

UT Tyler University Academy

Safe Return to In-Person Instruction and Continuity of Services Plan

IN RESPONSE TO COVID-19

Revised August 16, 2021



UT TYLER UNIVERSITY ACADEMY RETURN TO SCHOOL PLAN

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INTRODUCTION

We have created this plan to aid in navigating the reestablishment of our school where employees, students, and families feel safe and to reduce the impact of COVID-19 conditions upon returning to the district. The guidelines referenced in this plan are based on guidance from the NETHealth, Texas Department of State Health Services, and Texas Education Agency (TEA). Regular updates will be made to this plan based on information provided by the CDC and applicable federal, state and local agencies.

While it is not possible to eliminate all risk of furthering the spread of COVID-19, the current science suggests there are many steps schools can take to reduce the risks to students, teachers, staff, and their families significantly.

UTTUA Afterschool Enrichment Program will follow the same guidance used to support on-campus instruction.

SECTION 1: SAFETY OF STUDENTS, STAFF, AND VISITORS

VISITOR RESTRICTIONS/GUIDELINES

UTTUA will allow normal visitation to our campuses. Community COVID-19 cases will be monitored, and visitation can be decreased or even stopped if there is evidence of increased community spread. The trends will be monitored and communicated as needed. UTTUA recommends that all visitors self-screen for COVID-19 symptoms.

TRAVEL RESTRICTIONS

UTTUA will discontinue staff travel to conferences and workshops until further notice, unless pre-approved by the Human Resource department and the office of the Superintendent. Approvals will be limited to essential travel, in which virtual participation is not available.

Several UTTUA employees travel between campuses. Employees will be required to self-screen for COVID-19 before entering the campus. Travel between campuses should be limited to essential travel only. When possible, virtual meetings should be scheduled to prevent increased exposure. When on campus, employees will work from designated areas, limiting interaction with others and travel throughout the campus.

Student field trips will be limited and follow safety guidelines. All field trips must be approved by the Campus Director and Superintendent.

SCREENING AND PROTOCOLS

To help prevent the spread of COVID-19 and reduce the potential risk of exposure to our employees and students, UTTUA will implement the following screening and protocols.

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- UTTUA will require teachers and staff to self-screen for COVID-19 symptoms (as listed in this document) before coming onto campus each day. Teachers and staff must report to the District Nurse and Campus Director if they themselves have COVID-19 symptoms or are lab confirmed with COVID-19, and, if so, they must remain off campus until they meet the criteria for re-entry as noted below. Additionally, they must report to the District Nurse and Campus Director if they have had close contact with an individual who is lab-confirmed with COVID-19, as defined at the end of this document.
- Parents must ensure they do not send a child to school on campus if the child has COVID-19 symptoms (as listed in this document) or is lab-confirmed with COVID-19. UTTUA will consider screening students for COVID-19, when necessary. Screening is accomplished by asking questions by phone or other electronic methods and/or in person.

Students, staff, or visitors may not enter a District facility if any of the following apply:

- Major symptoms of COVID-19 (one symptom present)
 - Fever (100.0 Fahrenheit or greater) and/or chills
 - Unexplained persistent cough
 - Unexplained shortness of breath or difficulty breathing
 - New loss of taste or smell
- Minor symptoms of COVID-19 (two or more present)
 - Sore throat
 - New or unexplained congestion or runny nose
 - Diarrhea/nausea/vomiting
 - Sudden onset of persistent headache
- Waiting for results from a COVID-19 test
- ~~Immediate family member is positive for COVID-19~~
 - ~~For individuals who are close contacts to a COVID-19 positive individual, who lives in the same house, 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.~~

REVISED
8/16/2021

All screening information will be kept confidential by Human Resources and the District Nurse.

Stay-at-Home Period for Close Contact to Individuals Who Tested Positive

Any individual identified as a close contact to a COVID positive case should monitor for COVID-19 symptoms for the next 10 days and seek medical advice and/or COVID testing if symptoms develop.

