



***Expect** To Begin and End Strong*  
***Achieve** By Being Engaged Daily*  
***Excel** In Order to be LIFE READY*

## **Safety Guidelines Handbook**

### **2020-2021**

Superintendent.....	Mrs. C. Hernandez
Assistant Superintendent.....	Mrs. C. Torres
Executive Director of Curriculum.....	Dr. I. Rodriguez

*This handbook was created for the La Feria I.S.D. with guidance from the Texas Education Agency & input from Board Members, staff, parents, and community members.*

## Public Health Considerations

While it is not possible to eliminate all risk of furthering the spread of COVID-19, there are many steps schools can take to reduce the risks to students, teachers, staff, and their families significantly. Consistently implementing these guidelines to the extent feasible is the best way to reduce the potential negative impact of infection on students' educational experiences and to protect staff.

These guidance address the following.

- On campus instruction and safety protocols
- Administrative activities by teachers, staff, or students that occur on school campuses to reduce the potential impact of the spread of the virus.
- UIL Extracurricular sports and activities
- Non-UIL extracurricular sports and activities
- Visits by parents and the general public

We ask that everyone please be mindful of the fact that the COVID-19 pandemic remains quite fluid and will continue to dictate how we begin and navigate through the new school year.

## Attendance and Enrollment

- Per Texas Education Code (TEC), §25.092, students must attend **90%** of the days a course is offered (with some exceptions) in order to be awarded credit for the course and/or to be promoted to the next grade. This requirement remains in force during the 2020-21 school year.
- Given the public health situation, student attendance may be earned through the delivery of virtual instruction.
- Any parent may request that their student be offered virtual instruction from any school system that offers such instruction. If a parent who chooses virtual instruction wants their child to switch to an on-campus instructional setting, they can do so, but La Feria ISD will limit (board approval needed) these transitions to occur only at the end of a grading period, if it will be beneficial to the student's instructional quality.
- School systems must provide daily on-campus attendance for students otherwise entitled to attend school who follow this document's required public health procedures and whose parents wish them to attend on campus each day, subject to school closure and the exceptions listed in this document.
- La Feria I.S.D. will provide parents a notice of their public education enrollment and attendance rights and responsibilities during the COVID-19 pandemic.

*This guidance document contains information on four sets of practices that minimize the likelihood of viral spread, including requirements for all campuses and departments. La Feria I.S.D. is committed to actively working together to prevent the spread of this virus through prevention and mitigation practices.*

1. **Communication** - Provide Notice: Requirements for parental and public notices
2. **Prevention**: Practices to Prevent the Virus from Entering the School
3. **Response**: Practices to Respond to a Lab-Confirmed Case in the School
4. **Mitigation**: Practices to Mitigate the Likelihood of COVID-19 Spread Inside the School

# COMMUNICATION

## Provide Notice: Requirements for Parental and Public Notices

La Feria I.S.D. has **Developed a Plan for On-Campus Activities and Instruction**. The District will post on the district website this Safety Guidelines Handbook for parents and the general public by August 11, 2020. (as per TEA requirement) The plan is intended to provide a summary of what the district will implement to mitigate the COVID-19 spread in our schools.

We encourage our parents, students, staff, and community to visit our District and school websites and to follow our social media platforms. In addition to these, we will utilize the School Messenger notification system to send out periodic messages.

La Feria I.S.D. has designated the following individuals as the point of contacts in responding to COVID-19 questions or concerns:

District Safety Coordinator <a href="mailto:carlos.verduzco@laferiaisd.org">carlos.verduzco@laferiaisd.org</a>	Mr. Carlos Verduzco	(956)797-8361
Executive Director for Curriculum <a href="mailto:isaac.rodriguez@laferiaisd.org">isaac.rodriguez@laferiaisd.org</a>	Dr. Isaac Rodriguez	(956)797-8342
Nurse Coordinator <a href="mailto:sarah.saldivar@laferiaisd.org">sarah.saldivar@laferiaisd.org</a>	Sarah Saldivar	(956)797-8470
Assistant Superintendent <a href="mailto:cindy.torres@laferiaisd.org">cindy.torres@laferiaisd.org</a>	Cynthia Torres	(956)797-8302

La Feria I.S.D. continues to provide updates with regards to District & State announcements concerning COVID-19 through the District webpage and social media.

# PREVENTION

## **Prevent: Practices to Prevent the Virus from Entering the School**

### **Protocol for Staff Entering School**

La Feria I.S.D. will require teachers and staff to self-screen for COVID-19 symptoms before coming onto campus each day. Symptoms are listed at the end of this document. The self-screening should include teachers and staff taking their own temperature. Teachers and staff must report to the school system if they themselves have COVID-19 symptoms or are lab-confirmed with COVID-19, and, if so, they must remain off campus until they meet the criteria for re-entry as noted below. Additionally, they must report to the school system if they have had close contact with an individual who is lab-confirmed with COVID-19, as defined at the end of this document, and, if so, must remain off campus until the 14-day incubation period has passed. On campus/department protocols will also be implemented as stated below:

La Feria I.S.D. will require teachers and staff to be screened for COVID-19 symptoms before coming into campus each day. All staff are encouraged to self-screen prior to coming onsite and not to attempt to enter school or workplace if any of the following are present:

- Symptoms of COVID-19
- Fever equal to or higher than 100.0°F
- Are under evaluation for COVID-19 (for example, waiting for the results of a viral test to confirm infection)
- Have been diagnosed with COVID-19 and not yet cleared to discontinue isolation

If an employee has a temperature of 100.0 degrees or higher, he/she should be sent home immediately and instructed to promptly contact their doctor. LFISD administration will follow up with an employee who is sent home with additional information about any available benefits and return to work protocol.

