



Wheeler Independent School District
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REVIEWED JUNE 9, 2021

WISD SAFE RETURN TO IN-PERSON INSTRUCTION AND CONTINUITY OF SERVICES FALL 2020

Public schools across the nation will take on a new look this year. We, here at WISD, are committed to providing the best possible education for our students. With that being said, our current plan is to provide on-campus learning beginning Wednesday, August 19, 2020 for all students. Additional sanitation plans and separation protocols will be in place on campus, and we ask for the cooperation and patience of all students, staff, parents, and community members. This process has been a collaborative effort with guidance from the CDC, TEA, and both regional and local health authorities. As this situation continues to be ever-changing, flexible contingency plans will be maintained to allow for adapting during changing conditions.

- Parents and guardians are the frontline of defense for our school. Please ensure that students are symptom free before sending them to school. Students must stay home if they have a high fever or any signs of COVID-19 are present. Students must be fever-free for a minimum of 24 hours (without medication) before returning to school.
- Bus routes will be utilized, but all members of a household must sit on the same row. Sanitation of buses will be utilized daily.
- Sanitation practices will be bolstered within the facilities before, during, and after school. Electrostatic sprayers/foggers will be utilized along with traditional disinfectants and wipes to sanitize surfaces.
- Increased emphasis on frequent, proper hand washing will be practiced as well as hand sanitizer stations located throughout the building.
- Desks and tables will be arranged in rows as to reduce face-to-face interaction among students. Group interaction will be minimal and large assemblies avoided.
- Wearing a mask, although not required at this time, is recommended and supported for students, faculty, and staff (especially those with pre-existing conditions). *Dependent upon further state and local guidelines.*
- Teachers in grade PK-12 will utilize Google Classroom for assignments for onsite and offsite learning. This will allow for a seamless transition should distance learning become necessary.

- Cafeteria service will be provided in the most social-distanced manner possible. Plans are being created to minimize contact among students during this time. Plexi-glass dividers have been installed to reduce spread of germs while eating.
- Plans for Extracurricular events will be announce as guidance is provided.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION—

Wheeler ISD families will select from two options for their children. We will communicate the process for making the choice soon.

- Option 1: Full-time in-person on campus, with heightened hygiene and disinfection protocols according to CDC guidelines.
- Option 2: Full-time virtual learning with district-provided technology as needed. Virtual learning in this manner will be more stringent than the Spring semester of 2020. Districts are required to provide the same content for both on-campus and off-campus students. Grading policies will be the same for both sets of students, homework will be aligned with on-campus students, etc...

Parent Choice

On or about July 27, 2020, we will conduct a parent survey of parents to determine their *choice* of face-to-face or virtual learning for each child. It is extremely important that this survey is complete by NO LATER THAN JULY 31, 2020.

The survey will be available via the website www.wheelerschools.net as well as Facebook at Wheeler ISD ISD.

School Year Calendar

The District calendar was revised on July 24th to include nine extra days at the conclusion of the school year. These days will only be utilized if the District must be out for emergency closure and the minutes are required to complete the school year.

Re-Entry: Frequently Asked Questions

If I choose one option and want to change the choice later in the year, can I make a switch?

Changes can be made at the end of a 6-week grading period. *It is highly recommended that students only make a change at semester, if possible.* Changing options mid-semester may have a negative impact on a student's ability to receive credit, especially in elective courses.

How will I register for virtual school?

Parents, upon making a firm commitment to virtual instruction, will be required to enroll either online or by setting up an appointment with the campus principal.

Can students who select virtual school still participate in athletics and extracurricular activities?

No. Students who choose to participate in extra-curricular activities will need to choose the in-person option.

Who will be accountable for State assessments?

Students participating in both in-person and virtual learning will be required to participate in state (STAAR/EOC/TELPAS, etc.) testing.

How will you address social, emotional, or mental health concerns?

The school counselor, along with additional resources, is available to support students academically, socially, and emotionally and can provide mental health support for families who may be struggling. Contact the school principal to schedule time with the counselor.

What will staff do if they have to quarantine due to COVID-19? Will the District provide extra sick or personal days for staff?

Requirements to quarantine are determined by the health department and CDC guidelines. In addition to existing leave balances in effect for employees, WISD will follow all provisions of the Families First Coronavirus Response Act (FFCRA) which is in effect through December 31, 2020. The FFCRA provides for one-time paid leave up to 80 hours (ten days) for persons testing positive for COVID-19. Contact the Business Office for more information.

Will we still have open-houses, assemblies, pep rallies, etc...?

At this time, large events will occur either in a virtual setting or in small in-person gatherings that comply with CDC guidelines. Events will be addressed on a case by case basis.

Will students and staff be required to wear masks?

Face coverings are not mandated at this time, but they are strongly encouraged for all staff and students. The current executive order from Governor Greg Abbott does not require facemasks for students under the age of 10 or anyone in counties that do not have more than 20 active coronavirus cases. Wheeler County is currently exempt from the order (as of 7/10/20). While WISD encourages masks for everyone, we are not currently requiring them. We especially encourage masks during passing periods and any other time students will be in close contact.

Will buses run?

Yes, transportation will continue to be provided for all students. To improve social distancing on buses, we are asking parents only send students on the bus if they absolutely do not have other transportation options. Students will be instructed with specific safety protocols. The bus driver and students will be strongly encouraged to wear face coverings and use hand sanitizer that will be provided. Students will remain seated, with all members of the same household only, and keep hands and feet to themselves. School buses will be disinfected daily.

