



Sulphur Springs Independent School District
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Sulphur Springs ISD COVID-19 Mitigation Plan Summary

Last Updated September 4, 2020

I. SSISD COVID-19 Mitigation Plan Summary Generally

a. Plan Purpose

The virus that causes COVID-19 can infect people of all ages, and as a school district we will do everything feasible to keep students, teachers, staff, and our communities safe. Research from the Centers for Disease Control (CDC), among others, has found that while children do get infected by COVID-19 and some severe outcomes have been reported in children, relatively few children with COVID-19 are hospitalized or have severe symptoms. The American Academy of Pediatrics notes that COVID-19 risks must be balanced with the need for children to attend school in person, given that lack of physical access to school leads to a number of negative consequences, placing “children and adolescents at considerable risk of morbidity, and in some cases, mortality.”

While it is not possible to eliminate all risk for furthering the spread of COVID-19, the current research suggests that there are many steps we can take to reduce the risk to students, teachers, staff, and their families. This Plan Summary contains information on four sets of practices that minimize the likelihood of viral spread:

- Notice – Parental and Public Notices
- Prevention – Practices to Prevent the Virus from Entering our School
- Response – Practices to Respond to a Lab-Confirmed Case in our School
- Mitigation – Practices to Reduce the Likely Spread Inside our School

Some sections of the Plan Summary describe specific measures campuses are taking to mitigate the spread of COVID-19. **Due to the unique instructional and logistical needs of every campus, some measures are offered in some locations but not others.** For questions regarding more specific information about a particular campus, please contact the campus principal.

b. Symptoms

Any of the following symptoms indicate a possible COVID-19 infection:

- Feeling feverish or a measured temperature greater than or equal to 100.0 degrees
- Loss of taste or smell
- Cough
- Difficulty breathing
- Shortness of breath
- Fatigue
- Headache
- Chills
- Sore throat
- Congestion or runny nose

- Shaking or exaggerated shivering
- Significant muscle pain or ache
- Diarrhea
- Nausea or vomiting

c. Close Contact

This Plan Summary refers to “close contact” with an individual who is lab-confirmed to have COVID-19. Close contact is determined by an appropriate public health agency. In general, close contact is defined as:

- Being directly exposed to infectious secretions (e.g., being coughed on); or
- Being within 6 feet for a largely uninterrupted or sustained extended contact period throughout the course of a day of approximately 15 minutes; however, additional factors like case/contact masking (i.e., both the infectious individual and the potential close contact have been consistently and properly masked), ventilation, presence of dividers, and case symptomatology may affect this determination.

Either of the above defines close contact if it occurred during the infectious period of the case, defined as two days prior to symptom onset to 10 days after symptom onset. In the case of asymptomatic individuals who are test-confirmed with COVID-19, the infectious period is defined as two days prior to the confirming lab test and continuing for 10 days following the confirming lab test.

Close contacts will follow the stay at home protocol. COVID-19 testing for close contacts is not necessary, as negative test results can occur at any time while the virus is incubating. The role of the school in identifying close contacts is to provide relevant information to our local health departments, not to determine close contacts in the absence of health guidance.

d. Return to School Criteria

- For close contact **EXPOSURE** to COVID-19:
 - End of stay home period – 14 days after their last contact with the confirmed positive COVID-19 individual.
- For COVID-19 positive **DIAGNOSIS** and/or **SYMPTOMS**:
 - At least one day (24 hours) has passed since recovery (resolution of fever without the use of fever-reducing medications);
 - The individual has improvement in symptoms (e.g., cough, shortness of breath); and
 - At least 10 days have passed since symptoms first appeared.

To return sooner:

- The individual obtains a medical professional’s note clearing them for return based on an alternative diagnosis; OR
- The individual obtains an acute infection test/molecular test (at a physician’s office or other site) that comes back negative for COVID-19.
 - In the case of a high-risk exposure, the individual exposed should wait 3-5 days, or until symptoms begin, to get tested to ensure accuracy of the test.

e. Plan Contacts

Local Health Administration – Brynn Smith – 903-440-5902
 SSISD Representative – Josh Williams – 903-885-0999

II. Notice

SSISD will post for parents and the general public, one week prior to the start of school, the Plan Summary the District will follow to mitigate COVID-19 spread in our school based on Texas Education Agency and CDC guidance.

The Plan Summary will broadly address the District's COVID-19 mitigation plan and will be posted on the SSISD website. The plan was developed in consultation with teachers, staff, and parents to ensure the plan provides for the safety of teachers, staff, and students.

