



STISD Flexible Learning Initiative: Roadmap to a safe return

Employee Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

1. Where can I learn more about the processes and procedures in place to help keep me safe while at work?

The district's Flexible Learning Initiative: Roadmap to a safe return, which is posted on the district website at www.stisd.net, details the processes and procedures in place to help keep the district community as safe as possible during the pandemic. ([Flexible Learning Initiative: Roadmap to a safe return is available in the COVID-19 section of the STISD website](#))

2. How frequently is the guide updated?

The guide is reviewed each week, and updated on Friday, if needed. The most up-to-date guide is always available for review on the district website at www.stisd.net.

3. How can I help keep myself and others within the district community safe?

You can help keep yourself and others within the STISD community safe by familiarizing yourself with the STISD Flexible Learning Initiative: Roadmap to a safe return ([available on the COVID-19 section of the STISD website](#)) and following the processes and procedures in place, including wearing your mask, washing and sanitizing your hands frequently, and ensuring you conduct your self-screening daily before reporting to work.

All employees are required to conduct a self-screening daily before leaving home for work. This screening should consist of checking your temperature and identifying any symptoms of COVID-19. Ask yourself the following question: "Have I recently begun experiencing any of the following symptoms in a way that is not normal for me?" Symptoms of COVID-19 include the following: fever/chills, cough, shortness of breath or difficulty breathing, fatigue, muscle/body aches, headache, new loss of taste or smell, sore throat, congestion or runny nose, nausea or vomiting, and diarrhea.

4. I am feeling sick today, and my symptoms align with COVID-19. What do I do now?

If you have a fever at or above 100.0 Fahrenheit (as established by the Texas Department of Health) or are experiencing any COVID-19 symptoms, you should not report to work. You should contact your immediate supervisor to report that you will be out. As detailed within the Individuals Confirmed or Suspected with COVID-19 section (page 10) of the Flexible Learning Initiative: Roadmap to a safe return, ([available on the COVID-19 section of the STISD website](#)) you must meet the following re-entry guidelines in order to return to work:

- Any individuals who themselves either: (a) are test-confirmed to have COVID-19; or (b) experience the symptoms of COVID-19 (listed above) must stay at home throughout the infection period, and cannot return to campus until the school system screens the individual to determine any of the below conditions for campus re-entry have been met.
- In the case of an individual who is symptomatic and is diagnosed with COVID-19, the individual may return to school when all three of the following criteria are met:
 - i. at least one day (24 hours) has passed since recovery (resolution of fever without the use of fever-reducing medications);
 - ii. the individual has improvement in symptoms (e.g., cough, shortness of breath); and
 - iii. at least ten days have passed since symptoms first appeared.





4. I am feeling sick today, and my symptoms align with COVID-19. What do I do now? Cont.

- In the case of an individual who has symptoms that could be COVID-19 and who is not evaluated by a medical professional or tested for COVID-19, such individual is assumed to have COVID-19, and the individual may not return to the campus until the individual has completed the same three-step set of criteria listed above.
- If the individual has symptoms that could be COVID-19 and wants to return to school before completing the above stay at home period, the individual must either (a) obtain a medical professional's note clearing the individual for return based on an alternative diagnosis though for health privacy reasons the note does not need to indicate what the alternative diagnosis is, or (b) obtain an acute infection test (at a physician's office, [approved testing location](#), or other site) that comes back negative for COVID-19.
- If the individual has tested positive for COVID-19 and believes the test was a false positive, and wants to return to school before completing the above stay at home period, the individual must either (a) obtain a medical professional's note clearing the individual for return based on an alternative diagnosis, though for health privacy reasons the note does not need to indicate what the alternative diagnosis is, or (b) obtain two PCR acute infection tests (at a physician's office, [approved testing location](#), or other site) at least 24 hours apart that come back negative for COVID-19.

5. I am at work, and I am starting to feel symptoms that align with COVID-19. What do I do now?

If an employee begins experiencing COVID-19 symptoms while at work, the employee should alert the nurse immediately via phone. The nurse will guide the employee through next steps.

6. Who can explain to me the processes involved with being out due to COVID-19 symptoms and how I can return to work?

The STISD Flexible Learning Initiative: Roadmap to a safe return ([available on the COVID-19 section of the STISD website](#)) details these processes and is a great resource for answering these questions on your own. Once you have reviewed this document, if you still have questions, you are encouraged to reach out to your supervisor.