Employees must enter through one of the campus/department designated “symptom check” points for daily screenings. Campus principals/department supervisors will develop a plan for the screening of custodians that report to work each day. A daily log of temperatures and symptoms check will be kept for all employees. Sarah Saldivar, Nurse Coordinator, will train all staff members that are in charge of screenings.

### **Protocol for Students Entering School**

All students will be required to self-screen or have their parent/guardian screen them for signs or symptoms of COVID-19. All parents will receive a student at Home COVID-19 screening chart prior to the first day of instruction.

### **Student at Home COVID-19 Screening Chart**

- 1. Has my child taken any Fever/Pain reducing medication such as Tylenol (acetaminophen)/Motrin (Ibuprofen) in the past 24 hours?**

☐ **Yes**

☐ **No**

- 2. Does my child have any of these signs/symptoms? Yes/No**

☐ **Fever of 100.0 F or greater**

☐ **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**

- 3. Has my child or anyone in the household been in close contact, (within 6 feet for 15min while not wearing a mask), to anyone with a lab-confirmed COVID-19 result in the past 14 days?**

☐ **Yes**

☐ **No**

- 4. Has my child or anyone in the household had a positive lab-confirmed COVID-19 result in the past 14 days?**

☐ **Yes**

☐ **No**

**If you have a YES response to any of these questions your child should stay home, and you should contact the School Nurse. Students will not be able to report to school or entry of any district building or facility until cleared by a School Nurse.**

Staff will be utilized for duty in a variety of ways to include screenings, monitoring, hallway duties, etc. La Feria I.S.D. will screen for symptoms as well by following the following protocol.

**For students that are dropped off,**

- Staff will meet students at the drop off area to monitor social distancing.
- Parents of elementary students will be required to assist their child in getting out of vehicles. Under the district safety guidelines, staff are not allowed to open vehicle doors.
- Student temperature will be checked as they exit the vehicle. Parents are not allowed to drive off until the child's temperature has been checked, and the student is cleared.
- A staff member will verify that the parent has completed the self-check form while checking the child's temperature.

**For students that walk/drive to school,**

- Each student will be assigned a designated entrance/exit to reduce traffic and interaction between students
- A staff member will be available at the identified location to complete the screening with the student and take the student's temperature.

**For students that ride the bus,**

- Students will have designated seats on buses. Seats will be assigned to keep families together and will be assigned to reduce to minimize passing each other when loading and unloading (first off will be last on and will sit at the front/last off, first on).
- Temperatures will be taken when students enter the bus. If a student has a temperature, he/she will not be allowed to attend in-person to school.
- Screenings will be conducted when students are picked up each morning. The questions from CDC on the symptoms will be posted on the bus.
- Students will use hand sanitizer provided in the bus upon entering and when exiting the bus.
- Driver/Monitor will dismiss students one at a time, students must remain in their seat until they are called.
- For all bus pickups, parents or parent designated adult must be present with the child until their child is picked up

- If a student displays symptoms or has a fever, they will not be allowed on the bus including all siblings.

### **Individuals Confirmed or Suspected with COVID-19**

Any individuals who themselves either: (a) are lab-confirmed to have COVID-19; or (b) experience the symptoms of COVID-19 (listed below) must stay at home throughout the infection period, and cannot return to campus until La Feria I.S.D. screens the individual to determine any of the below conditions for campus re-entry have been met:

- In the case of an individual who was **diagnosed with COVID-19**, the individual may return to school/work when all three of the following criteria are met:
  - at least three days (72 hours) have 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
  - 14 days have passed since symptoms first appeared.

*If a student's health permits it and if assignments can be done remotely, students will be allowed to complete class assignments remotely from home.*

- When an employee/student has been diagnosed with COVID-19, the individual must obtain a medical professional's note clearing the individual to return to work/school.
- 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, such individual is assumed to have COVID-19, and the individual may not return to the school/work until the individual has completed the same three-step set of criteria listed above.
  - If the individual has **symptoms that could be COVID-19** and wants to return to school/work before completing the above stay at home period, the individual must either
    - (a) obtain a medical professional's note clearing the individual for return based on an alternative diagnosis or
    - (b) receive two separate confirmations at least 24 hours apart that they are free of COVID via acute infection tests at an approved COVID-19 testing location found at <https://tdem.texas.gov/covid-19/>.
- When an employee/student has a **family member that has tested positive for COVID-19 that lives in the same household**, the individual must obtain a medical professional's note clearing the individual to return to work/school.
- If a student has siblings or lives with school-aged family members (ex: cousins), nurse

must notify nurse(s) at other campus(es). Siblings and/or school-aged family members must be sent home if a family member living in the same household has a lab confirmed case/displaying symptoms of COVID-19/determined to be a close contact. Siblings/school-aged family members must then follow the same steps as student that is experiencing symptoms or is lab-confirmed positive.

