



**2022-2023 School Year Guidance  
In the Aftermath of COVID-19**



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## Introduction and District Priorities

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As a school district, Ferris Independent School District looks forward to welcoming students back to school on August 10, 2022. Despite the challenges of COVID-19, our district will continue to provide excellent education to our students. As the public health crisis continues to linger with new variants, we have planned for the opening of the 2022-2023 school year with a focus on the health, safety, and well-being of our students, staff, visitors, and community.

Ferris ISD's plans follow recommendations for school opening and operations provided by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), the Texas Education Agency (TEA), and state and local health officials.

**Please note: 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 become necessary throughout the coming school year, it will be our priority to keep the community informed of those changes and updates. The Ferris ISD website, Remind, and Ferris ISD social media pages will provide you with the most up-to-date information.**

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## Student & Staff Safety Protocols

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### Protocols for Screening and Isolation

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The following are the return to onsite work and return to school protocols for Ferris ISD campuses and administration buildings. Since this is an ever-changing situation, the district may need to change protocols at any time to address specific needs and circumstances in order to protect the health and safety of students, employees, and the community. Please note, health guidance cannot anticipate every unique situation. As a result, Ferris ISD will continue to consult available guidance through governmental agencies and other information deemed relevant to monitor the situation. The district will comply with applicable federal and

state employment and disability laws, workplace safety standards, and accessibility standards to address individual needs.

It is important to remember the virus that causes COVID-19 can be spread by infected persons who have few or no symptoms. Even if an infected person shows no symptoms or is only mildly ill, the people they spread it to may become seriously or fatally ill, especially for persons 65 years of age or older with pre-existing health conditions placing them at higher risk. Due to the hidden nature of this threat, Ferris ISD expects all employees, students and families to rigorously follow these practices.

## Preparation for the Opening of School

Ferris ISD will ensure all staff, resources, and supplies are prepared for opening school, including but not limited to assigning sufficient staff to carry out the plans, ensuring proper training and stocking inventory of necessary supplies, such as personal protective equipment (PPE).

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) provides guidance, recommendations, and resources to assist with plans and protocols for health and safety. Ferris ISD will continue to implement the following health and safety plans that include:

- Ensuring adequate supply inventory (e.g., PPE, cleaning supplies, hand sanitizer, etc.)
- Cleaning with products approved by governing authorities and per guidelines from the Environmental Protection Agency
- Ensuring compliance with CDC, Health and Human Services, the Texas Education Agency (TEA) and other jurisdictional policies
- Providing signage in areas recommended by the TEA to communicate procedures and expectations upon entering facilities and throughout buildings when needed

## General

**For the time being, students and staff will not be screened for COVID-19 symptoms like we did last year. We still encourage everyone to monitor their own health and to stay home when needed. Students feeling ill and experiencing a temperature will be sent home by the nurse when needed.**

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## Protocols for Travel

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### General

- Ferris ISD requests students and staff to limit personal travel where possible to reduce the risk of personal exposure, to adhere to physical distancing and enhanced hygiene practices while away from the district.
- Individuals who develop symptoms while traveling or immediately after traveling should follow CDC guidelines for individuals presumed to have been exposed to COVID-19.
- Any student or staff member who develops symptoms must notify the campus principal to activate district protocols.

### Staff Travel Restrictions

- We will minimize non-essential travel throughout the year.

### Student Travel Restrictions

- Ferris ISD will follow all federal, state, and local guidelines for travel to/from extracurricular events, to the greatest extent possible.

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## Protocols for Face Coverings & Personal Protective Equipment

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Schools are required to comply with the governor's current executive order regarding the wearing of masks. Ferris ISD cannot make students and staff wear face coverings during school hours; however, it is an option for those that choose to do so. CDC highly encourages the wearing of face coverings for anyone still unvaccinated. This requirement is subject to change and will be determined by the level of disease activity of COVID-19. The District will rely on data from the Department of State Health Services (DSHS) and the Ellis County Health Departments to determine the disease activity level and the appropriate protective measures.

- Masks include buffs, non-medical grade disposable face masks, cloth face coverings (over the nose and mouth), or full-face shields to protect eyes, nose, and mouth.
- Staff and students that are not vaccinated are encouraged to wear face coverings.

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## Protocols for Campus Visitors

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### General

Campuses will conduct virtual meetings to limit campus visitors when practical and mutually agreeable.

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## Protocols for Disinfecting and Hand Sanitizing

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### General

Frequent disinfection and hand sanitization will aid in the health and wellness of students and staff.

### Hand Washing / Sanitizing Expectations

- Alcohol-based hand sanitizer will be available at the main entry to the campus, in classrooms, in the cafeteria, and in additional common areas throughout the campus.
- Staff and students will be expected to regularly wash or sanitize their hands.
- Students will use hand sanitizer upon entry to the classroom, upon return from outdoors (physical education classes or recess), before eating, and following restroom breaks.
- Teachers will also provide periodic reminders during the instructional day.

