

Guidance below is intended for in-school instruction and visits by students, teachers, and staff, starting June 1 as part of:

- Summer learning options if offered by school systems, including
  - o In-person summer school programs including staff and student participants
  - o Virtual summer school programs, which may require some teachers to use school facilities to deliver instruction
- Instructional activities that school systems would like to prioritize during the summer (e.g., special education evaluations, specialized assessments, individualized tutoring, etc.)
- Administrative activities by teachers, staff, or students (e.g., locker clean out, return/retrieving band instruments, etc.)
- Any other activities that teachers, staff, or students must complete and cannot be accomplished virtually

*This guidance replaces previous guidance issued by the agency regarding teachers and [staff](#) and [student](#) use of school facilities. Please see [here](#) for guidance regarding promotion ceremonies.*

### **Public Health Considerations**

The virus that causes COVID-19 can infect people of all ages. Research from the Centers for Disease Control, among others, has found that while children do get infected by COVID-19, relatively few children with COVID-19 are hospitalized. However, some severe outcomes have been reported in children, and a child with a mild or even asymptomatic case of COVID-19 can spread the infection to others who may be far more vulnerable. While it is not possible to eliminate all risk of furthering the spread of COVID-19, the current science suggests there are many steps schools can take to reduce the risks to students, teachers, staff, and their families significantly.

Even if an infected person is only mildly ill, the people they spread it to may become seriously ill or even die, especially if that person is 65 or older with pre-existing health conditions that place them at higher risk. Because of the hidden nature of this threat, everyone should rigorously follow the practices specified in these protocols, all of which facilitate a safe and measured reopening of Texas.

School teachers and staff will need to be trained specifically on the protocols outlined in this document and the practices adopted by their school system. Additionally, while not developed with this exact guidance in mind, Texas Agri-Life Extension offers a free online course on [Special Considerations for Infection Control During COVID-19](#) (2hrs). This course is intended for frontline childcare workers, but the principles of the course apply equally to those working in school settings.

### **Deciding Whether to Offer In-School Instruction**

School systems should take their local context into account when deciding whether to offer summer school on campus by monitoring the situation on the Texas Department of State Health Services [dashboard](#).

## **Bringing Students on Campus**

### *Summer School Programs*

1. Summer school attendance in person at school must be optional for students. Students who are mandated by their school system to attend summer school as a condition of promotion to the next grade or to otherwise obtain course credit may not be required to attend in-person but would still need to satisfy district academic and/or participation requirements virtually if they do not attend in person.
2. School systems may consider prioritizing the availability of on-campus summer school for:
  - Students with significant academic gaps;
  - Students with disabilities whose needs pose additional challenges to learning in a virtual environment but who are otherwise not medically at risk;
  - Student learning experiences that cannot be done remotely, such as certain Career and Technical Education (CTE) learning experiences for middle and high school students;
  - Students experiencing homelessness;
  - English learners;
  - Younger students whose parents may have greater need of childcare to allow them to work; and/or
  - Students in protective day service who are not otherwise medically at risk.
3. No more than eleven individuals should be in an enclosed area together regularly, for example as a class group. This includes teachers, staff, and students.

### *All Other Instruction*

1. Any instructional activity to be completed at school should either be optional or, if it is mandatory, should be able to be completed virtually.
2. Students can gather with teachers or staff in groups of no more than eleven individuals together This includes teachers, staff, and students.

## **Operational Considerations:**

### *Instruction*

Encourage students to practice social distancing and minimize the number of students who they encounter regularly.

1. All instruction should be held in spaces that allow desks to be placed at least six feet apart.
2. If more than one group is using a shared space that is large enough to allow for students in all groups and their respective desks to be six feet apart, then multiple groups of individuals can be in the space together. However, each group must be separated from the other by an empty space of at least 30 feet. The groups should not combine for activities at any time. (Two groups of ten students and one teacher can meet at the opposite ends of a cafeteria, if students can all be seated at least six feet apart; three groups of 11 students can meet in a large gymnasium, separated by 30 feet, with one teacher circulating between the groups to support online learning; and other iterations are also possible, so long as they meet the requirements for distancing.)
3. Whenever possible and developmentally appropriate, there should be no group or pairs work that would require students to regularly interact within six feet, recognizing that this is not possible for early childhood students and some students with disabilities.
4. Students must not be brought together in assemblies, field trips, or other group gatherings outside of their class group, unless the distancing of 30 feet between groups can be maintained.

