

Garner ISD COVID-19 Health & Wellness Protocols

Return to In-Person Instruction and Continuity of Services (RIPICS) Plan

Updated January 2024

This document summarizes the extent to which Garner ISD has implemented CDC Guidelines to maintain the health and safety of students, educators, and other school and district staff. These protocols are subject to change as new information becomes available from the local health authorities, Texas Education Agency, Department of State Health Services, or the Governor's Office.

Masks or Face Coverings - Per the Governor's executive order, school systems cannot require students or staff to wear a mask. School systems must allow individuals to wear a mask if they choose to do so. As stated in previous protocols, we are following the governor's current mandates regarding masks or face coverings. Any staff or students who wish to wear a mask or face covering are allowed to do so. Masks are not provided.

Physical Distancing, Ventilation, & Other Operational Considerations

- Physical distancing, ventilation, or other operational measures specific to COVID-19 mitigation are no longer in place. All regular operations have resumed successfully.
- We will continue to offer extracurricular and UIL activities in compliance with published regulations.
- Outside organizations may continue to follow district Facility Request procedures.

Minimizing Large Group Gathering

- Large group gatherings are no longer minimized.

Arrival and Dismissal

- Morning student drop-off is 7:30-7:45. Dismissal is 3:40. Student arrival and dismissal are staged and managed according to transportation mode and grade level or individual student needs.

Transportation

- Buses are regularly cleaned, focusing on high-touch surfaces.

Handwashing and Respiratory Etiquette

- Hand sanitizer is made available at each entrance.
- Classrooms with a sink have antibacterial soap available.
- Hand sanitizer will be provided in all classrooms and will be encouraged before room transitions.
- All restrooms will be equipped with antibacterial soap and hand sanitizer.
- Students and staff are encouraged to cough or sneeze into tissues, and if not available, covered in their elbows. They are required to wash or sanitize hands afterward regardless.

Please contact us if you have any questions.
Diane Shaw, Dean of Instruction dshaw@garnerisd.net
Rebecca Hallmark, Superintendent rhallmark@garnerisd.net

Cleaning and Disinfection

- Any areas used by individuals showing COVID-19 symptoms while at school will be cleaned immediately.
- Areas of heavy use by individuals with lab-confirmed COVID-19 will be closed off until all non-porous surfaces are disinfected.
- Students will assist with cleaning their own supplies and work spaces as developmentally appropriate.
- All cleaning products will be stored and used safely.

Contact tracing in combination with isolation and quarantine - The district is not involved in contract tracing or tracking of COVID symptoms and/or treatment.

Diagnostic & Screening Testing

COVID-19 Exposure or Diagnosis:

Students and Staff MUST go or stay home if lab diagnosed with COVID-19 until improvement of symptoms as described below.

COVID-19 Symptoms – “Experienced in a way that is not normal for the individual”

Adults MUST self-screen (incl. temp check) and stay or go home.

Parents self-screen their students.

Students who exhibit any of these symptoms during the school day will be immediately separated from other students, screened, and sent home:

- o Feeling feverish or a measured temperature greater than or equal to 100.0 F
- o Loss of taste or smell
- o Cough, Difficulty breathing or Shortness of breath
- o Headache
- o Sore throat
- o Chills, Shaking, or Exaggerated shivering
- o Significant muscle ache or pain
- o Diarrhea

Conditions for Return:

Any individual who is lab-diagnosed with COVID-19 OR any individual who is symptomatic but is not evaluated by medical professional or tested may return to campus when the following criteria are met:

- At least 2 days (48 hrs) have passed fever-free without medication AND
- Improvement of symptoms listed above AND/OR
- Doctor’s note noting appropriate return date

Visitors

- All visitors are subject to current legal mandates regarding masks and all other Garner ISD health and wellness protocols, including symptom and temperature screening for adults when required.

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Staffing

- Employees must continue to meet the work expectations set by Garner ISD, subject to any applicable employment contract terms.
- All school staff will be trained on these protocols and are expected and empowered to enforce them with all students. Concerns with adults' noncompliance should be reported immediately to Mr. Grudt or Mrs. Hallmark.

Promoting vaccination opportunities to school communities - The Department of State Health Services (DSHS) is the agency responsible for overseeing the decision-making and distribution related to vaccinations in Texas. Please visit its [COVID-19 Vaccine Information webpage](#) for the most up-to-date COVID-19 vaccination information. For general COVID19 vaccine information, please visit the [Center for Disease Control \(CDC\) Vaccines webpage](#)

Appropriate accommodations for children with disabilities with respect to health and safety policies - Garner ISD staff will provide accommodations, modifications, and assistance for students, teachers, and staff with disabilities and other health care needs when implementing COVID-19 safety protocols. Staff work with parents and families to better understand the individual needs of students with disabilities. As required by federal and state disability laws, staff will adjust accordingly to provide an individualized approach for working with children and youth with disabilities consistent with the child's Individualized Family Service Plan (IFSP), Individualized Education Program (IEP), or Section 504 plan.

Coordination with State and local health officials - Garner ISD considers guidance issued by state and local health officials. The Texas Education Agency (TEA) continues to work with the Office of the Governor, Texas Department of State Health Services (DSHS) and the Texas Division of Emergency Management (TDEM) to coordinate and plan the state's response to COVID-19. The [Texas Department of State Health Services](#) (DSHS) is working closely with the Texas Education Agency (TEA) and the Texas Division of Emergency Management (TDEM) to monitor, track, and coordinate public health responses to COVID-19 cases in Texas public schools.

Continuity of Services to Address Students' Academic Needs and Students' and Staff Social, Emotional, and Mental Health – Staff are available to consult with students and parents and, as appropriate, refer families to local mental health agencies and other social service providers. The Texas Health and Human Services Commission (HHSC) launched a statewide mental health support line to help all Texans experiencing anxiety, stress, or other emotional challenges due to the COVID-19 pandemic. [Harris Center for Mental Health and IDD](#) operates the line, which is available anytime day or night, at 833-986-1919. Counseling services are confidential and free of charge. More information on mental health resources and your local mental health authority can be found on [HHSC's Website](#).

Food Services – The P-EBT program which provided free breakfast and lunch to all students has ended. Garner ISD has resumed normal food service operations. Families are encouraged to apply for and participate in the free/reduced lunch program as appropriate.

Garner ISD will continue to deliver rigorous, standards-based educational programs to all students in compliance with all state and local policies.

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