the COVID positive individual does not live in the same household as the student and the student is not exhibiting any symptoms of COVID-19. If a person tests positive on a rapid test and is referred for a PCR/send off test, they should quarantine until they receive the results of their PCR/send off test
- **Any student who has been FULLY vaccinated (must provide proof) OR has tested positive for COVID-19 within the last 90 days OR was properly masked during close contact will be exempt from quarantining due to close contact, as long as they are not experiencing any symptoms of COVID-19.**

- UIL - Updated Return to Play Requirements

As schools continue to navigate challenges presented by COVID-19, UIL is providing the following information.

Following a called meeting of the UIL Medical Advisory Committee (MAC), UIL has altered the return to play requirements for students diagnosed with COVID-19 related to requiring clearance from a physician or physician-approved delegate. The UIL MAC strongly recommends a student who has been diagnosed with COVID-19 receive clearance from a physician, or physician-approved delegate, prior to returning to participation in UIL marching band or athletics activities in accordance with the most current resources available from the American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) and/or the American College of Cardiology (ACC). This change also provides medical providers with additional guidance related to when a student who has been diagnosed with COVID-19 requires clearance from a physician, or physician-approved delegate.

<https://www.uiltexas.org/policy/2021-22-policy-info>

- Guidelines above for COVID-19 symptoms also apply to fully vaccinated students.
  - For individuals who are determined to be close contacts, a 14-day stay-at-home period was previously advised by the CDC based on the incubation period of the virus. The CDC has since updated its guidance, and the stay-at-home period can end for students experiencing no symptoms on Day 10 after close contact exposure, if no subsequent COVID-19 testing is performed.
  - Alternately, students can end the stay-at-home period if they receive a negative result from a PCR acute infection test after the close contact exposure ends.
  - During the stay-at-home period, the school system may deliver remote instruction consistent with the practice of remote conferencing outlined in the proposed Student Attendance Accounting Handbook (SAAH) rules, as described here.

<https://tea.texas.gov/sites/default/files/covid/SY-20-21-Public-Health-Guidance.pdf>

# RESPOND (con't)

## Notification of Positive Case

- As required by the Texas Education Agency, if an individual who has been in a school is test-confirmed to have COVID-19, the school must notify its local health department, in accordance with applicable federal, state, and local laws and regulations, including confidentiality requirements of the American with Disabilities Act (ADA) and Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA). <https://tea.texas.gov/sites/default/files/covid/SY-20-21-Public-Health-Guidance.pdf>
- Upon receipt of information that any teacher, staff member, student, or visitor at a school is test-confirmed to have COVID-19, the school must submit a report to the Texas Department of State Health Services via an online form. The report must be submitted each Monday for the prior seven days (Monday-Sunday).
- Consistent with school notification requirements for other communicable diseases, and consistent with legal confidentiality requirements, schools must notify all teachers, staff, and families of all students in a classroom or extracurricular or after-school program cohort if a test-confirmed COVID-19 case is identified among students, teachers or staff who participated in those classrooms or cohorts. TISD will send parents and staff members an email notifying them of a positive case on campus for the required notification. In addition to the required notification, if close contact exposure has been determined, the staff member and or the parent of the student may receive a close contact communication.

## Close Contact

- Efforts will be made by District personnel to identify and notify close contacts. Identified close contacts will not be required to quarantine but may choose to do so. If identified close contact opts not to quarantine, then it is highly recommended for the individual to choose to wear a mask for the 10-day period following exposure and to monitor for symptoms.
- As defined by the CDC, "close contact through proximity and duration of exposure: Someone who was less than 6 feet away from an infected person (laboratory-confirmed or a clinical diagnosis) for a cumulative total of 15 minutes or more over a 24-hour period (for example, three individual 5-minute exposures for a total of 15 minutes). An infected person can spread SARS-CoV-2 starting 2 days before they have any symptoms (or, for asymptomatic people, 2 days before the positive specimen collection date).
  - As a reference, close contact determinations are generally based on guidance outlined by the CDC, which notes that individuals who are fully vaccinated may not need to follow the stay-at home period.
  - As noted above, public health authorities will be notified of all positive cases in schools. While school systems are not required to conduct COVID-19 case investigations, local public health entities have authority to investigate cases and are currently engaged in cooperative efforts on that front. Participation by individuals in these investigations remains voluntary. If school systems are made aware that a student is a close contact, the school system must notify the student's parents.
  - School systems may choose to require household-based close contact students to stay at home during the below stay-at-home period if they are in an area with high or rising COVID case rates. This applies specifically to students who are close contacts because an individual who lives in the same household is COVID-19 positive.
  - Independent of whether a school system chooses to implement the above requirement, parents of students who are determined to be close contacts of an individual with COVID-19 may opt to keep their students at home during the recommended stay-at-home period. In cases when it is permitted, parents who opt to send their children to school in the two weeks following exposure are encouraged to closely monitor their children for symptoms.
  - Exception: In the K–12 indoor classroom setting, the close contact definition excludes students who were within 3 to 6 feet of an infected student (laboratory-confirmed or a [clinically compatible illness](#)) if both the infected student and the exposed student(s) [correctly and consistently](#) wore well-fitting [masks](#) the entire time.