



SUMMARY OF COVID-19 HEALTH AND SAFETY PLANNING

September 1, 2020

Dear Waco ISD Families and Employees,

Throughout the summer, campuses and departments across the district have been planning to make our return to in-person instruction as safe as possible. This document is a summary of the steps that are being taken to reduce the likelihood of the virus spreading at one of our schools or other facilities and to respond when there is a confirmed case.

While there is much that we can do to reduce the risk that someone will be exposed to COVID-19 at one of our schools, we cannot eliminate that risk. Any in-person gathering of people during a pandemic carries with it the risk that someone may unknowingly have the virus and spread it to others.

The plans summarized in this document have been developed in consultation with a team of local health experts. They take the health and safety requirements put in place by the state as a starting point and build on them going further to protect our students and employees. When there are cases at a campus, we will notify both families and employees and will work closely with Waco-McLennan County Public Health District.

It will take all of us working together to keep our students, our employees and our community safe. The most important thing that we can do is to stay home if we're feeling sick or believe that we have been in close contact with someone who has the virus.

Sincerely,

Susan Kincannon, Ed.D.
Superintendent

A COORDINATED EFFORT

Preventing the spread of COVID-19 when schools reopen for in-person instruction will require families, employees and the community to work together and starts by knowing the signs and symptoms of COVID-19.

People with these symptoms may have COVID-19:

- Fever or chills
- Cough
- Shortness of breath or difficulty breathing
- Fatigue
- Muscle or body aches
- Headache
- New loss of taste or smell
- Sore throat
- Congestion or runny nose
- Nausea or vomiting
- Diarrhea

FEELING SICK? HAVE ANY OF THESE SYMPTOMS? STAY HOME!

PREPARING FACILITIES TO REOPEN

Throughout the summer, the facilities and maintenance department has been implementing a series of measures to reduce the potential for the virus to spread in Waco ISD schools and other buildings. These steps include the following:

- HVAC systems have been adjusted to increase the air exchange rate and fitted with filters that provide a higher level of filtration.
- Hand sanitizing stations have been installed in every classroom as well as common areas, and each classroom will also have hand sanitizer in a pump bottle.
- Water fountains have been converted to bottle filling stations or disconnected.
- In many areas where it is not possible to maintain social distance, plexiglass barriers have been installed.
- Signage has been added throughout buildings to promote social distancing, masking and hand washing.
- Seating in stadiums, gymnasiums and theatres will be marked to promote social distancing.

Based on their physical layout, schools are taking additional steps (like designating one-way hallways and staircases) to maintain social distancing on campus. Many classrooms have also been reconfigured to eliminate unnecessary furniture and allow for additional space between students.

Cleaning and sanitization protocols have also been enhanced to reduce the potential for the virus to spread. All campuses will be cleaned with a hospital-grade disinfectant twice each day, and high-touch areas (including restrooms) will be disinfected more frequently.

TRANSPORTING STUDENTS

Waco ISD is also implementing measures to reduce the potential for the virus to spread on buses:

- Every morning and afternoon, buses will be cleaned and sanitized using hospital-grade disinfectants.
- Hand sanitizing stations have been added at the entrance to each bus.
- Masks are required on buses, and disposable masks will be available on each bus in case a student is waiting at a bus stop without one.

Students will be spaced out as much as possible on buses. However, the amount of space between students on buses will depend on how many students choose in-person instruction and, in turn, how many of those students choose to ride the bus.

Families are encouraged to consider other forms of transportation (like walking or carpooling) when feasible. The fewer people that a student interacts with each day, the less likely it is that they will be exposed to someone who has the virus.

Some campuses have also revised their procedures for drop off and pick up to help maintain space between students as they enter and exit the school.

SCREENING STUDENTS & STAFF DAILY

All students and employees will be screened for possible symptoms of COVID-19 and have their temperatures taken as they arrive each day.

At each campus, there will be designated location(s) for students to be screened prior to entering the school building. The location will be determined by each student's name, grade level and/or how they get to school each day. Students with an elevated temperature and/or reporting other possible symptoms of COVID-19 will be directed to a designated area away from other students and staff members where they will be assessed by the campus nurse. If the nurse determines that the symptoms are consistent with those for COVID-19, the student's family will be called to pick up the student immediately.

To reduce potential exposure to the virus, visitors and volunteers will not be allowed in schools until further notice. Deliveries/drop-offs of outside food also will not be allowed.

STAYING SAFE ON CAMPUS

A little less than half of Waco ISD's students are expected to start the school year in person. Reducing the number of students on campus is significant. It reduces the potential for exposure to the virus, and it will make it possible to maintain more space between students in classrooms, hallways and other areas.

