



**A VISION OF EDUCATIONAL EXCELLENCE**

*At Palo Pinto ISD, we will provide the best of instruction for today and for the future so our students are well prepared to meet their fullest potential.*

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WENDELL BARKER  
Superintendent

Natalie Rogers  
Principal

Dear Parents,

We hope this correspondence comes to you in good health! We also hope that you and your kiddos have had a wonderful summer and that you all have experienced some positivity during the extended break from school. What we do know is that we MISS our kids (TERRIBLY) and are very eager to see them again starting in August! It has been way too long!

We know that during these uncertain times, you likely have valid concerns, especially those pertaining to the health and safety of your/our child(ren) as we gear up for another school year. We want you to rest assured that we have worked diligently since March, including all summer, staying abreast of situational changes, professional guidance and recommendations, and numerous meetings with the Texas Education Agency, health organizations, and other school districts, among many other things to ensure we provide the safest learning environment possible. We will continue to do the same. Ultimately, we realize that the most effective learning occurs in the classroom with the teacher and we want to do everything possible to give our kids the best learning opportunity. They deserve it and need a strong foundation. Fortunately for Palo Pinto ISD, we are a very small school district that can implement the best practices very easily with minimal disruption to our day. With this said, this correspondence/document is our *Public Health Plan* based on the public health situation as we understand it today—July 22, 2020—updated December 4, 2020 and March 23, 2021—and is intended to create and maintain the optimal safety for the 2020-2021 school year. Please understand that things related to the virus change frequently—from the number of cases, to scientists' understanding of how the virus behaves, to executive orders, to TEA recommendations—and it will likely continue to change. Evolving changes to the public health situation may necessitate changes to this plan, including additional restrictions to school operations as necessary or recommended.

This guidance addresses:

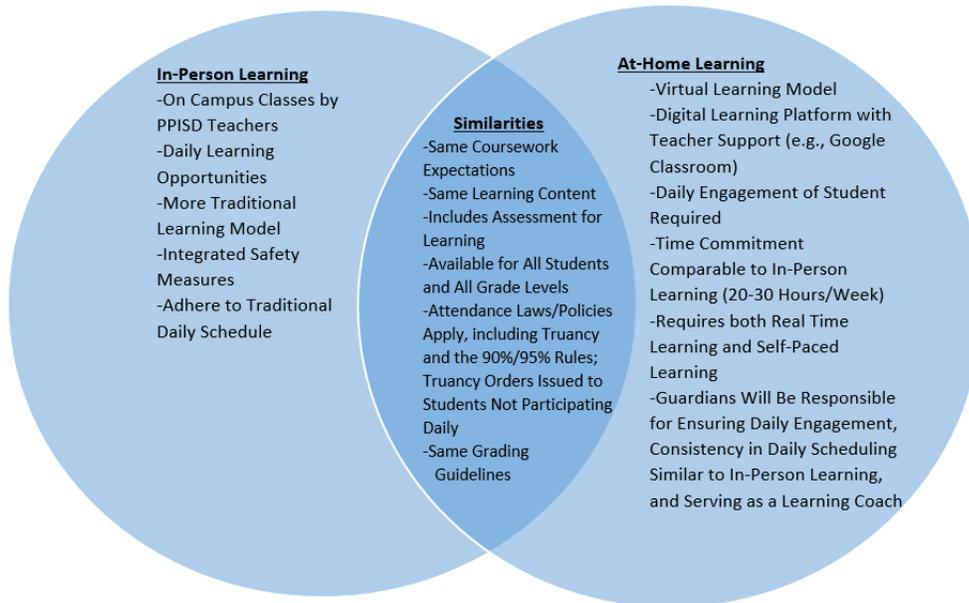
- Prevention (from virus entering the school)
- Response (required practices to respond to a lab-confirmed case in the school)
- Mitigation (recommended practices to mitigate the likelihood of spread inside the school)