**Often students and staff may feel that they are in danger of acquiring COVID-19 because they have been in “close contact” with an individual they believe has tested positive for COVID-19.**

The definition of “Close Contact” is listed below.

**Close Contact:**

Close contact is defined as being directly exposed to an infected person for a cumulative total of 15 minutes or more over a 24 hour period. Individuals are presumed infectious at least two days prior to symptom onset or, in the case of asymptomatic individuals who are lab-confirmed with COVID-19, two days prior to the confirming lab test. 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 symptomology may affect this determination. The definition of close contact is evolving with our understanding of COVID-19, and individual scenarios should be determined by an appropriate public health agency.

If a student or staff member has been determined to have been in close contact with an individual who is lab-confirmed with COVID-19, they will need to complete a 14 day quarantine and should monitor themselves for symptoms as listed in the handbook. Siblings and/or school-aged family members must be sent home if a family member living in the same household has been determined to be a close contact with an individual who is lab-confirmed with COVID-19. Siblings/school-aged family members must then follow the same steps as the student that is determined to have been a close contact.

**COVID-19 testing locations found at <https://tdem.texas.gov/covid-19/>.**

**PLEASE NOTE: COVID-19 test results and notes from medical professionals will only be accepted from medical organizations/clinics in the United States.**



### *Identifying Possible COVID-19 Cases on Campus*

- Schools must immediately separate any student who shows COVID-19 symptoms while at school until the student can be picked up by a parent or guardian.
- Schools should clean the areas used by the individual who shows COVID-19 symptoms while at school (student, teacher, or staff) as soon as is feasible.
- Students who report feeling feverish should be given an immediate temperature check to determine if they are symptomatic for COVID-19.

## **Additional Preventive Practices**

**While at school, students will be required to follow these guidelines:**

- Students shall wear masks that cover their nasal and mouth areas at all times. **(face masks for PK-3 to 1<sup>st</sup> grade are encouraged daily; 2<sup>nd</sup> grade-12<sup>th</sup> grade face masks are required)**
- Students shall maintain social distancing of at least 6 feet from one another when feasible.
- Students shall wash their hands and/or use hand sanitizer throughout their time in the building.
- Students shall not shake hands, touch, or hug others.

### **Water Fountains**

- Students will not have access to traditional water fountains.
- Each campus will have multiple water bottle filling stations for student use.
- Vending machines/snack bars will not be available.
- Students will be able to fill their water bottles at designated times.
- Water fill stations must be sanitized after each use. Staff will supervise the refilling of water bottles to allow for sanitizing. Hands sanitizers must be used by each student prior to filling the water bottles.

## **Sanitization Procedures**

- Classrooms will be sanitized twice daily. For 6th-12th grades, classroom desks will be sanitized between students. Staff will prop open doors in classrooms and halls to eliminate the possibility of the spreading of the virus on doors.
- Restrooms will be sanitized three times per day. Touchless faucets for sinks, dividers between sinks, and automatic toilets and urinals will be installed.
- Pre-k/kinder restrooms will be sanitized at least four times per day.
- Handles and other high-touch objects will be cleaned hourly.
- Hand sanitizer is available in each classroom, at all entrances and throughout common areas throughout the campus.

## **Classrooms**

- Students will not share supplies in the classroom. In Pre-K through 1st grade classrooms, desk sneeze guards as well as dividers between desks will be utilized for young students that may have a difficult time wearing masks and/or face shields.
- All classroom teachers will be provided gloves for disinfecting classroom, disinfectant spray and cloths, disinfectant wipes, and hand sanitizer.
- Tables have been removed from classrooms, and all students will use an individual desk.

## **Hallway Traffic**

- In an effort to reduce congestion in hallways, each campus has established one-way directional pathways. Signage on floors and around the campus will assist in maintaining social distance.
- All staff will monitor hallways to promote social distancing.

## **School Facilities**

- All facilities will remain closed to the general public.
- LFISD will not permit the renting/use of facilities for non-district related events.

## **Preventive Measures for Campus Clubs/Organizations**

Clubs/organizations will hold all meetings via teleconferencing at La Feria High School. Until further notice, all meetings for clubs/organizations in grades PK-8 will be postponed.

# **RESPOND**

## **RESPOND: Practices to Respond to a Lab-Confirmed Case in the School**

### **Required Actions if Individuals with Lab-Confirmed Cases Have Been in a School**

- If an individual who has been in a school is lab-confirmed to have COVID-19, La Feria I.S.D. must notify the Cameron County 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).
- La Feria I.S.D. will close off areas that are 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 7 days have already passed since that person was on campus.
- Consistent with school notification requirements for other communicable diseases, and consistent with legal confidentiality requirements, La Feria I.S.D. will notify all teachers, staff, and families of all students in a school if a lab-confirmed COVID-19 case is identified among students, teachers or staff who participate on any on-campus activities.

