

WHITNEY INDEPENDENT SCHOOL DISTRICT

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Melissa Marbut – Director of Accountability
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Judy Bailey – Director of Food Service

WHITNEY ISD SAFE RETURN TO IN-PERSON INSTRUCTION AND CONTINUITY OF SERVICES PLAN FOR 2023-24

(UPDATED June 19, 2023)

The Safe Return to In-Person Instruction and Continuity of Services Plan for 2023-24 has been written in collaboration with district administrators, the WISD Board of Trustees, teachers, parents, and community members. The guidelines referenced in this plan are based on the guidance and recommendations from the CDC, the Department of State Health Services, and the Texas Education Agency. These guidelines may be amended if new information is received from any of these authorities. WISD will comply with Governor Abbott's Executive Order GA-36 and masks will not be required for students or staff. Students and staff will be allowed to wear masks if they choose to do so.

DISTRICT COMMITMENTS

Whitney ISD ensures that the interventions to be implemented will respond to the academic, social, emotional, and mental health needs of all students, and particularly those students disproportionately impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic.

1. Follow the CDC, the Department of State Health Services, and the Texas Education Agency guidelines to keep our students and staff safe.
2. Assess academic gaps and provide accelerated closing-the-gap growth opportunities.
3. Evaluate the social and emotional needs of our students and staff.
4. Make every attempt to keep schools open all year without experiencing a school closure.

INSTRUCTIONAL DELIVERY

Whitney ISD will continue with traditional, in-person instruction for the 2023-24 school year. The district will not offer remote learning as an alternative to traditional, in-person instruction. The district will continue to implement Google Classroom as a learning management system to facilitate instruction for students who are quarantined or test positive for COVID-19. Assignments managed via Google Classroom are available to students who are absent from school, but students not present on campus will NOT be counted present for attendance purposes.

INSTRUCTIONAL CONTINUITY

Implementation of technology devices (one-to-one) and Google Classroom will provide the foundation for instructional continuity. Students in grades 3-12 will receive laptops and students in grades PK-2 will receive iPads. This will allow the district to respond to a variety of circumstances and seamlessly provide instruction for students who are required to stay home. If it is necessary for a campus or the district to close, remote learning can be implemented at any time.

Students With Disabilities

Throughout the COVID-19 pandemic, Whitney ISD has coordinated services for students with disabilities along with the Hill County SSA. District staff and teachers have continued the process of evaluating students, providing appropriate accommodations and learning supports, and meeting the needs of students. This support was available, regardless of the learning environment, and continues to be available through any future campus or district closures caused by the pandemic.

Social, Emotional, or Mental Health Needs

The Whitney ISD counseling staff is prepared to respond to the social, emotional, or mental health concerns of our students. Throughout the COVID-19 pandemic, counselors are available and work proactively to protect the mental health of our students. SEL positions were added at WES and WIS to assist the counselors in responding to the SEL needs of the students at those campuses. WISD partnered with The KLARAS Center For Families in Waco to provide mental health case managers at WHS and WMS to assist the counselors in responding to the SEL needs of the students at those campuses.

PRACTICES TO PREVENT THE VIRUS FROM ENTERING THE SCHOOL

Screening

- Teachers and staff must self-screen for COVID-19 symptoms before coming onto campus each day. Teachers and staff must report to WISD if they themselves have COVID-19 symptoms or have been lab-confirmed with COVID-19, and if so, they must remain off campus until they meet the criteria for re-entry. Additionally, they must report to WISD if they have had close contact with an individual who has been lab-confirmed with COVID-19.

- Parents must screen their children for COVID-19 symptoms daily to ensure they do not send a child on campus if the child has COVID-19 symptoms or has been lab-confirmed with COVID-19. If a child has fever, they should not be sent to school. If a student is lab-confirmed with COVID-19, they will remain off campus until they meet the criteria for re-entry.

Individuals Confirmed or Suspected with COVID-19

Any individual who is lab confirmed with COVID-19 or is experiencing the symptoms of COVID-19 must stay at home throughout the infection period, and cannot return to campus until WISD screens the individual to determine if the below conditions for re-entry have been met:

- In the case of an individual who is lab-confirmed with COVID-19, the individual may return to school when all three of the following criteria are met:
 1. At least one day (24 hours) has passed since recovery (no fever without the use of fever-reducing medications)
 2. The individual has improvement in symptoms; and
 3. At least 5 days have passed since the symptoms first appeared.
- 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, the individual is assumed to have COVID-19 and may not return to campus until the three step criteria for re-entry is met.

Identifying Possible COVID-19 Cases on Campus

- WISD will immediately separate any student who shows symptoms of COVID-19 while at school until the student can be picked up by a parent or guardian. Students must be picked up within one hour of being notified by the school nurse.
- WISD will clean the areas used by the individual who shows COVID-19 symptoms while at school as soon as feasible.
- Students who report feeling feverish will be given an immediate temperature check to determine if they are symptomatic for COVID-19.

Close Contact

In general, close contact is defined as 1) being directly exposed to infectious secretions from a person who is lab-confirmed with COVID-19 (e.g., being coughed on) or 2) being within 3 feet in a classroom setting for a total of approximately 15 minutes throughout the course of a day with a person who is lab-confirmed. Either one defines close contact if it occurs during the infectious period of the case, defined as two days prior to symptom onset to 10 days after symptom onset.

Due to the changes made by the CDC on August 11, 2022, the recommendation for close contacts to quarantine has been removed.

RESPONDING TO A LAB CONFIRMED CASE

- If an individual who has been at school is lab-confirmed to have COVID-19, WISD will notify the Department of State Health Services in accordance with applicable laws and regulations.

PRACTICES TO MITIGATE THE SPREAD OF COVID-19 INSIDE THE SCHOOL

Health and Hygiene Practices

- All campuses will have hand sanitizer at each entrance
- Students, teachers, and staff will be encouraged to sanitize and/or wash their hands frequently.
- Students, teachers, and staff will be encouraged to cover coughs and sneezes with a tissue, and if not available, covered in their elbow.
- All campuses will have additional cleaning and disinfecting if a lab-confirmed case is reported on campus.
- Desks and tables will be socially distanced as much as possible based on the size of the classroom.

Food Service

- All food service staff will have their temperatures taken daily and recorded by the manager on duty.
- Tables will be socially distanced as much as possible and some of the tables will have Plexiglas installed to allow only 4 students at each table if students prefer those accommodations.
- Social distancing decals will be placed on the floor.
- Tables and serving lines will be disinfected between lunch periods
- All meals will be served in closed containers and all condiments and milk will be handed out by the servers.
- Visitors will be allowed in the cafeteria during lunch only at WES and WIS.

Vaccinations

Beginning in March 2021, Whitney ISD worked closely with Goodall Witcher Clinic to make vaccines available to all district employees. By the end of the 2020-21 school year, all district employees who chose to receive the vaccine were fully vaccinated.

This plan will be reviewed every six months and updated as needed until September 30, 2023.

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