We hope this information is clear while trying to stay as precise as possible. We **DO NOT** in any way intend for this information, though thorough, to cause more concern or unnecessary anxiety. Instead we want you to be well-informed, so you can rest assured, that we are providing the steps necessary to ensure the safest environment for our students, staff, and visitors. Please remember that we are putting this plan in place ultimately to ensure the optimal safety of our students and our employees, and in the end your safety as well,

while also simultaneously providing the best educational opportunities. Finally, please understand that we are not putting these guidelines in place to make life more difficult, though we understand it might, or to make our environment seem unwelcoming or exclusionary. We understand that no one will be happy with every decision we have made. There will be some things you appreciate and others you do not, or may not understand. Some will feel we are not going far enough on safety and others will feel we are going too far. Our goal is to keep kids and employees safe from the virus while also providing an excellent education and complying with mandates from federal, state, and local officials. In short, we are trying to thread a needle with a nautical rope. We are trying to make the best decisions we can taking into consideration our training, correspondence, guidance, and the unpredictability of the current circumstances.

Though we are implementing our District's *Public Health Plan* in order to ensure our campus is as safe as possible, it is also important to note that during the 2020-2021 school year, families may select between two distinct learning models. Both **In-Person Learning** and **At-Home/Remote Learning** will be available for students throughout the school year. Below is a diagram showing a comparison between the two models. We encourage you to also read our District's *Remote Learning Guide* to have a more thorough understanding of what remote/virtual learning entails so you can make an informed decision.

### **In-Person vs. At-Home/Remote/Virtual Learning**



Should you have COVID-19 questions or concerns, your primary contact will be with our principal, Mrs. Rogers who will be in direct communication with me and health officials as needed. She can be reached at (940) 659-2745 or by email at [nr Rogers@palopintoisd.net](mailto:nr Rogers@palopintoisd.net). We appreciate your understanding, support, and patience, even in times when it may prove tough, as we all make the best of a less-than-positive situation.

With kindest regards,

Wendell Barker  
Superintendent

# General FAQs

## 1. Why is PPISD re-opening schools during a pandemic?

On Tuesday, July 7, 2020, the Texas Education Agency informed school superintendents that public schools in Texas would forfeit their funding unless they opened physical campuses for student attendance five days per week. If we do not re-open, we would lose funding and cease operations.

## 2. Where can I find more detailed answers about PPISD's COVID-19 response?

There are three principal documents that address the details related to PPISD's COVID-19 response. The **PPISD Public Health Plan** is the main document pertaining to health and safety guidelines related to re-opening of our facilities. The **PPISD Remote Instruction Guide** is the main document related to remote learning and academics during COVID-19. The **PPISD Asynchronous Instructional Plan** will outline specifically the details pertaining to the requirements of remote instruction. The *Asynchronous Instructional Plan* is a plan that must be approved by TEA by the end of the 1<sup>st</sup> semester. Therefore, that plan will not be published until TEA approves the plan. All three documents can/will be found under the COVID-19 menu at [www.palopintoisd.net](http://www.palopintoisd.net). **All three documents are considered "living documents" and will be changed as circumstances warrant.**

## 3. Will PPISD students & staff be required to wear masks or face shields?

As long as Governor Abbott's Executive Order GA-29 is in effect, all students ages 10 and up and staff will be required to wear a face covering over the nose and mouth when inside a commercial entity or other building or space open to the public, or when in an outdoor public space, wherever it is not feasible to maintain six feet of social distancing from another person not in the same household. PPISD employees are required to wear face coverings that cover mouth and nose anytime they are within six feet of students, staff, or visitors. This requirement is independent of the Governor's Executive Order GA-29 and GA-34 and will remain in effect until rescinded by PPISD administration and/or Board of Trustees. Certain students with disabilities will not be required to wear face coverings due to developmental inappropriateness. Parents will have the choice of sending students younger than 10 to school with a mask to wear, though it is considered not developmentally appropriate for grades PK and K. If a mask becomes a distraction for those students not required by the executive order to wear one, a school employee may ask the student to remove the mask or face covering. In accordance with the Governor's Executive Order, individuals are not required to wear face coverings while eating but should endeavor to socially distance any time masks are not worn. Students are not required to wear masks during PE activities if six feet of space are maintained between students. High respiration activities while indoors are not permitted. Whenever possible, PE activities should take place outside where there is more air circulation and more ability to socially distance students. We will have recess. Efforts will be taken to prevent or reduce the mixing of students from different classes at recess. **(See revision to this Public Health Document per Governor's Executive Order No. GA-34 as of 3/2/2021, TEA's updated Public Health Planning Guidance as of 3/3/2021, and PPISD's Board action as of 3/23/2021.)**