For questions about the SSISD COVID-19 Mitigation Plan Summary, please call or e-mail Assistant Superintendent Josh Williams at 903-885-0999 or josh.williams@ssisd.net.

III. Prevention

Prevention practices outlined in this plan are designed to significantly reduce the likelihood that a coronavirus outbreak occurs on campus.

a. Screening

Screening is an activity that campuses conduct to identify and temporarily exclude from campus those who may have been exposed to COVID-19, in an effort to keep the virus out of campuses.

Screening is accomplished by asking questions via electronic methods, by phone, and/or in person to determine that individuals:

- Are not lab-confirmed with COVID-19
- Do not themselves have COVID-19 symptoms
- Have not come into close contact with an individual who is lab-confirmed with COVID-19

The District will prevent anyone who either does not complete or pass screening from entering the school.

i. Teachers and Staff

Teachers and staff must self-screen daily for COVID-19 symptoms and for close contact with any individual who is lab-confirmed to have COVID-19. Teachers and staff must take their temperature each day as part of this self-screen. Teachers and staff must notify their principal, supervisor, or designated campus contact if they are lab-confirmed with COVID-19, experience symptoms, or have been in close contact to an individual who is lab confirmed, and, if so, **they must remain off campus until they meet the criteria for returning to work.**

The principal, supervisor, or designated campus contact will contact the Office of Human Resources which will collaborate with local health authorities and the Business Office to determine necessary communications, leave options, return to work timelines, and contact tracing/investigation.

ii. Students

Parents must screen their children. **Parents must ensure they do not send a child to school on campus if the child has COVID-19 symptoms or is lab-confirmed with COVID-19**, and instead should opt to receive remote instruction until the conditions for return to school are met.

In addition to parental screening, Douglass ECLC (Head Start and Pre-K only) will screen students daily by taking their temperatures upon entering the campus.

Parents should notify the campus nurse who will collaborate with SSISD administration and local health authorities to determine necessary communications, return to school timelines, and contact tracing/investigation.

iii. Visitors

The District will screen all individuals who come on campus. This includes parents, guardians, or caregivers who share a student's household. Every campus will designate a secure area for visitors to complete screening before allowing them to proceed onto campus such as a vestibule or hallway area near a campus entrance. Every campus will display signage and procedures to encourage social distancing. Screening will include a series of questions to determine whether the visitor has experienced any COVID-19 symptoms, or had close-contact with a lab confirmed individual. Visitors who do not pass or are not willing to complete the screening will be temporarily prohibited from being on campus.

The principal, supervisor, or designated campus contact will contact the office of human resources which will collaborate with local health authorities to determine necessary communications and contact tracing/investigation.

b. Instruction and Training

When students arrive on campus, SSISD will provide instruction on appropriate hygiene practices and other mitigation practices described in this Plan Summary.

Before school begins, teachers and staff will be provided instruction on the SSISD COVID-19 Mitigation plan, which includes appropriate hygiene practices.

The district will distribute information for parents and guardians to inform them on the signs and symptoms of COVID-19 as well as other information about how to screen their students before coming to school each day.

IV. Response

a. Required Actions if Confirmed Case has been Present in School

- The school will notify the Texas Education Agency, the local health department, and the Texas Department of State Health Services.
- Areas that are heavily used by the individual will be closed off and disinfected unless more than 7 days have already passed since the person was on campus.
- The school will notify all teachers, staff, and families of all students in a school.

b. Case Investigation and Contact Tracing

Case investigation involves a discussion with a COVID-19 positive individual to determine who may have spread and/or been infected and how that spread may have occurred. Contact tracing is the identification of individuals who have been exposed as close contacts to COVID-19 and are possibly infected themselves, but pre-symptomatic.

Both case investigation and contact tracing will be conducted by our local health entity. If an infected individual is determined on campus, SSISD personnel will provide information to inform the case investigation and contact tracing process.

c. Staying Home/Self-Isolation

Staying home allows individuals who may have been exposed to COVID-19 to monitor their symptoms during the period in which they may be infectious. Because doctors believe a positive person can infect others with COVID-19 for two days prior to experiencing symptoms, and symptoms may take 14 days to appear, if an individual is made aware that they are a close contact to someone who tested positive for COVID-19, they should immediately begin to stay home and continue to do so during the virus incubation period. SSISD will closely monitor individuals who have been directed by local public health entities or asked by the District to stay at home.