**Information concerning employee leave when diagnosed with COVID-19 or other scenarios with leave and COVID-19 can be found in the 2020-2021 employee handbook.**

# MITIGATE

## MITIGATE: Practices to Mitigate the Likelihood of COVID-19 Spread Inside the School

### Operational Requirements

#### **Health and Hygiene Practices: General**

- All campuses will have hand sanitizer stations in each classroom & at the entrance of the campuses.
- Students, teachers, staff, and campus visitors will be encouraged to sanitize and/or wash hands frequently.
- Elementary campuses will have students engage in supervised handwashing for at least 20 seconds at least two times each day, in addition to being encouraged to wash hands after using the restroom and before eating. Secondary campuses will encourage students to wash their hands before eating and use hand sanitizer upon entering the classrooms.
- La Feria I.S.D. will review at the beginning of the school year good handwashing techniques.
- Students, teachers, staff, and campus visitors will be encouraged to cover coughs and sneezes with a tissue, and if not available, covered in their elbows. Used tissues should be thrown in the trash, hands should be washed immediately with soap and water for at least 20 seconds, or hand sanitizer should be used. Signage will be placed around the campuses to promote practice.
- Campuses will schedule frequent cleaning practices, including additional cleaning by janitorial staff, as well as provide the opportunity for children to clean their own spaces before and after they are used, in ways that are safe and developmentally appropriate.
- Campuses will arrange for additional cleaning and disinfecting of surfaces that are touched in common areas throughout the day. This would include objects such as door handles, common tables/desks, shared supplies such as art supplies, and high touch devices such as shared laptops or tablets.
- Campuses will arrange for cleaning of commonly-touched surfaces in classrooms between different class groups, if the same room will be used by multiple class groups.
- The District will ensure these products are stored safely, including storing harmful products where children cannot access them, and ensuring that harmful cleaning products are not used near children.
- Whenever possible, campuses will open windows or otherwise work to improve air flow by allowing outside air to circulate in the building.
- On the first day a student attends school on campus, La Feria I.S.D. will provide instruction to students on appropriate hygiene practices and other mitigation practices adopted in our district.

## **Health and Hygiene Practices: Masks**

- For the purposes of this handbook, masks include non-medical grade disposable face masks, cloth face coverings (over the nose and mouth), no bandanas. Personal reusable masks must meet dress code requirements in the campus student handbook and not be inappropriate or derogatory in nature. A face shield will be provided to all staff and students in the district to be used with the face mask at the discretion of the staff member or student.
- La Feria I.S.D. is required to comply with the governor's executive order regarding the wearing of masks.
- La Feria I.S.D. will require the use of masks for all staff, students, and visitors.
- It may be impractical for students to wear masks while participating in some non-UIL athletic or other extracurricular activities. When it is impractical for students to wear masks during those activities, La Feria I.S.D. will require students, teachers, staff, and visitors to wear masks when entering and exiting facilities and practice areas and when not actively engaging in those activities. La Feria I.S.D. will allow students who are actively exercising to remove masks, as long as they maintain at least six feet of distance from other students, teachers, and staff who are not wearing masks. However, the District require students, teachers, and staff to wear masks as they arrange themselves in positions that will allow them to maintain safe distancing.

## **Student-Teacher Groupings**

Where feasible without disrupting the educational experience, La Feria I.S.D. will encourage students to practice social distancing.

- In classroom spaces that allow it, La Feria I.S.D. will place student desks a minimum of six feet apart when possible.
- In classrooms where students are regularly within six feet of one another, campuses will plan for more frequent hand washing and/or hand sanitizing and will consider whether increased airflow from the outdoors is possible.

## **Use of Non-Classroom Spaces**

- When feasible and appropriate (for example, in physical education classes as weather permits), La Feria I.S.D. will encourage students to gather outside, rather than inside, because of likely reduced risk of virus spread outdoors. Outside playground equipment will not be utilized at this time.
- Campuses will continue to offer extracurricular activities, at their discretion and consistent with the guidance in this document, for non-UIL extracurricular activities and with the guidance found on the UIL website for all UIL activities. (see section for UIL Sponsored Activities)

- La Feria I.S.D. has planned for entry, exit, and transition procedures that reduce large group gatherings (of students and/or adults) in close proximity.

### **Celebrations**

- Due to health concerns, we will not permit in-class birthday parties, distribution of goody bags or permit sharing of any items between students.

### **Deliveries**

- Due to health concerns, no deliveries will be accepted. This includes but is not limited to drinks, band instruments, cell phones, homework, food, clothing, books, devices, etc. No exceptions.
- Parents who need to deliver medication to the school nurse, must call ahead and schedule a time to deliver the medical items/equipment.

### **School Facilities**

- Schools have undergone a deep cleaning using approved products with residual technologies to ensure that surfaces stay clean and sanitized for longer periods.
- Schools will have hand sanitizer dispensers installed throughout the building.
- Schools will have posters indicating CDC recommendations.
- Schools will have barriers installed between sinks in student bathrooms.
- Schools will have 6 ft. markers in the sidewalks and hallways to support social distancing.
- Furniture has been removed to optimize classroom space
- Portable Electrostatic Disinfecting mist devices will be used daily at campuses.
- Classrooms will have hand sanitizer dispensers filled so that students can use as they enter and exit.
- Classrooms will have signage added that speak to the safety measures as recommended by CDC