## 4. Is PPISD Remote Instruction a synchronous or an asynchronous model?

The Remote Instruction Plan is an asynchronous instructional plan. This means: the use of self-paced online courses with intermittent teacher instruction, preassigned work with formative assessments on paper or in an online learning system, and the viewing of pre-recorded videos of instruction with guided support.

**5. Are students participating in Remote Instruction subject to the PPISD Student Code of Conduct?**

Yes.

**6. What are the academic expectations of students participating in PPISD Remote Instruction?**

Those can be found in the PPISD *Remote Instruction Guide*.

**7. Will students participating in Remote Instruction have access to school meals?**

Breakfast and lunch meals will be available for pickup at Palo Pinto Elementary School each day between 10am and 11am. They must be taken away and eaten. Cafeteria space is limited to on-campus learners. If such meals are desired, the guardian must call the school no later than 8:30am so that adequate preparations can be made. Meals will be grab and go for remote learners. Guardians will pull into the school drive by the cafeteria. They will call 940-659-2745 to inform the receptionist they are at the school to retrieve a meal for their child. A cafeteria employee/staff member will bring the meal to your car. The school number will be posted on the cafeteria door for ease of reference.

**8. Will special education and 504 services be available for remote instruction students?**

Yes. Please contact the campus principal for details.

**9. Will all courses be available via remote learning that are available on campus?**

No. There are "electives" or rotation courses that will only be available on campus.

### **Response to COVID-19 Cases FAQs**

**1. How will PPISD respond to cases of COVID-19?**

**POSITIVE COVID-19 TEST**

**a. Student or staff member tests positive and hasn't been on campus**

The individual must inform the school and must stay home until **ALL** the following three criteria have been met:

- 24 hours since recovery (no fever without use of fever-reducing medication)
- improvement in symptoms
- at least 10 days since symptoms first appeared

**b. Student or staff member tests positive and has been on campus**

The individual must stay home until **ALL** the following three criteria have been met:

- 24 hours since recovery (no fever without use of fever-reducing medication)
- improvement in symptoms
- at least 10 days since symptoms first appeared

The school must inform the local health authority. The school must close off areas heavily used by the individual for disinfection unless more than seven days have passed since the individual was on campus. Schools must notify all staff and families of students in a school if a lab-confirmed COVID-19 case is identified among students or teachers in any on-campus activities. Contact tracing will be conducted.

## COVID-19 SYMPTOMS

### c. Student or staff member detects COVID-19 symptoms at home

The individual must inform the school and must stay home until **ALL** the following three criteria have been met:

- 24 hours since recovery (no fever without use of fever-reducing medication)
- improvement in symptoms
- at least 10 days since symptoms first appeared

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) obtain an acute infection test at an approved testing location (<https://tdem.texas.gov/covid-19/>) that comes back negative for COVID-19 AND not have any exclusionary factors for returning to school such as fever or diarrhea.

### d. Student or staff member or screener detects COVID-19 symptoms at schoolhouse entry door

An administrator will be contacted immediately, and the individual will be taken to an isolation room. Temperature will be taken. If no symptoms are detected, the employee or student will be sent to class. If a temperature of 100.4 degrees Fahrenheit is detected, a parent will be contacted to pick up the student and take to the doctor or home. (Employees will be permitted to drive themselves home if they are healthy enough to do so.) The isolation room and all surfaces recently touched by the individual will be disinfected.