In general, the guidelines to follow if you are test-confirmed to have COVID-19 or experience symptoms of COVID-19 are as follows: Any individuals who themselves either: (a) are test-confirmed to have COVID-19; or (b) experience the symptoms of COVID-19 must stay at home throughout the infection period, and cannot return to campus until the school system screens the individual to determine any of the below conditions for campus re-entry have been met.

- In the case of an individual who is symptomatic and is diagnosed with COVID-19, the individual may return to school when all three of the following criteria are met:
 - i. at least one day (24 hours) has passed since recovery (resolution of fever without the use of fever-reducing medications);
 - ii. the individual has improvement in symptoms (e.g., cough, shortness of breath); and
 - iii. at least ten days have passed since symptoms first appeared.
- In the case of an individual that is asymptomatic but has received a positive COVID-19 test result, the individual may not return to the campus until ten days have passed since a positive test.
- In the case of an individual who has symptoms that could be COVID-19 and who is not evaluated by a medical professional or tested for COVID-19, such individual is assumed to have COVID-19, and the individual may not return to the campus until the individual has completed the same three-step set of criteria listed above.
- If the individual has symptoms that could be COVID-19 and wants to return to school before completing the above stay at home period, the individual must either (a) obtain a medical professional's note clearing the individual for return based on an alternative diagnosis though for health privacy



6. Who can explain to me the processes involved with being out due to COVID-19 symptoms and how I can return to work? Cont.

reasons the note does not need to indicate what the alternative diagnosis is, or (b) obtain an acute infection test (at a physician’s office, [approved testing location](#), or other site) that comes back negative for COVID-19.

- If the individual has tested positive for COVID-19 and believes the test was a false positive, and wants to return to school before completing the above stay at home period, the individual must either (a) obtain a medical professional’s note clearing the individual for return based on an alternative diagnosis, though for health privacy reasons the note does not need to indicate what the alternative diagnosis is, or (b) obtain two PCR acute infection tests (at a physician’s office, [approved testing location](#), or other site) at least 24 hours apart that come back negative for COVID-19.

7. I was in close contact with someone who tested positive for COVID. What happens now?

- This document refers to “close contact” with an individual who is test-confirmed to have COVID-19.

The definition of close contact is evolving with our understanding of COVID-19, and individual scenarios should be determined by an appropriate public health agency. In general, close contact is defined as:

- a. being directly exposed to infectious secretions (e.g., being coughed on); or
- b. being within 6 feet for a total of approximately 15 minutes throughout the course of a day ; however, additional factors like case/contact masking (i.e., both the infectious individual and the potential close contact have been consistently and properly masked), ventilation, presence of dividers, and case symptomology may affect this determination.

Either (a) or (b) defines close contact if it occurred during the infectious period of the case, defined as two days prior to symptom onset to 10 days after symptom onset. In the case of asymptomatic individuals who are test-confirmed with COVID-19, the infectious period is defined as two days prior to the confirming test and continuing for 10 days following the confirming test.

If you have come into “close contact” with an individual test-confirmed to have COVID-19, **you should notify your supervisor and stay home during the stay-at-home period for close contacts of individuals who tested positive. (See Stay-at-Home Period for Close Contacts of Individuals Who Tested Positive section on pg. 5 of the STISD Flexible Learning Initiative: Roadmap to a safe return for details.) Once the stay-at-home period has passed**, you will need to be in contact with the STISD Human Resources Department, which will screen you for re-entry. If at any time you test positive for COVID-19, you must contact Human Resources.

8. I am experiencing symptoms because of a current health condition I have. Do I have to isolate?

When conducting your self-screening, you should ask yourself if you have recently begun experiencing any of the symptoms in a way that is not normal for you. Only you know your condition and what “normal” is for you. If you have doubts about whether or not what you are experiencing is “normal,” you should isolate and reach out to your healthcare provider for further guidance.

9. If I have symptoms of COVID-19, but I want to come back to work before my 10 days are over, what can I do?

If you have symptoms that could be COVID-19 and you want to return to school before completing the full stay at home period, you must either (a) obtain a medical professional’s note clearing you for return based on an alternative diagnosis though for health privacy reasons the note does not need to indicate what the alternative diagnosis is, or (b) obtain an acute infection test (at a physician’s office, approved testing location, or other site) that comes back negative for COVID-19.





