

Hermleigh ISD COVID-19 Return to In-Person Instruction and Continuity of Services Plan

Last Updated December 7, 2022

The conditions surrounding the COVID-19 pandemic are continually evolving, and Hermleigh ISD's Return to In-Person Instruction and Continuity of Services Plan will be constantly evaluated to adapt to the continuing trends of the COVID-19 virus, especially in Hermleigh and Scurry County.

Please know that Hermleigh ISD will follow recommendations for school opening and operation from the Centers for Disease Control (CDC), as well as state and local health officials. Circumstances related to COVID-19 may change throughout the coming school year, and this document will be updated as conditions change.

*****Hermleigh ISD will not offer remote learning during the 2022-2023 school year.*****

***** Per GA-38, school systems cannot require students or staff to wear a mask.*****

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Health and Safety

Infection Control Measures

- Face Coverings are optional for all staff and students.
- Social distancing of at least 6 feet will be encouraged at all times. However, it is important to note that 6 feet of distancing is not possible in some settings.
- Water fountains will only be available for filling of water bottles.
- Staff will work to try to maintain social distancing at restrooms where possible **See note above about the feasibility of this with all/most students attending school*
- Hand sanitizer will be available in each classroom, entrances, and throughout common spaces
- Staff will be expected to regularly wash or sanitize hands
- Students will have instruction on effective hand-washing. Elementary students will wash hands or use hand sanitizer before eating, following restroom breaks and after recess. All secondary students will be encouraged to wash their hands or use hand sanitizer regularly.
- Students, staff, and 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.

Health Screenings

- Staff will self-screen for COVID-19 symptoms before coming onto campus each day
- Parents/guardians are expected to screen their students for COVID-19 symptoms each day prior to sending their students to school
- Teachers will monitor students and refer to the nurse if symptoms are present
- Visitors required to complete health screening to determine if they have any COVID-19 symptoms or have come into close contact with an individual who is lab-confirmed with COVID-19 upon entry into the building **See Visitor section for more information*
- Screening Questions:
 - *Have you experienced any of the following symptoms that indicate a possible COVID-19 infection?*
 - *Temperature of 100.4 degrees Fahrenheit or higher when taken by mouth;*
 - *Sore throat;*
 - *New uncontrolled cough that causes difficulty breathing (or, for students with a chronic allergic/asthmatic cough, a change in their cough from baseline);*
 - *Diarrhea, vomiting, or abdominal pain; or*
 - *New onset of severe headache, especially with a fever.*
 - *Have you had close contact with any individual who is lab-confirmed with COVID-19 in the last 14 days?*

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Campus Operations

- Hand sanitizer will be available in each classroom, entrances, and throughout common spaces
- The campus will open multiple entrance/exit points during arrival/dismissal to promote social distancing
- The campus will review options to reduce large group gatherings at the start and end of the day as well as other events
- Restrooms will continue to be disinfected daily / Classrooms will have surfaces disinfected daily
- Classroom doors will be propped open during transitions to reduce high-touch areas
- Where possible, one-way traffic throughout campus corridors will be established
- Schedules and protocols will be developed for the use of common areas (lab, libraries, conference rooms, cafeteria, etc.), including how to sanitize between uses. Hand sanitizer will be available in all common areas.
- Procedures and protocols will be put into place to address locker rooms. Protocols will be in place for disinfecting equipment, students changing clothes, students showering, distancing of students, etc.

Learning Environments

- Desks and tables will be arranged to maximize space between students
 - It is important to note that our classrooms are not large enough to ensure 6 feet of distance between staff/students. We will not be able to place students 6 feet apart
- Staff will have access to disinfectant wipes to sanitize high-touch and working surfaces and shared objects regularly
- Staff will limit the use of shared supplies where possible
- The use of outdoor space for learning will be considered when possible.

Breakfast/Lunch

- Students will be encouraged not to share food or drink
- If becoming necessary for disease mitigation, meals will be in disposable packaging and condiments and pre-wrapped silverware to be included with all meals.
- Lunch tables will be spread out across cafeterias to maximize space between groups
- All tables will be sanitized between lunches.

Transportation

- Parents will be encouraged to transport their children to school daily as it is the safest means of transportation due to COVID-19.
- Face Coverings are optional but encouraged on buses.
- All buses will have hand sanitizer dispensers placed in the stairwells for use when loading/unloading
- All buses will be sanitized and wiped down after each route

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Visitors

- Visitors will be restricted for those essential to school operations and for scheduled events/activities. We highly discourage non-emergency drop-offs...i.e. snacks, lunch, instruments, Sonic, etc. Parents/visitors will not be allowed to eat lunch at the school until further notice or unless a district activity is planned.
- Visitors are required to complete a self health screening to determine if they have any COVID-19 symptoms or have come into close contact with an individual who is lab-confirmed with COVID-19 upon entry into the building .
 - Visitors may be temperature checked before entering the building.
- Any visitor who has COVID-19 or COVID-19 symptoms or has come into close contact with an individual who is lab-confirmed with COVID-19 must remain off campus until the 14-day incubation period has passed.

Clinic Procedures Related to COVID-19

- Students or staff who present with symptoms will be evaluated and assessed by the school nurse
- **Anyone who has symptoms of COVID-19, who has been in close contact with a person known to have COVID-19, or who lives in or has recently traveled from an area with ongoing spread of COVID-19, should contact their healthcare provider and be tested.**
 - **The nearest healthcare facility is below:**
 - **Name:** Cogdell Memorial Hospital
 - **Address:** 1700 Cogdell Blvd, Snyder, Texas 79549
 - **Phone Number:** (325) 573-1300
- Nurse or designee will provide parent/staff with **Return to School Criteria**

Notification Procedures Related to COVID-19

- If an individual who has been in a school 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).
- 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).
- 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 classroom or extracurricular or after-school program cohort if a test-confirmed COVID-19 case is identified among students, teachers or staff who participated in those classrooms or cohorts.