HEALTH PROTOCOL

Individuals Confirmed or Suspected with COVID-19

Any individuals who **themselves** either: (a) are lab-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 UTTUA screens the individual to determine any of the below conditions for campus re-entry have been met:

- In the case of an individual who was 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) have 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.
- 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 an approved testing location (<https://tdem.texas.gov/covid-19/>) that comes back negative for COVID-19.

IDENTIFYING POSSIBLE COVID-19 CASES ON CAMPUS

- UTTUA will separate any student who shows COVID-19 symptoms while at school until the student can be picked up by a parent or guardian.
- UTTUA will clean the areas used by the individual who shows COVID-19 symptoms while at school (student, teacher, or staff) as soon as is feasible.
- Individuals who report feeling feverish will be given an immediate temperature check to determine if they are symptomatic for COVID-19.
- Each case of symptom(s) will be assessed individually.

RESPONSE: LAB-CONFIRMED CASE IN THE SCHOOL

Required Actions if Individuals with Lab-Confirmed Cases Have Been in a School

- If an individual who has been in attendance at UTTUA is lab-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 Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA).
- 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).

In addition, UTTUA Staff should report COVID-19 exposures and positive cases that may have an imminent impact on the campus to the COVID-19 Hotline.

Individuals are asked to immediately call 903.565.5999 (ext. 5999 from campus) to report if they, or someone they know, has been exposed to or tested positive for COVID-19 and has recently been on campus. This will allow campus officials to quickly take steps to prevent a spread on campus.

UTTUA Staff who are not on campus and have not come in contact with the university community, but have been exposed to, have a positive test or have symptoms of COVID-19 are asked to report using [COVID-19 Reporting Form](#).

The hotline is answered 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. If you happen to get voicemail, please leave a message and your call will be returned as soon as possible.

PERSONAL PROTECTIVE EQUIPMENT

Executive Order No. GA-36 states “no governmental entity, including a county, city, school district, and public health authority, and no governmental official may require any person to wear a face covering or mandate that another person wear a face covering.” Although masks are not required, UTTUA highly encourages individuals that have not been fully vaccinated to wear appropriate personal protective equipment while on campus.

VACCINATIONS

The Center for Disease Control (CDC) recommends eligible individuals to receive a vaccine to help stop the COVID-19 pandemic. Staff will be made aware of vaccination opportunities as information is received by the district. Due to our large geographic boundary, families are encouraged to reach out to their local health organization or physician for information on vaccination opportunities in their area.

SOCIAL DISTANCING

Social distancing is an effective way to prevent potential infection. UTTUA employees, students, parents, and visitors should practice staying approximately 6 feet away from others and eliminating contact with others.

PERSONAL WORKSPACE/CLASSROOM

UTTUA staff will use the signage provided to indicate the rooms for sanitizing and disinfecting. Employees are encouraged to disinfect their own personal workspace (teacher desk, phone, etc.) throughout the day, giving special attention to commonly touched surfaces.

UTTUA has alcohol-based hand sanitizers throughout the workplace and in common areas. Cleaning sprays and wipes are also available to clean and disinfect frequently touched objects and surfaces such as telephones and keyboards. The UTTUA Custodial Team will clean all workspaces at their designated cleaning time.

USE OF NON-CLASSROOM SPACES

When feasible and appropriate (for example, in physical education classes as weather permits), it is preferable for students to gather outside, rather than inside, because of the likely reduced risk of virus spread outdoors.

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UTTUA will continue to offer extracurricular activities, at their discretion and consistent with the guidance in this document, for non-UIL extracurricular activities and with the guidance found on the UIL website for all UIL activities.

UTTUA will plan for entry, exit, and transition procedures that reduce large group gatherings (of students and/or adults) in close proximity.