5. When feasible and appropriate, it is preferable for students to gather outside rather than inside, because of likely reduced risk of virus spread outdoors.
6. Students on campus should not participate in activities like those listed below, because of their potential for spreading the virus through respiratory droplets:
  - Choir
  - Playing wind instruments
  - Indoor sports

School gyms, weight rooms, and indoor workout facilities are to remain closed for purposes of athletic or fitness activities to both students and the community. Outdoor sports are allowable only if they can be conducted in accordance with Department of State Health Services [guidance](#).

Additionally, [UIL activities remain cancelled](#) for school year 2019-2020.

7. Whenever possible, students, teachers, and staff should maintain consistent groupings of people, to minimize virus spread in the school. Specifically:
  - Elementary school students should be taught in self-contained classes if at all possible.
  - Secondary students should be taught in self-contained classes if possible and, if that is not possible, should be exposed to as few different individual teachers as possible, consistent with the parameters provided in operational considerations 2 and 4 above.

The rationale for this limitation is that each additional individual exposure presents greater opportunity for virus spread. As noted below, a positive COVID-19 case in a school will require two-week closure of the individual's class group. If, for example, three classes are taught by a single science teacher, and a student in one of those classes contracts COVID-19, all three classes are considered a single class group for purposes of potential exposure, because they all have extended exposure to an individual who could spread the virus. If the class is self-contained, then only the single class group and teacher would self-isolate for two weeks.

8. When students must be taught by multiple teachers, it is better for students not to be brought together with those in other classes for shared instruction or mixed with other classes during elective or other periods or between classes.
  - Rather than having students change from classroom to classroom, consider having teachers rotate between classes while students stay in one class to minimize students encountering others in the hallway.
  - Alternatively, schools could stagger class start and end times to minimize the number of students in the hallway during passing periods.

### *Health and Hygiene Practices*

1. Teachers and staff should self-screen for COVID-19 symptoms before coming onto campus. Before coming onto campus and at the start of every week of instruction, all students should be pre-screened for COVID-19 symptoms that they or others living in their house will experience. Screening of students can be completed by phone prior to the first day of school and/or prior to entering the campus in person or in writing. The symptoms to screen for are listed at the bottom of this document.
2. School teachers and staff should take the temperature of each student each day they are on campus, if possible.
3. Schools should have hand sanitizer at each entrance and require students, teachers, and staff to use it whenever they enter the building. Hand sanitizer should also be available in every classroom, and students and teachers should be encouraged to use it frequently. Students, teachers, and staff should

also wash hands or use hand sanitizer after they have touched something another person recently touched.

4. Students should be instructed in good handwashing techniques and given frequent opportunities to wash their hands.
5. Students should 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.
6. Consistent with the actions taken by many organizations across the state, consider having all employees wear cloth face coverings (over the nose and mouth). If available, employees should consider wearing non-medical grade face masks. Similarly, consider having all students for whom it is developmentally appropriate wear cloth face coverings (over the nose and mouth), except while doing an activity where the mask cannot be worn (e.g., eating). It is most likely not developmentally appropriate for students younger than five years old and for some students with disabilities to wear masks or face coverings.
7. Where possible, dividers should be placed on desks if they can serve the purpose of shielding students, teachers, and staff from respiratory droplets with which they might otherwise come into contact. This could be particularly helpful in settings where individuals cannot otherwise wear cloth face coverings or masks.
8. Campuses should institute more 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. Arrange for additional cleaning and disinfecting of surfaces that are touched in common throughout the day. Arrange for cleaning of classrooms between different class groups if the same room will be used by multiple class groups. This would include objects such as door handles, common tables/desks, and high touch devices such as shared laptops or tablets. The CDC has provided [guidance on cleaning community buildings](#) to prevent COVID-19 spread.
9. If a building has remained dormant for an extended period, we recommend you review [CDC guidance on maintaining water system safety](#) when buildings are dormant and apply this guidance as appropriate.

#### *Other Operational Considerations*

1. Campuses will need to plan for entry and exit procedures that reduce the number of students and parents congregating outside and/or mixing in the hallways. Consider staggering school start and end times, assigning students to entries to ensure even distribution of students entering/exiting at each door, providing guidance to students to enter one at a time and wait six feet apart outside the entrance, and, where appropriate, encouraging parents to remain outside during drop-off and pick-up.
2. Parents can participate in school visits if their participation is needed. In these cases, parents should follow the guidance in this document. School systems and parents should consider how to minimize visits inside the school building when they are not needed to reduce the number of individual interactions during summer school (e.g., have parents drop off and pick up students outside the school rather than inside).
3. To the extent possible, students should eat lunch at their desks. When this is not possible, students could have assigned seats in the cafeteria that allow students to maintain social distancing.
4. Schools will need to consider how to minimize virus spread as a result of play space use.
  - Older elementary students who can follow social distancing protocols should be asked to keep six feet apart while using play spaces. For these children, it may also help to restrict class

groups to specific areas of the play space using cones, caution tape, or a natural barrier, with the intent of preventing students from interacting across class groups and increasing virus spread. Alternatively, schools can send only one class group to a play space at a time.