Definition of COVID-19 Symptoms

In evaluating whether an individual has symptoms consistent with COVID-19, individuals will be asked if they have 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
- 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

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.

Definition of Close Contact

- “Close contact” is defined by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) as: Anyone who was less than 6 feet away for a combined total of 15 minutes or more over a 24-hour period.

Students Who Have COVID-19

- As provided in this Department of State Health Services (DSHS) Rule, school systems **must exclude students from attending school in person who are actively sick with COVID-19 or who have received a positive test result for COVID-19**. Parents must ensure they do not send a child to school on campus if the child has COVID-19 symptoms or is test-confirmed with COVID-19, 2 until the conditions for re-entry are met.
- If symptomatic, exclude until **at least 5 days have passed since symptom onset, and fever free***, and other symptoms have improved.
- Children who test positive for COVID-19 but do not have any symptoms must stay home until at least 5 days after the day they were tested.

****Fever free for 24 hours without the use of fever suppressing medications. Fever is a temperature of 100° Fahrenheit (37.8° Celsius) or higher.***

Students Who Are Close Contacts

- Given the data from 2020-21 showing very low COVID-19 transmission rates in a classroom setting and data demonstrating lower transmission rates among children than adults, school systems are **not required** to conduct COVID-19 contact tracing. If the school system is made aware that a student is a close contact, the school system should notify the student's parents. However, the school system cannot require the student to stay home.
- Parents of students who are determined to be close contacts of an individual with COVID-19 **may opt** to keep their students at home during the recommended stay at home period.
- Students that are household-based close contacts are required to stay home during the recommended stay at home period.
- The stay at home period can end for students experiencing no symptoms on Day 5 after close contact exposure.

Absences

- If a student must isolate after testing positive for COVID-19, the school/teacher will provide makeup work in a similar manner as for students absent for other reasons.

Staff Who Have COVID-19

- School Systems must exclude staff from attending school in person who are actively sick with COVID-19, who are suspected of being actively sick with COVID-19, or who have received a positive test result for COVID-19. Based on recent updates from the CDC, staff may return when:
- If symptomatic, at least 5 days have passed since symptom onset, and fever free*, and other symptoms have improved.
- For those with no symptoms, at least 5 days after the day they tested positive.
- Fever free for 24 hours without the use of fever suppressing medications. Fever is a temperature of 100 degrees Fahrenheit or higher.

Staff Who are Close Contacts

Staff who meet the close contact threshold with a COVID-19 positive individual and are in one of the following groups, do not need to stay home.

- Ages 18 and older and have received all recommended vaccine doses, including boosters and additional primary shots for some immunocompromised people.
- Was confirmed positive within the last 90 days and has fully recovered.
- For staff who meet the close contact threshold with a COVID-19 positive individual who are not in one of the above groups, the staff member must stay home for 5 days and have not experienced symptoms during the 5 days.

Instructional Delivery

- Hermleigh ISD will offer on-campus traditional instruction (face to face). It will be for all students. For students who are in quarantine due to a confirmed Covid-19 case, online instruction will be available from the student's teacher(s). Teachers will preferably send student's assignments via online learning platforms, but if the student does not have internet access then other arrangements may be made through communication with the teacher and the campus office. Students who are in quarantine will be marked absent, per changes in TEA Public Health Guidance, August 5, 2021. Students will be required to return to face to face instruction when they meet the return to school criteria.
- Continuity of Services: In the event of a school-wide closure, instruction will be delivered electronically utilizing LMS options including Google Classroom and iCEV. All services required by 504 plans and the student's IEPs will be delivered by the classroom, support, and special education teachers.

Social-Emotional Support/Mental Wellness

- Hermleigh ISD counselors will be trained in COVID-19 safety protocols.
- Counselors will develop strategies and support for students, families, and staff members for each phase of recovery (before reopening, immediately after reopening, and long-term support).
- Counselors will develop a referral system for individuals who need targeted support as well as access to school-employed and community mental health professionals.
- A process will be established to help identify and provide support to students or staff, perhaps at higher risk for significant stress or trauma from COVID-19.
- Students in need of social-emotional support will be provided tiered interventions which could involve referral for additional school-based services or referral for outside mental health support.
- Resources for Social Emotional Wellness
 - Child Mind Institute:
<https://childmind.org/article/talking-to-kids-about-the-coronavirus/>
 - National Association for School Psychologists:
<https://www.nasponline.org/resources-and-publications/resources-and-podcasts/school-climate-safety-and-crisis/health-crisis-resources/helping-children-cope-with-changes-resulting-from-covid-19>
 - CASEL's resources and guidance on Social-Emotional Learning (SEL):
<https://casel.org/covid-resources/>
 - Recommendations for the Practical, Fair, and Safe Reopening of Public Schools K-12 in the State of Texas:
https://cookchildrens.org/SiteCollectionDocuments/coronavirus/Presentation-Return_school-Mazade.pdf
 - The Child Mind Institute
<https://childmind.org/coping-during-covid-19-resources-for-parents/>

Communication Tools and Channels

Hermleigh ISD is committed to providing families with clear and concise communication through the following outbound channels:

- Email / Text Messages
- Social Media
- Website

Circumstances related to COVID-19 may change throughout the coming school year and we will keep all parents informed if conditions change.