- UTTUA will assign students to entries to ensure even distribution of students entering/exiting at each door.
- UTTUA will provide guidance to students to enter one at a time and wait six feet apart outside the entrance, and, where appropriate, encouraging parents to remain outside and in their vehicles during drop-off and pick-up.
- UTTUA will assess whether or not the play structure can support groups of children along with additional processes for proper handwashing (before/after) and cleaning of high-touch structure areas.
- UTTUA will consider eliminating assemblies and other activities that bring large groupings of students and/or teachers and staff together.

FACILITIES CLEANING

The safety of our employees and students are our first priority. Upon reopening, our schools have been completely cleaned and disinfected and we will continue to adhere to all necessary safety precautions. In addition to the deep clean of the office and school before employees and students return, the cleaning steps outlined below are to be taken to disinfect workplace surfaces, chairs, tables, etc. to reduce the risk of spread of infection. We will require all employees to maintain this safety standard by continuously cleaning and disinfecting based on the frequency stated below.

GENERAL DISINFECTION MEASURES

Category	Area	Frequency
Workspaces	Classrooms, Offices	At the end of each use/day
Appliances	Refrigerators, Microwaves, Coffee Machines	Daily
Electronic Equipment	Copier machines, Shared computer monitors, TV's, Telephones, Keyboards	At the end of each use/day and/or between use
General Used Objects	Handles, light switches, sinks, restrooms	At least 4 times a day
Buses	Bus seats, handles/railing, belts, window controls	At the end of each use/day
Common Areas	Cafeteria, Library, Conference rooms, Gyms, Common Areas	At the end of each use/day; between groups

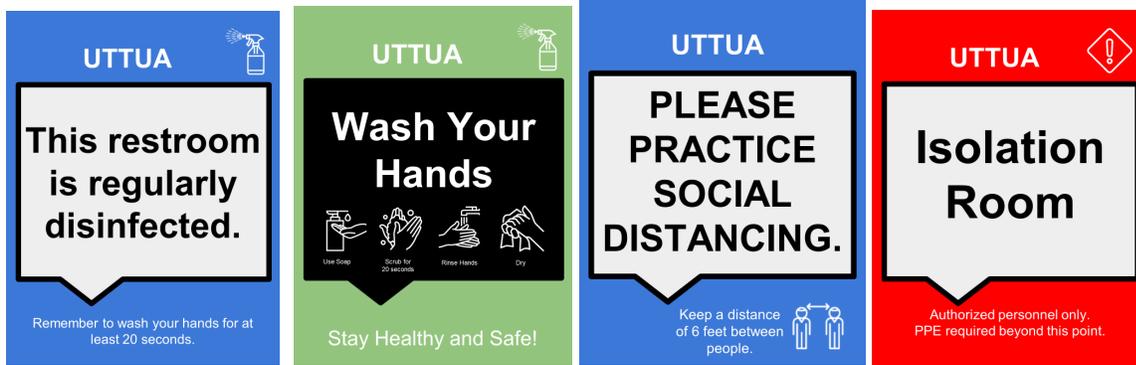
GENERAL DISINFECTION MEASURES PROTOCOL

Health and Hygiene Practices: General

- UTTUA will have hand sanitizer and/or hand washing stations with soap and water at each entrance. UTTUA will have hand sanitizer stations in every classroom.
- Students, teachers, staff, and campus visitors will be encouraged to sanitize and/or wash hands frequently.
- UTTUA recommends handwashing for at least 20 seconds at least two times each day, in addition to being encouraged to wash hands after using the restroom and before eating.
- Students, teachers, staff, and campus visitors will be encouraged to cover coughs and sneezes with a tissue, and if not available, covered in their elbows. Used tissues should be thrown in the trash, hands should be washed immediately with soap and water for at least 20 seconds, or hand sanitizer should be used.
- UTTUA will institute more frequent cleaning practices, including additional cleaning by janitorial staff, as well as provide the opportunity for children to clean their own spaces before and after they are used, in ways that are safe and developmentally appropriate.
- UTTUA will arrange for additional cleaning and disinfecting of surfaces commonly touched throughout the day. This would include objects such as door handles, common tables/desks, shared supplies such as art supplies, and high touch devices such as shared laptops or tablets.
- UTTUA will arrange for cleaning of commonly touched surfaces in classrooms between different class groups, if the same room will be used by multiple class groups.
- The CDC has provided guidance on cleaning community buildings to prevent COVID-19 spread. UTTUA will ensure these products are stored safely, including storing harmful products where children cannot access them, and ensuring that harmful cleaning products are not used near children.
- Whenever possible, UTTUA will open windows or otherwise work to improve air flow by allowing outside air to circulate in the building.