## Transportation

- All La Feria ISD School buses will be in operable condition and equipped with anti-microbial and anti-bacterial solution products that are CDC and EPA approved to ensure the safety of our students, and employees during transport to and from school. The LFISD Transportation Department will continue to assess and make efficient changes if needs arise. All LFISD employees are expected to follow CDC guidelines while at work.
- Buses have undergone a deep cleaning using approved anti-microbial products with residual technologies to ensure that surfaces stay clean and sanitized for longer periods.
- Each bus will house a portable laser thermometer to monitor students' temperature prior to loading the bus each morning.
- Buses will have hand sanitizer dispensers installed so that students can use as they enter and exit.
- Buses have undergone a deep cleaning using approved anti-microbial products with residual technologies to ensure that surfaces stay clean and sanitized for longer periods.
- Buses will have hand sanitizer dispensers installed so that students can use as they enter and exit.
- All buses will be equipped with a visual social distancing chart and COVID-19 safety measures chart.
- Buses will have signage added that speak to the safety measures as recommended by the CDC including:
- Students will be guided to practice social distancing, 6 ft. apart.
- Students will be wearing face coverings for their own protection and that of others.
- Bus drivers and bus monitors will wear face coverings such as face masks and/or face shields.
- Students from different households will sit 6 ft. apart as recommended CDC guidelines.
- Bus drivers will keep windows open to ventilate air.
- Routes will be adjusted as needed
- Buses will be thoroughly cleaned and sanitized daily, between runs, and at the end of the day, using approved anti-microbial products with residual technologies.

## Child Nutrition Services

- The La Feria ISD Child Nutrition Department will continue to feed the LFISD community following CDC, TDA, and USDA guidelines. Due to COVID-19, the LFISD CNS Department has made the necessary changes to efficiently serve our students. These are examples of the operational adjustments in the area of School Meals.

### School Meals

- Current models being offered to school districts:
  - *-In Cafeteria Model:* Meals will be served in the cafeteria with additional safety and sanitation practices implemented for all grades. CNS and Custodial Department will coordinate on cleaning, disinfecting, and sanitizing before, during and after meal distribution to students.
  - *In Classroom Model:* Meals will be served to students in classrooms at all elementary campuses. The CNS Department and the Custodial Department will coordinate daily for cleaning, disinfecting, and sanitizing duties.
  - *-Virtual Learning Model (Grab and Go):* Meals will be provided via a grab and go style. La Feria High School, Noemi Dominguez Elementary, and Sam Houston Elementary cafeterias will open to produce meals to distribute. The plan will allow for a two-day distribution of meals per week.
  - *-Virtual Learning Model/Hybrid:* Meals will be provided via a grab and go style for students that have chosen remote instruction in place of in-person. Meals will be distributed at La Feria Academy turn-around on Mondays from 11:00-12:30. The plan will allow for a one-day distribution of meals per week.

### During the day.

- Food service staff will wear face coverings such as face masks and/or face shields.
- Food service staff will continue to wear gloves when serving meals and universal isolation gowns
- School meals will be served to students following CNS protocols and procedures.
- CDC recommendation will be adhered to during any meal distribution and consumption. Students may remove masks during consumption time.

Meals with your child at school will be suspended until further notice.



## **Assemblies**

- Assemblies of all students will not take place at campuses during the COVID-19 pandemic.

## **Staffing**

- Employees of La Feria I.S.D., like employees of any organization, must continue to meet the work expectations set by their employers, subject to any applicable employment contract terms.
- School teachers and staff will be trained specifically on the protocols outlined in this handbook and the practices adopted by the La Feria I.S.D.
- La Feria I.S.D. will attempt to reduce in-person staff meetings or other opportunities for adults to congregate in close settings. When those meetings are necessary and cannot be done via electronic means, everyone must follow the mask protocols in this guidance, remain at least 6 feet apart where feasible, and consider whether increased airflow from the outdoors is possible in those settings.

## **Training**

- All personnel will be trained on protocols and proper use of Personal Protective Equipment (PPE).
- All employees will be trained on basic identification of COVID-19 symptoms by the district/campus nurse (See COVID-19 Symptoms Checklist)
- Parents/guardians will be offered training on student attendance protocols.
- Parents/guardians will be offered training on grading policies.

## **Policy and Procedures**

- District's Policies will be updated to reflect updated CDC guidelines.
- Duties and responsibilities of some employees will be amended to ensure the safety of all stakeholders.
- District will identify point of contact personnel at every campus to handle COVID-19 questions.
- Adjustments will be made to mitigate concerns related to COVID-19. These recommendations are compiled from the Texas Department of Health, Texas Education Agency (TEA), Center for Disease and Prevention (CDC), and the Texas School Safety Center.

# 2020-2021 UIL COVID-19 Risk Mitigation Guidelines

**Updated November 12, 2020**

The following guidance related to UIL activities, based on the public health situation, as we understand it today, applies to the 2020-2021 school year. This guidance is effective immediately. Changes to the public health situation in the coming months may necessitate changes to this guidance.

Given the varying numbers of COVID-19 cases across different areas of the state, and the vast geographic area in the state of Texas, UIL is presenting modifications for the 2020-21 school year that reflect the situation at this time. UIL will continue to work with state officials and monitor CDC and other federal guidance to determine any potential modifications that may become necessary. Schools should be prepared for the possibility of interruptions in contest schedules. District Executive Committees should work and plan to accommodate, as best possible, for these interruptions.

These guidelines are in addition to guidance issued by the Texas Education Agency (TEA) and intended to be implemented along with [TEA guidance](#), which applies to academic and extracurricular non-UIL activities. The information below includes a requirement for schools to develop a plan for mitigating risk of COVID-19 spread during UIL activities. Schools should take their local context into account and follow all state requirements when considering UIL activities.