### e. Student or staff member exhibits COVID-19 symptoms during the school day, after site entry

Isolation protocol will be followed, as above. The school must close off areas heavily used by the individual for disinfection unless more than seven days have passed since the individual was on campus. Schools must notify all staff and families of students in a school if a *lab confirmed* COVID-19 case is identified among students or teachers in any on-campus activities. Contact tracing will be conducted. If a student or teacher who was on-campus later tests positive for COVID-19, ISD officials will conduct contact tracing to identify persons who may have been exposed to the infected employee or student. Each person identified as having come into *close contact*, as defined in the District's **Public Health Plan**, with the lab-confirmed positive individual must: be provided a copy of the Self-Screening Protocol and required to self-quarantine for 14-days or until obtaining an acute infection test at an approved testing location (<https://tdem.texas.gov/covid-19/>) that comes back negative for COVID-19, and not have any exclusionary factors for returning to school such as fever or diarrhea, or must provide a medical certification to return to work or school. **(See revision/amendment on the Public Health Plan as of 12/4/2020 regarding close contact with a lab-confirmed positive individual.)**

## POSSIBLE EXPOSURE TO COVID-19

### f. Student or staff member was within six feet of someone who later tested positive for COVID-19

If the student or staff member spent 15 or more minutes within six feet of a person who later tested positive for COVID-19, the individual is considered to have been directly exposed to COVID-19. Individuals who have had direct exposure to someone who is lab-confirmed to have COVID-19, as defined in the district's **Public Health Plan**, should stay at home through the 14-day

incubation period and should not be allowed on campus. After the incubation period has ended, school systems should screen individuals. If the individual did not experience COVID-19 symptoms during that period, the individual can be allowed back on campus. If the individual experienced symptoms, they must stay at home until the three-step set of criteria outlined above have been met. **(See revision/amendment on the Public Health Plan as of 12/4/2020 regarding close contact with a lab-confirmed positive individual.)**

**g. Are there other ways to be considered exposed to COVID-19?**

If at any time in the last 14 days the employee or student has been directly exposed to infectious secretions (e.g., being coughed on) by a person who has been lab-confirmed to have COVID-19, while the person was infectious, that individual is considered to have had direct exposure. Individuals who have had direct exposure to someone who is lab-confirmed to have COVID-19, as defined in the District's *Public Health Plan*, should stay at home through the 14-day incubation period and should not be allowed on campus. After the incubation period has ended, school systems should screen individuals. If the individual did not experience COVID-19 symptoms during that period, the individual can be allowed back on campus. If the individual experienced symptoms, they must stay at home until the three-step set of criteria outlined above have been met. **(See revision/amendment on the Public Health Plan as of 12/4/2020 regarding close contact with a lab-confirmed positive individual.)**

# Palo Pinto ISD Public Health Plan

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## **Public Health Considerations**

The virus that causes COVID-19 can infect people of all ages, and our district leaders and staff should do everything feasible to keep students safe. That said, research from the Centers for Disease Control (CDC), among others, has found that while children do get infected by COVID-19 and some severe outcomes have been reported in children, relatively few children with COVID-19 are hospitalized or have severe symptoms. Furthermore, the American Academy of Pediatrics notes that COVID-19 risks must be balanced with the need for children to attend school in person, given that lack of physical access to school leads to a number of negative consequences, placing “children and adolescents at considerable risk of morbidity, and in some cases, mortality.”

However, a child with a mild or even asymptomatic case of COVID-19 can spread the infection to others. The same is true for adults. 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.

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.

The prevention and mitigation practices recommended in this plan are designed to significantly reduce the likelihood that a coronavirus outbreak occurs on campus. Additionally, consistently and stringently implementing recommendations to the extent feasible is the best way to reduce the potential negative impact of infection on students’ educational experiences.

There exists a high likelihood of situations that may necessitate temporary school closure due to positive COVID-19 cases in school. It is essential that parents, educators, and school administrators be prepared for this in the event that it occurs, while actively working to prevent it through prevention and mitigation practices.