- For the youngest students, including early childhood and early elementary students, as well as some students with disabilities, social distancing on play spaces will not be possible or developmentally appropriate. These students are also unlikely to attend to a natural barrier or cones. In these cases, it is recommended that, as much as possible, only one class group uses a play space at a time.
  - Students in age groups who do not need to use play equipment for recreation should not spend their recreation time in play spaces, if possible, and should maintain social distance at all times when outside, just as they do inside.
5. Employees of school systems, like employees of any organization, must continue to meet the work expectations set by their employers, subject to any applicable employment contract terms. However, school systems will need to plan for increased teacher attrition and potential future illness. For teachers and staff members who are at particular risk, consider options to allow them to work remotely. Systems should consider hiring additional teachers to plan for these possibilities.

#### *Bus Planning*

1. School systems should reduce the number of students on a bus route and consider grouping bus routes to align to class groupings to minimize cross-group exposure.
2. Students, teachers, and staff should use hand sanitizer upon boarding the bus.
3. Students should be seated at least six feet from other students on the bus (in most cases, this will mean one student per row, on opposite sides of the bus). Students should stay in their seats.
4. Encourage families to drop students off, carpool, or walk with their student to school to reduce possible virus exposure on buses.
5. Buses should be thoroughly cleaned after each bus trip, particularly high-touch surfaces such as bus seats, steering wheels, knobs, and door handles. During cleaning, open windows to allow for additional ventilation and air flow, which is helpful in mitigating COVID-19 spread.

#### **Positive Cases and Teachers, Staff, or Students Showing COVID-19 Symptoms**

1. If a positive case is identified for a summer school participant, whether teacher, staff, or student, the school must identify any individuals who had regular or close contact with the affected participant. This will include the entire class (students, teachers and staff) and potentially other teachers and staff (if multiple teachers work regularly with the student or staff member). If those teachers or the students interacted with other students or staff on a regular basis or came in close contact with them, those students and staff should be considered potentially exposed as well. Anyone who is considered to have regular or close contact with someone who may have been exposed to COVID-19 must stay at home for two weeks. In some cases, this may necessitate closing only a single classroom. In other cases, it may require closing multiple classes, or even the entire school, for two weeks
2. All participants of the summer school program must receive written notification if a positive COVID-19 case is identified among summer school participants (teachers, staff, or students). For students, such written notification is to be provided to the parents or guardians of the students. The school must also notify its [local health department](#).
3. Any teacher, staff member, or student who experiences any of the symptoms of COVID-19 (listed below) should self-isolate until the below conditions have been met.

- In the case of an individual who was diagnosed with COVID-19, the individual may visit 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); and the individual has improvement in symptoms (e.g., cough, shortness of breath); and at least ten days have passed since symptoms first appeared; or
  - In the case of an individual who has symptoms that could be COVID-19 and does not get evaluated by a medical professional or tested for COVID-19, the individual is assumed to have COVID-19, and the individual may not return to work until the individual has completed the same three-step criteria listed above; or
  - If the individual has symptoms that could be COVID-19 and wants to return to work before completing the above self-isolation period, the individual must obtain a medical professional's note clearing the individual for return based on an alternative diagnosis.
4. Any student, teacher, or staff member living with someone who experiences any of the symptoms of COVID-19, whether they have a positive COVID-19 test or not, should self-isolate for two weeks. If they do not experience any COVID-19 symptoms during that period, they can return to summer school. If they experience symptoms, they must self-isolate until the conditions outlined above have been met.

#### **COVID-19 Symptoms for Screening**

- Cough
- Shortness of breath or difficulty breathing
- Chills
- Repeated shaking with chills
- Muscle pain
- Headache
- Sore throat
- Loss of taste or smell
- Diarrhea
- Feeling feverish or a measured temperature greater than or equal to 100.0 degrees Fahrenheit
- Known close contact with a person who is lab confirmed to have COVID-19