What precautions will be in place for athletics, fine arts, and other extracurricular activities?

Safety guidelines have been developed for conducting summer workouts, rehearsals, and practices. The District will continue to follow all guidelines provided by UIL, TEA, and the state.

Will students have recess or the ability to play and socialize with other students?

We are awaiting guidance from the TEA on recess activities. However, we anticipate elementary students will have recess time with restrictions that reinforce social distancing.

What happens if a student or a teacher tests positive for COVID-19? Will the entire classroom have to quarantine and enroll in virtual school? What if multiple classrooms and students/staff are impacted?

When notification of a possible exposure occurs, WISD, in accordance with local health authorities, will begin contact tracing and complete a thorough risk assessment. Based on this assessment, a determination as to whether an entire classroom or multiple classrooms are required to quarantine will be made. Students will have the opportunity to access virtual content during the quarantine period.

Can I visit my child at school to have lunch with them or for other special events?

WISD will have a district-wide NO VISITORS policy for the duration of the COVID-19 crisis. **Teacher conferences should be scheduled for after hours or via teleconference.**

Are students and staff going to be screened daily for COVID-19 symptoms?

Current state guidelines require staff members and teachers to “self-screen” daily for coronavirus symptoms. Parents are asked to screen students **at home** each day. Screening each student as they arrive at school would cause delays and interfere with instructional time.

What are the symptoms of COVID-19 that should be checked for daily?

- 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
- Headache
- Chills
- Sore throat
- Shaking or exaggerated shivering
- Significant muscle pain or ache
- Diarrhea

Additional Information—

WISD continues to monitor state and federal CDC guidelines and adjust as needed to provide maximum protection of our students while also providing the best education possible in these difficult times. It is our belief that the best education, for most students, can be provided through in-person, face-to-face instruction. We encourage parents to keep this in mind as they make the decision for their children.

WISD Isolation Procedures Related to COVID-19

- If a student or staff member has displayed symptoms of COVID-19, the school nurse will provide a clinical assessment to determine if and when a student/staff needs to be sent home.
- If a student or staff member is assessed and exhibits symptoms of COVID-19 during the school day, the cohort will be relocated to an alternate area while the room is being disinfected.
- 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 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 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
- at least ten days have passed since symptoms first appeared.

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 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/>

Students or staff who come into close contact (within 6 feet for 15 or more minutes while not wearing a face covering) with a lab-confirmed case of COVID-19 will be asked to self-quarantine for 14 days and should contact the school for meeting the Return to School Criteria.

- District communication will be provided to the staff and students who came in contact with anyone who tests positive for COVID-19.
- WISD will immediately sanitize all areas that had exposure from someone who tested positive. In the event this cannot be done before the start of the next school day, WISD may need to close for a day to complete this process if relocating students is not an option.
- Any student requiring quarantine will transition to Remote Learning for the period of self-isolation.
- Staff needing to self-isolate for exposure to COVID-19 will be asked to work remotely. WISD will follow all applicable leave policies as well as TEA and CDC recommendations.
- Staff needing to self-isolate because of a positive diagnosis of COVID-19 will qualify for Emergency Paid Sick Leave (EPSL).

Clinic Procedures Related to COVID-19

Students or staff who present with symptoms will be evaluated and assessed by the school nurse.

- If COVID-19 symptoms are present, the staff member will be sent home. If a student has the symptoms, he or she will be isolated from other students and asked to put on a face covering until the parent arrives.
- Nurse will notify the campus administrator to move the student's class so that the space can be disinfected.
- Student will be escorted to the vehicle upon parent arrival.
- Nurse will provide parents/staff with Return to School Criteria.
- Contact tracing for lab-confirmed cases of COVID-19 will be conducted.

Notification Procedures Related to COVID-19

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 lab-confirmed COVID-19 case is identified among students, teachers or staff who participate in any on-campus

activities. If you were determined to have had close contact, you will be individually contacted.

- Contact tracing for lab-confirmed cases of COVID-19 will be conducted to determine who came into close contact with the infected person.
- Close contact is defined as:
 - being directly exposed to infectious secretions (e.g., being coughed on while not wearing a mask or face shield); or
 - being within 6 feet for a cumulative duration of 15 minutes, while not wearing a mask or face shield

Example: A student tests positive in the third grade. All parents are notified that a student has tested positive at the campus. Through contact tracing, WISD determines who has been in “close contact” and contacts those families to determine next steps (which may or may not include self-isolation depending on if face coverings were worn and degree of contact).



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Safe Return to In-Person Instruction and Continuity of Services

AMENDMENT—October 8, 2020

With the rise in Covid-19 cases in Wheeler County, and now in our WISD, the District will require ALL staff and students to wear face coverings until further notice. It is very important that we take the lead to protect each of you and our more than 400 students.



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Safe Return to In-Person Instruction and Continuity of Services

AMENDMENT—March 5, 2021

After thoughtful consideration, Wheeler ISD has made the following decisions regarding mask requirements:

All Wheeler ISD students, staff and visitors will be required to wear masks through Friday, March 12, 2021. Upon return on Monday, March 22, 2021, masks will be optional, although still highly encouraged. The District will closely monitor positive cases, and a mandatory requirement would be imposed if the District and/or County reaches a set threshold