It is recommended that each school identify a staff member or group of staff members to serve as compliance officer(s) to oversee effective use of these protocols. Schools must follow all requirements of state authorities in addition to the requirements below.

### **Face Coverings- Executive Order GA-29**

**Executive Order GA-29, regarding face coverings, applies to all UIL activities effective July 3, 2020.**

**This includes the 2020-2021 school year. As the public health situation changes, and/or if subsequent Executive Orders are issued by Governor Greg Abbott, these guidelines may be further modified.**

1. For the purposes of this document, face coverings include non-medical grade disposable face masks, cloth face coverings (over the nose and mouth), or full-face shields to protect eyes, nose, and mouth.
2. All employees, parents, visitors and students ten years of age or older must wear face coverings or face shields upon entry to an area where UIL activities are being conducted and when not actively practicing or playing in the contest, unless an exception listed below applies.
3. The face coverings requirements do not apply to a school in a county that meets the requirements of paragraph 11 of [Executive Order GA-29](#), unless the local school system chooses to implement these requirements locally. Even in these circumstances, the wearing of face coverings or face shields is strongly encouraged.

Exceptions to the wearing of face coverings or face shields include:

- Any person with a medical condition or disability that prevents wearing a face covering;
- While a person is consuming food or drink;
- While the person is in a swimming pool, lake, or similar body of water.
- When a congregating group of persons maintains at least 6 feet of social distancing; or
- Any other reason or circumstance indicated under [Executive Order GA-29](#).

## **General Operational Guidelines**

### **REQUIRED OF ALL SCHOOLS:**

TEA requires all school systems to develop a plan for mitigating COVID-19 spread in schools. UIL guidelines require schools to include UIL activities for the 2020-2021 school year as part of this plan and carefully plan for mitigating risk of spread as students and staff participate in them. Schools must post these plans on the homepage of the school website or other easily accessible area of the school website. These plans do not require UIL or TEA approval.

### *Required Screening*

Required Screening before attending or participating in activities:

If staff have not been screened by the school for purposes of participating in instructional activities, schools must implement these screening protocols before allowing staff to participate in UIL activities.

1. Schools must require staff to self-screen for COVID-19 symptoms before participating in UIL activities or entering areas where UIL activities are being conducted. Symptoms are listed at the end of this document. The self-screening should include staff taking their own temperature. Staff must report to the school if they themselves have COVID-19 symptoms or are test-confirmed with COVID-19, and, if so, they must remain off-campus and away from areas where UIL activities are being conducted until they meet the criteria for re-entry as noted below. Additionally, they must report to the school if they have had close contact with an individual who is test-confirmed with COVID-19, as defined at the end of this document, and, if so, must remain off-campus and away from areas where UIL activities are being conducted until the 14-day incubation period has passed. Close contact is defined in this document below.
2. Parents must ensure they do not send a student to participate in UIL activities if the student has COVID-19 symptoms (as listed in this document) or is test-confirmed with COVID-19 until the below conditions for re-entry are met. School systems may consider screening students for COVID-19 as well. Screening is accomplished by asking questions by phone or other electronic methods and/or in person. The screening questions should also be asked of a student's parent if that parent will be dropping off or picking up their student from inside areas where UIL activities are being conducted.
3. Before visitors are allowed access to areas where UIL activities are being conducted, school systems must screen all visitors to determine if they themselves have COVID-19 symptoms (as listed in this document) or are test-confirmed with COVID-19, and if so, they must remain off-campus and away from areas where UIL activities are being conducted until they meet the criteria for re-entry as noted below. Additionally, school systems must screen to determine if visitors have had close contact with an individual who is test-confirmed with COVID-19, and if so they must remain off-campus and away from areas where UIL activities are being conducted until the 14-day incubation period has passed. When practical, screening questions could be supplemented with temperature checks of adults.
4. Schools are permitted to prevent any individual who fails the screening criteria from being admitted into school facilities or sites where UIL activities are being conducted until they meet the criteria for re-entry as described below. Any individual for whom screening cannot be confirmed should be presumed symptomatic until confirmed otherwise.

### *Individuals Confirmed or Suspected with COVID-19*

- Any individuals who themselves either: (a) are test-confirmed to have COVID-19; or (b) experience the symptoms of COVID-19 (listed below) must stay at home throughout the infection period, and cannot return to campus until the school system screens the individual to determine any of the below conditions for campus re-entry have been met:
  - In the case of an individual who was diagnosed with COVID-19, the individual may return to school when all three of the following criteria are met:
    - at least one day (24 hours) have 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 ten days have passed since symptoms first appeared.
- In the case of an individual that is asymptomatic but has received a positive COVID-19 test result, the individual may not return to the campus until ten days have passed since a positive test.
- 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, such individual is assumed to have COVID-19, and the individual may not return to the campus until the individual has completed the same three-step set of criteria listed above.

