

As Dallas County R-I Schools transition into the 2021-2022 school year, there continues to be many unknowns in our community and in our schools. Our goal is to provide a framework where learning can continue and students can develop the social and emotional connections necessary for their growth. Schools create conditions that support students to meet social/emotional needs, develop lifelong friendships, explore their passions, and channel their energy into productive pursuits and activities. Opening schools in a manner responsive to the needs of families and communities will involve many challenges within several undetermined factors. The Dallas County R-I School District is committed to working in partnership with the community to meet these challenges. It is imperative for the school district to learn and grow, preparing students to be successful and resilient. Together we will develop and deliver the educational experience our students need and deserve.

**\*\*Please note: The information and guidelines provided in this document are subject to change at any time based on further guidance received by the district. The plan will be reviewed at least every 6 months, with input from our stakeholders, to ensure adequacy in protocols and procedures.\*\***

The Dallas County School District has developed health-related protocols and a Safe Return to In-Person Instruction and Continuity of Services Plan in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. The protocols are based on best practices from area schools and businesses; and federal, ~~state, and local~~ health officials. These protocols are subject to change based on revised guidance and orders received by the school district. The goal of these protocols is to mitigate the risk of exposure to COVID-19 and other illnesses by reducing the number of personal and surface contacts students and employees experience while at school. While the reduction of risk is the goal, it is impossible to completely eliminate all contact and therefore risk of exposure.

#### MASKING

Masks are not required within Dallas County R-I School District facilities for students and staff.

- District staff and students are encouraged to continue wearing masks while in district facilities.
- The district will have a limited supply of masks available for anyone that needs one.
- Masks/face coverings must comply with district dress code requirements, and must be free of any wording or advertisements that could cause a substantial disruption to the educational environment.
- Mask requirements are subject to change throughout the school year, based on guidance from federal health officials and district conditions. Due to a federal order regarding public transportation, masks are required for all students and staff on district school buses. Parents are encouraged to transport their children to and from school if possible.
- Drivers and aides will wear masks/face-coverings while students are loading and unloading, but may remove them between stops.

#### PHYSICAL DISTANCING/COHORTING

- To help lower exposure risk, student contact will be restricted to their individual homeroom classroom (cohort).
- There will be exceptions for students in programs such as Special Education, English Language Learners, and Title I Reading/Math.
- Middle School and High School students will follow their assigned schedule.
- Students will be distanced in classrooms and other areas to the greatest extent possible.
- Students will be encouraged to wear masks when social distancing is not possible (within 3 feet for at least 15 minutes).

#### ARRIVAL & DISMISSAL

- Students will be asked to walk directly to their homeroom or 1st-hour class to discourage congregating in the hallways.
- Parents are asked to:
  - Drop students off as close to the school start time as possible to avoid the gathering of students before doors open.
  - If possible, transport your child to and from school each day to reduce the number of students riding the bus.
  - Students will be encouraged to socially distance as much as possible during dismissal.

#### CLASSROOMS & FACILITIES

- The district will utilize assigned seating in classrooms.

#### VISITORS & VOLUNTEERS

- Non-essential visitors will not be permitted beyond the main office area to limit exposure to groups of students and staff.
- Essential visitors are defined as those necessary for the education and social/emotional wellness of students and staff. Volunteer programs may be limited at any time during the school year.

#### MEAL SERVICE

- Food services will make adjustments to accommodate social distancing protocols and building level cohorts. Each building will outline their serving procedures.
- The USDA has granted a waiver allowing all students to have free lunch and breakfast for the 2021-22 school year.

#### HANDWASHING & RESPIRATORY ETIQUETTE

- Hand sanitizer will be available in all classrooms and at most exterior doors.
- Signage will be displayed in all district facilities to encourage proper handwashing, cover coughs and sneezes, encouraging monitoring of symptoms related to COVID-19.
- Handwashing and sanitation procedures will be taught to students by district staff and time will be taken during the day to allow for these activities.

## HEALTHY FACILITIES

- The district's custodial department is continuing a specified sanitation plan using approved cleaning products across the district. High volume areas and frequently touched surfaces will be a large focus.
  - Each building will efficiently and thoroughly disinfect all surfaces.
- Hand sanitizer will be available throughout our buildings and inside our classrooms along with sanitation wipes. We are asking our families to help contribute to our district supply of these items by adding them to our student supply lists.

## HEALTH SCREENINGS

Personal health screenings are an important component of helping maintain a healthy school environment. Therefore, all students and employees are asked to self-screen prior to coming to school.

## SYMPTOMATIC STUDENTS & EMPLOYEES

The following information is based on current guidance from national, state, and local health officials. Symptomatic students who become ill while at school will be treated in a triage area that is isolated from others and asked to wear a mask until being sent home. Employees with symptoms from the list below will be sent home. Students and employees will follow the return guidelines as outlined below.

- The following symptoms indicate a possible illness that may decrease a person's ability to function productively, but also may put them at risk for spreading illness to others. Please visit the CDC website for a complete list of expected symptoms.
  - Temperature 100.4 degrees Fahrenheit or higher
  - Sore throat
  - New, uncontrolled cough that causes difficulty breathing or speaking. (For those with chronic allergic/asthmatic cough, a change in their normal cough)
  - Diarrhea, vomiting, or abdominal pain
  - New onset of severe headache (especially with fever)
  - Loss of taste or smell
- Anyone exhibiting any one or more of these symptoms should remain home until:
  - Symptoms improve
  - Fever free for at least 24 hours without the use of fever reducing medications
  - Upon returning to school, students and staff may be screened by the building nurse to verify recovery

## COVID-19 RELATED ILLNESS

If any of the following conditions apply, a person is considered high-risk of spreading the illness to others. Parents/students/employees are required to notify their building principal/supervisor if any of these conditions apply.

- A positive COVID-19 test result
- Pending results of a COVID-19 test
- Close contact with a person confirmed positive for COVID-19

## COVID-19 VACCINATIONS

Dallas County School District is fortunate to have numerous community sources for vaccine administration. DCR1 will communicate vaccination opportunities to all eligible students and staff members. DCR1 encourages each eligible staff and student to visit with their healthcare provider regarding the decision to become fully vaccinated against COVID-19.

#### SCHOOL CLOSURES

- The school district could consider phasing school closures based upon county, and state guidelines and will consider the percentage of a site population testing positive for COVID-19 relative to the environment of the school building.
- It is possible that individual building or classroom closures are implemented, depending on the exposure risk level across the district.
- It is important to note that should a closure, change to the school schedule, and/or exposure to COVID-19 take place, the district will use various methods of communication to contact families.

#### CONTINUITY OF SERVICES

If it is not possible to keep the school open in response to the pandemic, the district could change to an online learning environment. Content would be teacher generated and will resume in a timely manner from the point of paused learning. Learning must continue to move forward to ensure coverage of all 2021-2022 content to minimize student learning regression. Learning will move forward with normal grading practices in place. Dallas County R-I provides a variety of programs and resources to support the social, emotional and mental health of students.