In most cases, local health entities will notify close contacts that they should stay home until 14 days after their last contact with the confirmed positive COVID-19 individual.

Self-isolation is used to separate individuals infected with COVID-19 (or who have symptoms of COVID-19) from individuals who are not infected. People who are in isolation should stay home until it is safe for them to be around others. In the home, anyone sick or infected should separate themselves from others.

In most cases, local health entities will notify those who have been infected with COVID-19 (or those with symptoms) that they must meet all three of the following conditions to return to school:

- At least one day (24 hours) has passed since recovery (resolution of fever without the use of fever-reducing medications);
- The individual has improvement in symptoms (e.g., cough, shortness of breath); and
- At least 10 days have passed since symptoms first appeared.

To return sooner:

- The individual obtains a medical professional's note clearing them for return based on an alternative diagnosis; OR
- The individual obtains an acute infection test at an approved testing location (<https://tdem.texas.gov/covid-19/>)
 - In the case of a high-risk exposure, the individual exposed should wait 3-5 days, or until symptoms begin, to get tested to ensure accuracy of the test.

V. Mitigation

Mitigation practices outlined in this plan are designed to significantly reduce the likelihood that a coronavirus outbreak occurs on campus.

a. Health and Hygiene

i. Hand Sanitizer

Hand sanitizer will be provided in classrooms, offices, and other areas deemed necessary by building administrators. SSISD school buses will also be equipped with hand sanitizer.

Students and staff will be encouraged to use hand sanitizer as often as is practical.

ii. Hand Washing

Hand washing will be available in restrooms, breakrooms, and kitchens. Handwashing stations will be kept clean and equipped with soap approved by the CDC. Though not required by the CDC, hot water will be available in some locations.

Students and staff will be taught and encouraged to wash their hands for at least 20 seconds at least two times per day in addition to washing hands after using the restroom.

Students and staff will be encouraged to cover coughs and sneezes with a tissue, and if not available, cover with their elbows. Used tissues will be thrown in the trash, and hands should be washed immediately with soap and water for at least 20 seconds, or hand sanitizer should be used.

iii. Signage

SSISD will prominently display CDC signage on campuses and other district facilities that encourage social distancing, hand washing, and other general health and hygiene best practices.

iv. Open Air

Whenever possible, teachers are encouraged to move their classrooms outside for instruction. School buses will be run with windows down as often as possible.

b. Cleaning and Disinfecting Procedures

The District is implementing more frequent cleaning practices, including additional cleaning by custodial staff. The District will implement the following cleaning and disinfecting protocols:

- Traditional cleaning practices which include all classroom desktops being sprayed with disinfectant nightly
- Supplemental cleaning – contact items such as doorknobs, door push bars, lockers and locker doors, entry/exit doors, and water fountains will be wiped or sprayed with disinfectant cleaner at least four times daily
- Restrooms will be wiped down or sprayed at least four times daily
- 30 Day “Zoono” Microbe Shield Antimicrobial Surface Protectant – all District facilities and busses
- Additional cleaning/wiping down of surfaces by students and staff at their discretion
- Reactive cleaning/disinfecting of areas determined to have been heavily used by a person who tested positive for COVID-19

All disinfectants used by SSISD have been approved and recommended by the CDC.

c. Masks/Face Shields and other Personal Protective Equipment

The District will enforce the governor’s executive order concerning masks/face shields. The order states that, “Every person in Texas shall wear a face covering over the nose and mouth when inside a commercial entity or other building or space open to the public, or when in an outdoor public space, wherever it is not feasible to maintain six feet of social distance from another person not in the same household.” There are 11 exceptions including:

- any person under 10 years of age;
- any person with a medical condition that prevents wearing a face covering; and
- any person while the person is consuming food or drink.

The District will provide, if available, masks for teachers and students who need them. Furthermore, the District will provide face shields, if available, to teachers and staff who desire them.

If the governor’s executive order is lifted, SSISD will not independently require students or staff to wear face masks or shields. However, in such a case, students and staff will be permitted to continue wearing masks or face shields if they so desire.

Guidelines for face masks/shields may vary/be more rigorous for some extra and co-curricular activities such as athletics, band, etc. When applicable, SSISD will follow UIL guidelines for student safety.

The District will provide, if available, Nitrile gloves for staff who desire to wear them.

d. School Entry, Exit, and Transition Procedures

Where practical, campuses will employ specific entry, exit, and transition procedures that reduce large group gatherings (of students and/or adults) in close proximity.