If the individual has symptoms that could be COVID-19 and wants to return to school before completing the above stay at home period, the individual must either (a) obtain a medical

- professional's note clearing the individual for return based on an alternative diagnosis, though for health privacy reasons the note does not need to indicate what the alternative diagnosis is, or (b) obtain an acute infection test (at a physician's office, [approved testing location](#), or other site) that comes back negative for COVID-19.
- In addition to the criteria and processes described above, a student who has been diagnosed with COVID-19 must receive clearance from a physician prior to returning to participation in UIL marching band or athletic activities.
- If the individual has tested positive for COVID-19 and believes the test was a false positive, and wants to return to school before completing the above stay at home period, the individual must either (a) obtain a medical professional's note clearing the individual for return based on an alternative diagnosis, though for health privacy reasons the note does not need to indicate what the alternative diagnosis is, or (b) obtain two PCR acute infection tests (at a physician's office, [approved testing location](#), or other site) at least 24 hours apart that come back negative for COVID-19.

#### *Identifying Possible COVID-19 Cases on Campus*

- Schools must immediately separate any student who shows COVID-19 symptoms while at school until the student can be picked up by a parent or guardian.
- Schools should clean the areas used by the individual who shows COVID-19 symptoms while at school (student, teacher, or staff) as soon as is feasible.
- Students who report feeling feverish should be given an immediate temperature check to determine if they may be symptomatic for COVID-19.

#### **Close Contact**

This document refers to "close contact" with an individual who is test-confirmed to have COVID-19. The definition of close contact is evolving with our understanding of COVID-19, and individual scenarios should be 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 total of approximately 15 minutes throughout the course of a day; 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 symptomology may affect this determination.

Either (a) or (b) 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.

#### *Required Actions if Individuals with Test-confirmed Cases Have Been in a School or in an Area Where UIL Activities Are being Conducted*

1. If an individual who has been in areas where UIL activities have been conducted is test-confirmed to have 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).
2. Schools must close off areas that are heavily used by the individual with the test-confirmed case (student, teacher, or staff) until the non-porous surfaces in those areas can be disinfected, unless more than 7 days have already passed since that person was on campus.
3. Consistent with school notification requirements for other communicable diseases, and consistent with legal confidentiality requirements, schools must notify all teachers, staff, and families of all students in a school if a test-confirmed COVID-19 case is identified among students, teachers or staff who participate in any UIL activities. If the person who is test-confirmed to have COVID-19 participated in a contest against another school(s), the school must notify other school(s) and sports/contest officials involved in the contest.
4. Upon receipt of information that any teacher, staff member, student, or visitor at a school is test-confirmed to have COVID-19, the school must submit a report to the Texas Department of State Health Services via an online form. The report must be submitted each Monday for the prior seven days (Monday-Sunday).

### **COVID-19 Symptoms**

In evaluating whether an individual has symptoms consistent with COVID-19, consider the following question:

Have they recently begun experiencing any of the following in a way that is not normal for them?

- Feeling feverish or a measured temperature greater than or equal to 100.0 degrees Fahrenheit
- 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

### ***Screening Questionnaire Information***

1. When asking individuals if they have symptoms for COVID-19, school systems must only require the individual to provide a “Yes” or “No” to the overall statement that they are symptomatic for COVID-19, as opposed to asking the individual for specific symptom confirmation. School systems are not entitled to collect information during screening on the specific health information of an individual beyond that they are symptomatic.
2. Once it is determined that individuals who responded “Yes” to either of these questions have met the criteria for re-entry, school systems must destroy those individuals’ responses.

## **Performance Areas, Band Halls, Locker Rooms and Other Congregate Settings**

1. Schools should make hand sanitizer, disinfecting wipes, soap and water, or similar disinfectant readily available in these areas.
2. All congregate areas should be regularly and frequently cleaned and disinfected including all frequently touched surfaces such as doorknobs, tables, chairs, lockers, and restrooms.
3. Any equipment that will be kept in student lockers and/or in these areas should be thoroughly cleaned and disinfected each day prior to students accessing these areas. Schools should develop a plan for managing the storage, cleaning and disinfecting, and redistribution of student equipment.
4. Schools should consider identifying staff to monitor locker rooms and other areas where students may congregate to ensure effective use of school protocols. When possible, schools should open windows and/or doors or otherwise work to improve airflow by allowing outside air to circulate in these areas.
5. Schools must require staff and students to wear face coverings while inside locker rooms, meeting rooms, training rooms, band halls and other areas where students may congregate other than shower facilities.
6. As part of their overall plan, schools should develop a plan for mitigating risk of spreading COVID-19 when disinfecting, cleaning, and laundering items such as towels, practice clothes, and uniforms. This plan should include protocols for redistributing these items to students. Involved staff should be trained specifically on these protocols.

### **Practice and Rehearsal Activities**

In addition to the above general guidelines and rules in the UIL Constitution and Contest Rules and UIL manuals and handbooks, the following applies to practice activities during the 2020-2021 school year.

1. All surfaces in practice areas should be thoroughly disinfected throughout and at the end of each day.

2. Any equipment should be regularly disinfected before, during, and after practice sessions.
3. Schools may provide food, water or other drinks. If they provide these items, schools should do so in a manner that ensures students are not sharing these items.