The following measures will also reduce the potential for the virus to spread on campus:

- Masks are required for all staff and students.
- Frequent hand washing and sanitizing is required.
- Sharing of supplies and equipment will be limited, and any shared supplies or equipment will be disinfected between uses.

The way that meals will be served on campus is also changing to protect students and staff:

- All food items will be pre-packaged to prevent cross-contamination.
- Reusable trays will be replaced with disposable trays.
- Self-service bars, shared utensils and condiment stations have been eliminated.
- Barcodes and barcode scanners will be used to reduce contact when checking out.

In addition to adjusting lunch schedules, many campuses will be utilizing spaces outside of the cafeteria to spread students out at lunch. Some secondary campuses are also extending and/or staggering passing periods throughout the day to reduce the number of students in hallways at the same time.

CARING FOR SYMPTOMATIC STUDENTS

If a student develops possible symptoms of COVID-19 during the school day, they will be assessed by the school nurse in a designated area away from other students and staff members. If the nurse determines that the symptoms are consistent with those for COVID-19, the student's family will be called to pick up the student immediately.

It is important for families to keep their contact information up to date. When contacted to pick up a sick student, families should do so as soon possible, ideally, within an hour.

Students who are sent home with COVID-19 symptoms must isolate (and stay home from school) for at least 10 days from the beginning of their symptoms *and* until they have been fever free for at least 24 hours without the use of fever-reducing medications. If a student wishes to return before the 10-day infectious period is over, they must provide a written doctor's release with an alternate diagnosis.

Any areas used by the student will be deep cleaned and sanitized using hospital-grade disinfectants.

RESPONDING TO EXPOSURES OUTSIDE OF SCHOOL

If a family learns that their student was exposed to COVID-19 outside of school, they should notify the school immediately. The student must quarantine (and stay home from school) for 14 days from their last close contact with the person who tested positive.

Similarly, if an employee learns that they were exposed to COVID-19 outside of work, they should notify their supervisor immediately. The employee must quarantine (and stay home from work) for 14 days from their last close contact with the person who tested positive.

If a student or an employee does not develop symptoms of COVID-19, they will be allowed to return after the 14-day quarantine period is complete. A negative test is not required to return and will not shorten the quarantine period following an exposure.

Others on the campus are not at risk of exposure to COVID-19 unless the employee or student begins to show symptoms and/or tests positive within two days of their last day on campus. There is very little risk of developing the virus from someone who was exposed to the virus but did not develop an infection themselves.

RESPONDING TO CONFIRMED CASES

When someone who has been at a campus or another district facility tests positive for COVID-19, Waco ISD works closely with the Waco-McLennan County Public Health District.

Families should notify the school immediately if a student tests positive for COVID-19. The student must isolate (and stay home from school) for at least 10 days from the beginning of their symptoms *and* until their symptoms have improved including being fever free for at least 24 hours without the use of fever-reducing medications.

Similarly, employees should notify their supervisor immediately if they test positive for COVID-19. The employee must isolate (and stay home from school) for at least 10 days from the beginning of their symptoms *and* until their symptoms have improved including being fever free for at least 24 hours without the use of fever-reducing medications.

Waco ISD's health services department will work to identify everyone who was in close contact with anyone at a campus who tests positive for COVID-19. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention define close contact as being within 6 feet of a lab-confirmed or probable COVID-19 patient for at least 15 minutes.

All students and employees who have been in close contact with someone who tests positive will be contacted personally and must quarantine (and stay home from school or work) for 14 days from their last close contact with the person who tested positive. Waco ISD is also required to report any close contacts to the public health district.

Any areas that the person who tested positive used will be closed off and deep cleaned using hospital-grade disinfectants.

In addition, if an individual at a campus tests positive for COVID-19, all families and employees at the campus will be notified via email. A printed copy of the letter will also be sent home with students who are learning in person on campus.

LEARNING MORE

This document is a summary of the detailed plans that campuses and departments across the district have put in place to mitigate the potential spread of COVID-19 in Waco ISD schools.

More detailed information on Waco ISD's protocols for screening students, caring for symptomatic students and responding to exposures or confirmed cases can be found at **wacoisd.org/healthprotocol**.

Additional information on the upcoming school year, including information for students learning remotely, is available on the district's website at **wacoisd.org/COVID19**.

Families with questions about how health and safety plans are being implemented by specific schools should contact the campus principal or nurse.

The Waco-McLennan County Public Health District has a self-screening tool and up-to-date information on the virus at **covidwaco.com**. They also have a COVID-19 public information hotline at **254-750-1890**.

The Texas Education Agency has a flier with information on families' educational rights and responsibilities that can be accessed by visiting **wacoisd.org/TEAfler**.