## **Attendance and Enrollment**

1. Per Texas Education Code (TEC), §25.092, students must attend 90% of a course in order to be awarded credit for the course and/or to be promoted to the next grade. This requirement remains in force during the 2020-21 school year. Transfer students, as a condition of transfer, must maintain an attendance rate of at least 95%.
2. Given the public health situation, student attendance may be earned through the delivery of virtual

instruction with highly regulated requirements for attendance credit that differs greatly from what may have been experienced in the Spring of 2020. Truancy and attendance laws remain in place whether a student attends in person or virtually. There are time requirements, work requirements, and engagement requirements that are very strict per Texas Education Agency. Any consideration by a guardian of virtual learning for a student needs to be thoroughly discussed with the school principal so requirements can be communicated and an informed decision can be made.

### **PREVENT: Practices to Prevent the Virus from Entering the School**

**(See revision/amendment at the end of this document on the Public Health Plan as of 12/4/2020 regarding close contact with a lab-confirmed positive individual.)**

#### ***Screening Questions for COVID-19 Before Campus Access***

1. Teachers and staff will self-screen for COVID-19 symptoms before coming onto campus each day, including taking their own temperature. Symptoms are listed at the end of this document. Teachers and staff must report to the administration if: (a) they have come into close contact (as defined at the end of this document) with an individual who is lab-confirmed with COVID-19; or (b) they themselves have COVID-19 symptoms.
2. Before coming onto campus or buses at the beginning of the year and at the start of every week of on-campus instruction, Palo Pinto ISD will screen via questionnaire all students to determine if: (a) they have the COVID-19 symptoms listed in this document; or (b) they have had close contact with an individual who is lab-confirmed with COVID-19. Students will have their temperature checked upon entrance to the school daily with a non-contact thermometer, along with utilizing hand sanitizer stations. Questionnaires will be sent home every Friday, to be filled out and brought back on Monday morning or possibly via an online survey.
3. Palo Pinto ISD will have a closed campus. Visitors will not be allowed anywhere on campus except for the front office. It will be highly recommended/required that visitors wear a face mask or shield before entering the office as communicated by signage and/or verbally upon admittance. It is required as long as executive orders are in place and afterwards will be decided by district administration. Upon entrance to the office, visitors will be screened by questionnaire and by thermometer to determine if: (a) they have COVID-19 symptoms listed in this document; or (b) they have had close contact with an individual who is lab-confirmed with COVID-19.
4. School systems are permitted to prevent any individual who fails the screening criteria from being admitted to the campus or a bus until they meet the criteria for re-entry to the campus, as described below.

#### **Individuals Confirmed (tested), Suspected (symptoms), or Exposed (close contact) to COVID-19**

1. Any individuals—including teachers, staff, students, or other campus visitors—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 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:
    - i. at least **one day** (24 hours) has passed **since recovery** (resolution of fever without the use of fever-reducing medications); **and**
    - ii. the individual has **improvement in symptoms** (e.g., cough, shortness of breath); **and**
    - iii. **at least ten days** have passed since symptoms first appeared.
  - In the case of an individual who has symptoms that could be COVID-19 (including fever) 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; **OR**
- 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 and provide a **medical professional's note clearing** the individual for return **based on an alternative diagnosis** or (b) obtain an **acute infection test** at an **approved testing location** (<https://tdem.texas.gov/covid-19/>) that comes back **negative** for COVID-19 **AND** not have any exclusionary factors for returning to school such as fever or diarrhea.
  - Individuals—including students, teachers, staff, or other campus visitors—who **have had close contact with someone** who is lab-confirmed to have COVID-19, as narrowly defined in this document, must stay at home through the 14-day incubation period, and must not be allowed on campus. **(See revision/amendment at the end of this document on the Public Health Plan as of 12/4/2020 regarding close contact with a lab-confirmed positive individual.)**
    - The district will screen individuals after the incubation period has concluded, and if the individual did not experience COVID-19 symptoms during that period, the individual can be allowed back on campus. If the individual experienced symptoms, they must stay at home until the conditions outlined above have been met.