### **Game, Contest, and Event Management**

In addition to the above guidelines and rules in the UIL Constitution and Contest Rules and UIL manuals and handbooks, the following applies to games, scrimmages, and events:

#### **Teams and Participants**

1. If the school is planning to offer transportation for students, schools should follow [TEA guidance](#) related to such transportation.
2. Teams and participants are required to wear face coverings as described in Executive Order GA-29.
3. The host site should designate a cleaned and disinfected area for teams to unload and load buses separate from fans, spectators, and other individuals not essential to the team or group.
4. Visiting team /group locker rooms should be cleaned and sanitized by the host site before the visiting team arrives. Visiting teams/groups are responsible for cleaning and disinfecting equipment once it is unloaded. Schools should limit access to these facilities to only students and staff essential for the game, contest, or event.
5. Before each game, contest, or event, schools should follow the screening protocols described above to screen all staff members, contractors, volunteers, sports officials, contest judges, and any individuals otherwise involved in working the event. These individuals should also self-screen as described in these screening protocols.
6. Fan and spectator areas including bleachers, stands, walkways, and other spectator areas should be at least six feet from team /group areas such as team benches or performance areas. Where distancing is not feasible, other methods should be utilized to slow the spread of COVID-19, such as face coverings, implementing engineered controls such as physical barriers, or other risk mitigation efforts the school deems appropriate.
7. As previously indicated, water or other drinks and/or food may be provided. Schools or host sites should consider doing so in a manner that ensures students are not sharing these items.
8. Other areas used by participants, such as press box areas, should be cleaned and disinfected prior to and after use. Sites should develop plans for providing access to these areas that limit or remove potential contact between participants and non-participants.
9. The host site should provide sports and contest officials an area to enter and exit separate from fans when possible. Officials should be provided a dressing and meeting area, if applicable, that has been cleaned and disinfected prior to their arrival.
10. Pregame or pre-event meetings between teams and/or sports and contest officials should be planned to allow appropriate distancing between individuals.
11. Pregame and post-game gestures of sportsmanship should be conducted between teams and sports and contest officials in ways planned to help reduce the risk of spread of COVID-19.
12. All participants should be provided with entry and exit plans for contest areas that maintain separation from non-participants and fans. Individuals not essential to the team or group should not be given access to contest areas, performance areas, courts, or fields at all before, during, or after contests and events.

#### **Student Groups not directly involved in the game or contest**

Student groups such as marching bands, cheerleaders, drill teams, and other groups approved by the school district may attend and perform at games or contests in which they are not competing. Schools should consider limiting the number of participants to those essential to the performance.

1. These student groups should remain separate from the game or contest participants at all times. These student groups should avoid mixing with fans or non-group members throughout the game or contest.
2. Student groups are required to wear face coverings as described in Executive Order GA-29.
3. Schools should consider limiting the number of students and staff given access to the playing areas and ensure protocols for entering and exiting the playing areas are in place.

4. Fans and spectators should be located to provide at least 10 feet of distance from bands playing wind instruments from the stands.
5. These students should maintain appropriate distancing from game or contest participants at all times, including when on the sideline.

#### **Spectators, Audiences, Fans and Media**

Schools may allow spectators to attend games, contests, or events within a maximum 50% capacity limitation, provided that appropriate spacing between spectators is maintained according to the protocol, and according to the following:

1. Schools and/or host sites should post visible signs and/or messaging stating any individuals who are confirmed to have, suspected of having, are experiencing symptoms of, or have been in close contact with an individual who has been confirmed to have COVID-19 should not enter the facility.
2. Spectators, audiences, fans and media are required to wear face coverings as described in Executive Order GA-29.
3. Sites are encouraged to utilize remote ticketing options to help manage capacity limitations within a maximum 50% occupancy. Paper tickets and programming should be minimized to help avoid transferable materials.
4. If possible, set reserved times for entry to avoid mass arrivals.
5. Groups should maintain at least six feet of distance from other groups at all times, including the process of admission and seating. A group is defined as no more than 10 people including the members of the household and those persons who traveled together to the facility.
6. Schools should not allow seating in consecutive rows, and should block off seating to maintain a minimum six feet of distance between groups.
7. Pathways for spectator ingress and egress should be clearly marked and unobstructed.
8. Schools should provide hand sanitizing stations and/or hand washing stations at entrances and inside the facility.
9. Seating, hand rails, and other common surfaces should be cleaned and disinfected prior to each game or contest.
10. Press Box seating should include social distancing of at least six feet between individuals when possible.
11. Schools should limit access to working media providing coverage of the event to ensure protocols are followed.
12. Post-game interviews should be conducted while wearing face coverings and maintaining at least six feet of distance between the interviewer and individual being interviewed.

#### **Concession Stands and Food Service**

For games, contests, and events that will include concession stands or other food service, the following guidelines apply:

1. Staff, contractors, and volunteers involved in food service are required to wear face coverings as described in Executive Order GA-29.
2. Sites should avoid leaving condiments, silverware, flatware, glassware, or other traditional tabletop items on unoccupied tables or at the counter. Sites should only provide condiments or flatware upon request, and in single-use, individually wrapped items.
3. Regularly clean and disinfect the food service counters and areas. Clean and disinfect dining areas (tables, etc.) after each patron departs.
4. Limit contact between the individuals involved in food service and patrons as much as possible. Have employees, contractors, and volunteers follow proper food-handling protocols.
5. Before each game, schools should follow the screening protocols described above to screen staff, contractors, and volunteers who will be involved in food service prior to events. These individuals should also self-screen as described in these screening protocols.