### Disinfecting Expectations

- Staff will have access to disinfectant solutions and/or disinfectant wipes to regularly sanitize high-touch and working surfaces and shared objects.
- Staff will limit the use of shared supplies when possible.
- Age-appropriate students *may* assist with the disinfection of shared classroom desks prior to changing classes.

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## Protocols for Campus Cleaning and Disinfecting

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### General

**Frequent cleaning and disinfecting will promote a healthy learning and work environment for students and staff. Ferris ISD will continue to clean and disinfect our facilities to protect our students and staff, and reduce the risk of spread of infection.**

### Weekly Campus Cleaning

- Each classroom and restroom will be cleaned and disinfected.
- All high touch areas will be disinfected daily.
- Staff (and age appropriate students) will have access to disinfectant solutions and/or disinfectant wipes to sanitize working surfaces and shared objects after each use and during breaks in instruction.

### Additional Cleaning Measures for Covid-19 Positive Cases on Campus

- If a classroom or facility is closed due to COVID-19 spread, a special disinfectant that is recommended for use on the virus that causes COVID-19 will be used to disinfect as soon as the confirmation of a positive test is received.
- Custodial staff will disinfect classrooms, restrooms, and all common space areas throughout the building throughout the day.
- While the scope of deep cleaning is presumed to be the full campus, the necessary footprint to be cleaned may be reduced if there is sufficient rationale to do so. Notwithstanding the above, if an active employee is confirmed to have a COVID-19 positive test, in lieu of performing deep cleaning, a campus may shut down for a period of 72 hours to allow for natural deactivation of the virus, followed by site personnel performing a comprehensive disinfection of all common surfaces.
  - Ferris ISD will close off areas that were heavily used by the individual with the lab-confirmed case (student, teacher, or staff) until the non-porous surfaces in those areas can be disinfected, unless more than 3 days have already passed since that person was on campus.
  - Notification: Ferris ISD will notify all teachers, staff, and families of all students in a school if a lab-confirmed COVID19 case is identified among students, teachers, or staff who participate in any on-campus activities.

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## Protocols for Transportation

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### Bus Transportation

Students using school bus transportation services will follow revised protocols.

- Students should practice social distancing, whenever possible (if there is adequate space and it is safe to do so) while waiting for and approaching the school bus.
- Students should not share food, drinks, or personal items.
- Student family units will be seated together, to the extent practicable.
- When possible, bus windows will be opened to increase outside air circulation.
- ***Parents are encouraged to drop students off, carpool, or walk their student to school to reduce possible virus exposure on buses.***

### Bus Sanitization

- Bus drivers, bus monitors, and/or Ferris ISD transportation staff will disinfect all district route buses with a disinfectant daily.

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## Work and Learning Environments

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### Training

On the first day a student attends school on campus, Ferris ISD will provide instruction to students on appropriate hygiene practices and other mitigation practices adopted to reduce the spread of COVID-19.

- Students will be trained on:
  - Information about identification of symptoms, prevention of spread, and sanitation of work areas.
  - If a student is experiencing symptoms to immediately notify a teacher.
  - The practice of covering coughs and sneezes with a tissue or elbow.
  - The importance of frequent hand washing, with soap for at least twenty (20) seconds, and/or the use of hand sanitizer.

- All staff will be trained on identification of symptoms, prevention of spread, and sanitation of work areas.
- Custodial staff will be trained on the proper PPE levels for personal safety, disinfection methods and protocols, and provided comprehensive cleaning training.

### **Classroom Configuration**

- Desks or tables will be socially distanced as much as instructionally possible.
- When possible, Ferris ISD will eliminate communal supplies and shared supplies will be sanitized between use.
- Shared non-essential items will be removed from the classroom.
- Recommended procedures will be applied to all classroom settings, including special education service locations when possible and appropriate. Students' individual needs will be addressed on a case-by-case basis.

### **Collaborative Work and Projects**

- When possible, technology will be utilized when students are involved in collaborative work.
- Group or pair work can be implemented while maintaining physical distancing.

### **General Classroom**

- Alcohol-based sanitizer will be provided in each classroom.
- Disinfectant solution/disinfectant wipes will be provided in each classroom to sanitize working surfaces.
- Whenever possible, students and staff will maintain consistent groupings to minimize the spread of the virus.

### **Specialized Classrooms**

- Specialized equipment will be sanitized between each use. There will be adequate supplies to minimize the sharing of high touch materials or limit use of supplies of equipment to one group of students at a time.
- Procedures and protocols will be put into place to address locker rooms. Protocols will be in place for disinfecting of equipment, students changing clothes, students showering, distancing of students, etc.
- Special education classrooms and service locations may have additional protective barriers in place to support a safe environment for our students.



## Physical Education Classroom Protocols

- Whenever possible, physical education classes will be held outside to allow for maximum physical distance between students.
- Any activities bringing students into close physical contact will be avoided as much as possible.
- Procedures will be implemented in the locker rooms to encourage social distancing.
- Equipment will be disinfected after each use.
- Sanitizing areas and access to handwashing will be provided.