SIGNAGE

Signage will be placed throughout the offices and school, communicating expectations and guidance.



FOOD DELIVERY/LUNCH ARRANGEMENTS

UTTUA students will eat lunch in the cafeteria. Students are expected to arrive daily with a nutritious lunch. Lunch deliveries should be limited to emergency situations only.

UTTUA encourages hydration. Water bottling stations are provided on each campus. Students are encouraged to use refillable water bottles. Students should sterilize reusable water bottles at the end of each day.

BUS DRIVERS/BUS PROTOCOLS

Buses will be thoroughly cleaned after each bus trip, focusing on high-touch surfaces such as bus seats, steering wheels, knobs, and door handles. Window will remain open during cleaning, allowing for additional ventilation.

Bus drivers are employees of the district; therefore, they are required to follow the same preventative guidelines communicated by the HR Department and contained in this document.

In addition, UTTUA will require students and staff to use hand sanitizer upon boarding the bus. Passengers will be seated 6ft apart, spacing permitting. When conditions are favorable, windows on the bus will be left open to allow outside air circulation.

SOCIAL-EMOTIONAL WELL-BEING OF STUDENTS AND STAFF

UTTUA has employed a counselor who, with assistance from our district Licensed Specialist in School Psychology (LSSP), will develop resources for parents, students, and teachers to access to address the social, emotional, and mental health needs. The counselor will work with scholars individually or in small groups via teletherapy to address any well-being needs. Additionally, the counselor and LSSP will develop a scholar and staff survey. This survey will allow individuals to give feedback on how to develop a stronger outreach program and better support their needs.

STAFFING

- UTTUA Employees, like employees of any organization, must continue to meet the work expectations set by The University of Texas at Tyler, subject to any applicable employment contract terms.

STAFF TRAINING

It is very important that all employees understand the safety requirements, protocols and expectations to ensure everyone and their communities stay safe and prevent the spread of the virus.

- UTTUA Staff will be trained specifically on the protocols outlined in this document and the practices adopted by The University of Texas at Tyler.
- UTTUA will attempt to reduce in-person staff meetings or other opportunities for adults to congregate in close settings. When those meetings are necessary, it is encouraged for participants to remain at least 6 feet apart where feasible and consider whether increased airflow from the outdoors is possible in those settings.

ACADEMIC SERVICES

UTTUA will only be offering in-person learning and will ensure that resources and services are provided to support the academic needs of students on campus.

COMMUNICATION METHODS

To stay updated on the most up-to-date information:

- Teachers, students, and parents need to check their email throughout the day
- Visit our district/campus website
- Follow our social media platforms
- Access Skyward Platform
- Access PowerSchool Platform

STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES

Any students who have disabilities will receive the needed accommodations to ensure their safety while they are on campus or attending any campus-related events.

DUAL CREDIT

Students enrolled in dual credit will be expected to comply with the participation requirements communicated by both University Professor and Campus Director.

TEACHER SUPPORT

- UTTUA teachers will work closely with the curriculum team to ensure instruction is aligned with state standards

PARENT/STUDENT SUPPORT

- UTTUA will provide training opportunities for parents and students on the district chosen platform.
- UTTUA will provide troubleshooting support for parents and students needing assistance with the district chosen platform.

ATTENDANCE AND ENROLLMENT

- Per Texas Education Code (TEC), §25.092, students must attend 90% of the days a course is offered to be promoted to the next grade.