Each campus has a specific plan for entry, exit, and transition procedures that is unique to the needs of their students and instructional programs. Some measures include:

- Slowing the release of bus students into buildings to avoid crowds
- Upon arrival, allowing students to go directly to class or another common area if they are not having breakfast.
- Social distancing of car riders upon arrival and dismissal
- Separate entry and exit doors will be determined
- Dismissal by teacher teams and/or alphabetical order for bus pick up

e. Social Distancing

Where feasible without disrupting the educational process, SSISD will promote opportunities for social distancing of 6 feet. Though the District will work to seize every opportunity possible to provide an environment of social distancing, it is not likely that such an environment can be maintained continuously.

Each campus has a specific plan for social distancing that is unique to the needs of their students and their instructional programs. Some campus specific measures include:

- Arrows, placement dots, etc. will be used on hallway floors to indicate placement and the direction students will travel.
- Teachers will space students appropriately while walking/traveling
- Staggered intra-day transitions for some campuses

f. Use of Non-Classroom Spaces

The District is temporarily suspending some assemblies and other activities that bring large numbers of students and/or staff together. Such activities include:

- Assemblies
- Pep Rallies
- Field Trips
- Class Parties
- School Carnivals

g. School Breakfast and Lunch Procedures

Breakfast and lunch will normally be served in campus cafeterias, and the District will implement practices, where practical, that allow students and staff to socially distance to the greatest extent possible.

Each campus has a specific plan for food service that is unique to the needs of their students and the logistics of food service spaces. Some campus specific measures include:

- Social distancing for cafeteria queues and seating
- Student traffic measures
 - Separate entry and exits
 - Spaced food service queues
- Reducing the number of items students place on their own trays
- Supplemental cleaning of high traffic surfaces
- Breakfast
 - Students who are not eating can wait in campus gyms or other spaces for the beginning of the day.
 - Grab-and-Go breakfasts may be provided at the secondary level for students who arrive late in the morning.
 - Campuses will expand the food service space to allow for social distancing
 - Students will sit every other seat where possible
- Lunch
 - Students will sit every other seat where possible
 - Campuses will expand the food service space to allow for social distancing
 - Some campuses will increase the number of lunch periods to decrease the number of students per lunch

h. Transportation

SSISD transportation will run normally in the mornings and afternoons with the following measures taken to mitigate the spread of COVID-19:

- Hand sanitizer will be available on all buses.
- Students will be socially distanced where possible.
- Buses will be run with windows down to promote fresh air circulation when possible.
- In addition to normal cleaning, buses will be sprayed with 30 Day “Zoono” Microbe Shield Antimicrobial Surface Protectant.
- The governor’s mandate for masks/face shields will be enforced on buses.

i. Visitors and Deliveries

SSISD recognizes the value of parent and community visitors to campuses. Parents and guardians will still be able to access campuses for parent/teacher meetings, 504 meetings, special education meetings, etc. However, to mitigate the spread of COVID-19, the following types of access are temporarily suspended:

- Parents/guardians may not eat meals with students at this time.
- Local Clergy may not eat meals with students at this time.
- The Book Buddies program is temporarily suspended.
- Events such as assemblies, pep rallies, and class parties are temporarily suspended.

Parents/guardians will be allowed to deliver meals, backpacks, other forgotten items, etc. to their student via the front office of each campus.

j. Water Fountains

SSISD recognizes that students must have access to drinking water at school. However, traditional use of water fountains will not be permitted. All students will be encouraged to bring a water bottle from home to be re-filled at campus water fountains as needed. Cups will be provided for students who do not have

water bottles. On elementary campuses, teachers/staff will fill bottles and cups for students. On secondary campuses, students will fill their own bottles and cups.

k. Recess

Recess will be allowed at the elementary level, and during these times it will be unlikely that students will be able to continuously maintain 6 feet of social distancing. The students will be allowed to play with one another. High traffic playground equipment will be sprayed every 30 days with “Zoono” Microbe Shield Antimicrobial Surface Protectant.

l. Athletics, Band, and Other Extra/Co-Curricular Activities

All of these types of activities will continue to the greatest extent possible per state, UIL, and local/district guidelines and decisions. Some practices and events may have UIL guidelines that are more restrictive than TEA guidelines for the regular education program. SSISD will continuously strive to communicate and enforce these guidelines as they are determined.