## Common Areas

In order to provide the safest environment possible in our common/collaborative spaces, while promoting disease prevention and mitigation, the following guidelines will be implemented:

### Meeting Spaces

To the fullest extent possible, meetings will be conducted virtually. When the need arises to meet in person, meeting participants will:

- Follow social distancing protocols as directed by federal, state or local government orders.
- Limit the sharing of materials/supplies, make them consumable or disinfect after use.

### Administrative Spaces - Reception, Offices, Conference Rooms

To the fullest extent possible, meetings will be conducted virtually. When the need arises to meet in person, meeting participants will:

- Stand behind the shield guard installed at the reception desk.
- Use hand sanitizer provided in front office spaces.

### Restrooms

- Visual reminders will help students to wash their hands before leaving the restroom and then use hand sanitizer upon entering the classroom.
- Increased disinfecting will occur throughout the school day.
- Each campus will comply with health agency recommendations and social distancing as much as possible.

## **Library**

- Visual reminders will be added and furniture rearranged to help students maintain social distancing while in the library.
- Students and staff will wash/sanitize hands upon entering and after visiting the library.
- High touch surfaces (i.e. table tops, chairs, door handles) will be disinfected regularly.
- Occupancy will be limited.

## **Recess / Playground**

- Students and staff will be required to wash their hands or use alcohol-based hand sanitizer before entering and upon exiting the playground.
- Campus administrators will develop a schedule for students to access the playground equipment. Teachers will monitor students to ensure safety guidelines are followed.
- Campuses may consider limiting the number of students per recess group, staggered schedules and/or consistent class groupings to limit the potential spread of the virus.

## **Water Fountains**

- Students are encouraged to bring their own water bottle for use throughout the day.
- We will of course clean and disinfect our water fountains multiple times throughout the day for those that will need to utilize them.

## **Transitions**

- Classroom doors will be propped open (during class transitions only) to reduce high touch areas when possible.
- Staff (and posted visual reminders) will reinforce physical social distancing expectations.

## Standard Arrival Protocols

- Entry doors will be designated based on arrival method: bus riders, parent drop-off/walk to school, student drivers, students with unique needs.
- Entry protocols will be established to maintain physical distance.
- Sanitizer stations will be placed at each entrance and students will sanitize hands upon entry.
- Students will go directly to a designated location upon arrival.
- Parents may not accompany students into the building during routine morning arrival.

## Standard Dismissal Protocols

- Dismissal times will be staggered slightly to limit the number of students in hallways and exit areas at any given time.
- Sanitizer stations will be placed at each exit and students will be encouraged to sanitize hands prior to exit.
- Parents picking up students during the day may call ahead so that students can be ready for pick up in the campus front office.
- Students will not be dismissed for early checkout within the last 15 minutes of the school day.

## Breakfast / Lunch

- Posted signage and staff will reinforce physical distance and traffic patterns in the cafeteria.
- Students are expected to wash hands or use hand sanitizer (at provided stations) prior to entering / exiting the cafeteria.

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## Outdoor & Off-Campus Student Activities

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- Campuses will limit students from leaving campus after school prior to travel or start of extra-curricular or co-curricular activities when possible.
- Special Education Community Based Instruction (CBI) and Work Based Learning (WBL) guidance will be followed to ensure these learning environments are available to our students per ARD/IEP recommendations.

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## On-Campus Activities & Outside Personnel

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- Any outside personnel that are approved to be on campus need to adhere to social distancing and personal protective equipment requirements as outlined by FISD, TEA and UIL. (Examples: parent-teacher conferences, ARD meeting, etc.)
- School wide events will be live streamed and/or occur virtually when possible.
- To limit larger gatherings, campus club meetings should be held virtually when possible. If meeting in person is required, groups should utilize larger meeting spaces or multiple meeting opportunities will be provided. Campus club meeting sponsors must adhere to social distancing and personal protective equipment requirements as outlined by FISD, TEA, and UIL.

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## Extra-Curricular Programming

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### Athletics, Cheer, Band, etc.

- Practices, performance, and contests will be conducted following safety protocols provided by guidance from FISD, UIL and TEA. This will include group size limitations, sharing and sanitizing of equipment, locker room usage, etc.
- Hand sanitizing stations will be located throughout our facilities and equipment will be sanitized on a regular basis.
- Locker room use will be determined by TEA/UIL. If locker rooms can be accessed, all locker room space will be utilized to follow social distancing guidelines.
- Bus travel will follow transportation guidelines provided by FISD and TEA.
- Online ticketing for events may be utilized.
- Separate entrances and exits may be utilized and event doors may be propped open to minimize physical contact with handles.
- Large group practice sessions, sectionals, and rehearsals will adhere to social distancing guidelines provided by an authorized entity (e.g., FISD, TEA, UIL, etc.)
- Games, concerts, and performances may be adjusted based on health and safety guidelines provided by an authorized entity (e.g., FISD, TEA, UIL, etc.) including, but not limited to; transportation procedures, number of attendees, etc.

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## Communication Methods

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

- Teachers, students, and parents need to check their email often.
  - Visit Ferris ISD's district website.
  - Follow Ferris ISD's district and campus social media platforms.
  - Watch for Remind messages.
  - SeeSaw - Grades PK-5; Google Classroom - Grades PK-12.
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