

STISD Project Safe Return – 2022-2023 School Year – Fall 2022

STISD continues to prioritize the health, safety and well-being of students, staff and all members of the district community, and has instituted the practices and recommendations to promote this.

Executive Order GA-38 (GA-38), which has the effect of state law under Section 418.012 of the Texas Government Code, requires Texas public school systems to operate during the COVID-19 pandemic in compliance with the published guidance of the Texas Education Agency (TEA). The TEA Public Health Guidance document constitutes TEA's guidance under GA-38 and takes effect immediately, replacing all prior guidance.

Public school systems are to operate in compliance with existing state laws and regulations, including all executive orders issued by the governor of Texas in response to the COVID-19 pandemic that are currently in effect.

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

If an individual who has been in a school has a test administered on campus that comes back positive for 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).

Individuals who have or are suspected of having COVID-19

- As provided in this [Department of State Health Services \(DSHS\) Rule](#), school systems must exclude students from attending school in person who have or are suspected of having COVID-19, and must immediately notify parents if this is determined while on campus. As noted in the rule, exclusion shall continue until the conditions for re-entry are met:
 - For individuals with symptoms, at least 5 days have passed since symptom onset, and fever free, and other symptoms have improved.
 - Individuals who test positive for COVID-19 but do not have any symptoms must stay home until at least 5 days after the day they were tested.
- Parents must ensure they do not send a child to school on campus if the child has COVID-19 symptoms or is test-confirmed with COVID-19, until the conditions for re-entry are met.

Masks

- STISD continues to highly encourage the use of masks within district facilities.
 - From TEA's Public Health Guidance dated Aug. 1, 2022: Per GA-38, school systems cannot require students or staff to wear a mask. GA-38 addresses government-mandated face coverings in response to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Optional COVID-19 Testing for Students

STISD will offer optional COVID-19 student testing onsite at campuses. The testing is strictly optional, and it will occur on an as-needed basis, if the student's parent/guardian suggests the test or requests the test due to the student displaying symptoms. A test may not be administered to a student without a consent form on file with the student's campus. To allow for a child to be tested, parents/guardians must complete the STISD COVID-19 Optional Student Testing Consent Form, available through [the COVID-19 section of the district website](#), and submit it to the school nurse.

Testing is contingent upon the availability of tests. Please consult with your child's campus regarding the availability of testing. If your child is displaying symptoms, please do not send your child to school. Keep your child home, and reach out to your campus nurse for guidance.

Vaccinations & Other Precautions

- The district encourages faculty, staff and students to get vaccinated against COVID-19.
- Employees and students are required to continue daily self-screenings, and should not report to school or the office, if experiencing symptoms of COVID-19.
- Students, faculty, staff and visitors are highly encouraged to continue with frequent washing of hands or using hand sanitizer, and sanitization stations will continue to be available for use throughout district facilities and buses.
- The district will continue with more frequent cleaning and sanitation of campuses.
- Desk shields will be made available for student use, upon request by the student.
- The district will continue to provide appropriate accommodations for children with disabilities with respect to health and safety policies.

Social and Emotional Resources

STISD is prepared to provide STISD families needed mental health supports, as we are staffed with School Counselors, Social Workers, Licensed Professional Counselors (LPC), and a Licensed Specialist in School Psychology (LSSP). Should your child need to receive these services, please contact your school's counseling center.

Our counselors throughout the district have created resources that address topics important to our students and families, including dealing with anxiety, mental health, tips for adjusting to change, and staying safe. These resources and more are available through the district website at <https://www.stisd.net/parents/health-and-wellness>. Parent/student wellness meetings are also held periodically.

Review and Updating of Plan

This plan is a living document, and the district will continue to review it and make any necessary modifications based upon the most recent conditions and guidance. The most up-to-date plan will always be posted on the district website within the COVID-19 section.