10. To whom do I submit my negative COVID-19 test result or alternative diagnosis letter in order to be able to return to work?

These documents will need to be submitted to the Human Resources Department. You should contact the Human Resources Department at least 24 business hours prior to your scheduled return date for screening and clearance to return to work.

11. Someone I know was recently around someone who tested positive for COVID. Do I have to quarantine?

If you were not in close contact with the individual who tested positive for COVID-19, you do not have to quarantine.

12. I am ready to return to campus. Who can clear me to return to work? How will my campus know I am ready to return?

The STISD Human Resources Department will clear you for return to work once you have completed your stay at home period and all of the conditions for re-entry have been met, or you have the proper documentation to return to work before the stay at home period has ended. Once Human Resources clears you for return, they will provide you and your supervisor with an Authority to Report to Work form that indicates you have been cleared to return. Please note that, to allow for ample time for screening and the processing of the forms, you will need to reach out to the Human Resources Department at least 24 business hours prior to your scheduled return date.

13. I have to self-isolate/quarantine because I have COVID symptoms (or have been close to someone who tested positive for COVID). Can I work from home? What type of leave can I take if I can't work from home?

Whether or not you can work from home is a decision to be made by your supervisor based upon your ability to fulfill your duties remotely and/or at the discretion of the principal/supervisor.

If your supervisor determines that you cannot work from home, you will need to take leave while you are out due to COVID-19 symptoms or close contact with someone test-confirmed to have COVID-19. Your first option would be to use the 10 days of **Emergency Paid Sick Leave, or EPSL (formerly Families First Coronavirus Response Act, or FFCRA Leave)**. You will also need to submit an absence form through Docusign listing the days on which you were out. If an employee exhausts **EPSL**, they must use their local or state days to cover the absence.

Whether you are working from home or taking leave, you will need to reach out to Human Resources after the stay at home period to get clearance to return to work. The Human Resources Department will issue the Authority to Return to Work Form once you have been screened and have clearance to return.

14. I understand that FFCRA expired on December 31, 2020. Will I be able to take emergency paid sick leave after December?

Yes, the FFCRA expired on December 31; however, the STISD Board of Directors passed a resolution to extend the option to take Emergency Paid Sick Leave (EPSL) for those employees who have not yet exhausted their 10 days. The extension expires on June 30, 2021.

15. If I used all or part of my 10 days of paid sick leave through FFCRA before December 31, 2020, am I eligible for another 10 days of Emergency Paid Sick Leave?

If you used all or part of your FFCRA allowance in the fall semester, you will not be eligible for the full 10 days of Emergency Paid Sick Leave. You will only be eligible for the days which you did not yet use.



16. Can I use EPSL for my immediate family illness?

You may use EPSL for yourself when you are 1) subject to a federal, state, or local quarantine or isolation, 2) have been advised to quarantine by a healthcare provider, or 3) are experiencing symptoms of COVID-19 and are seeking a medical diagnosis. You may not use EPSL to care for another individual or a child. However, if your immediate family suffers from a serious health condition, you may be eligible for Family Medical Leave as per DECA (Legal).

17. What if I have already exhausted EPSL (formerly known as FFCRA) and do not have enough local or state days in my bank to cover the time I will have to be out?

If you have already exhausted EPSL (formerly known as FFCRA) and do not have enough local or state days in your bank to cover the time you will have to be out, you may consider Extended Sick Leave. More information about Extended Sick Leave may be found in the DEC (LOCAL) policy. District policies are available online through the [STISD Board Policy Manual here](#).

18. If I am exposed to a positive COVID-19 case on campus, how will I know?

If you are determined to have had “close contact” with an individual test-confirmed to have COVID-19, the Human Resources Department will notify you as soon as possible to alert you to the situation. At that point you will need to quarantine at home during the stay-at-home period for close contacts of individuals who tested positive. (See Stay-at-Home Period for Close Contacts of Individuals Who Tested Positive section on pg. 5 of the STISD Flexible Learning Initiative: Roadmap to a safe return for details.) Once the stay-at-home period has passed, you will need to be in contact with the STISD Human Resources Department to get clearance to come back to work. If you receive the general campus notification of a positive COVID-19 case but do not receive a notification regarding close contact, then you were determined not to have had close contact with the individual.