*Other steps the district will take when there are possible COVID-19 Cases on Campus:*

- The district will immediately separate any student who shows COVID-19 symptoms while at school until the student can be picked up by a parent or guardian.
- The district will clean the areas used by the individual who shows COVID-19 symptoms while at school (student, teacher, or staff) as soon as is feasible.
- Students who report feeling feverish will be given an immediate temperature check to determine if they are symptomatic for COVID-19.

### **RESPOND: Practices to Respond to a Lab-Confirmed Case in the School**

*Required Actions if Individuals with Lab-Confirmed Cases Have Been in a School*

1. If an individual who has been in a school is lab-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).
2. The school must close off areas that are heavily used by the individual with the lab-confirmed case (student, teacher, or staff) until the non-porous surfaces in those areas can be disinfected, unless more than 7 days have already passed since that person was on campus.
3. The district will 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.

### **MITIGATE: Practices to Mitigate the Likelihood of COVID-19 Spread Inside the School**

#### **Operational Considerations:**

*Health and Hygiene Practices: General*

1. The district will have hand sanitizer at each entrance. Further, Palo Pinto ISD also has hand sanitizer and hand washing stations with soap and water in every classroom.
2. Students, teachers, staff, and campus visitors will be encouraged to sanitize and/or wash hands frequently.

- Palo Pinto ISD will attempt to have students 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.
  - On the first day of school, the district will provide instruction to students on appropriate hygiene practices, including good handwashing techniques, consistent with the mitigation practices adopted by the district.
  - Students, teachers, staff, and campus visitors are encouraged to cover coughs and sneezes with a tissue, and if not available, covered in their elbows. Used tissues will be thrown in the trash, attempts will be made to wash hands immediately with soap and water for at least 20 seconds, or hand sanitizer will be used.
3. Palo Pinto ISD will 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.
- The district will arrange for additional cleaning and disinfecting of surfaces that are touched in common throughout the day. This includes objects such as door handles, common tables/desks, shared supplies, light switches, pencil sharpeners, sanitizer and soap dispensers, toys/equipment, and high touch devices such as shared laptops, keyboards, and mice.
  - The district will attempt to arrange for cleaning of commonly touched surfaces in rooms between different class groups, if the same room will be used by multiple class groups (such as labs, gyms, cafeteria, etc.).
4. Water fountains will be monitored by staff and available for the filling of water containers only. PPISD will purchase reusable water bottles for students. Those water bottles will be taken up each day, sanitized, and redistributed the following school day for use. Students are allowed to bring their own water bottles to school each day as long as they are of reasonable size (approximately 20oz or less), have a lid that can be securely closed and operated by the student, and only contain water. Personal water bottles brought from home will not be sanitized by the school. Students will be responsible for taking personal bottles home for sanitization and return. If a student does not have a water bottle supplied from home, the school will provide one to use in order to stay hydrated, but those water bottles provided by the school will not be able to be taken away from school.

*Health and Hygiene Practices: Masks*

1. For the purposes of this document, masks include non-medical and medical grade disposable face masks and cloth face coverings (over the nose and mouth). Full-face shields may be used in place of a mask to protect eyes, nose, and mouth whenever a mask is not feasible or whenever the education context may benefit from the ability to see an individual's full face.
2. Students and staff in grades 4<sup>th</sup>-6<sup>th</sup> will be **required** to wear masks at school. Students must provide their own masks as the district will not be providing them. If a parent/guardian of a student in grades PK-3<sup>rd</sup> desire to have their child wear a mask, and it does not become a large distraction for the student or others, face masks will be allowed. **(See revision/amendment regarding close contact at the end of this document.)**
  - Consideration should be given that it is not/may not be developmentally appropriate for younger students, such as those in PK or Kindergarten, or some students with disabilities, to wear masks.
  - **Revision per Board Action 3/23/2021: Per Texas Governor's Executive Order No. GA-34 as of 3/2/2021, TEA's updated Public Health Planning Guidance as of 3/3/2021, and PPISD's Board action as of 3/23/2021, the day-to-day mandate of wearing masks is optional for students and staff except after an early return from quarantine per CDC's amended guidance as of 12/4/2020, during an increase in confirmed cases defined locally &**

**communicated by administration, or as otherwise specified in our district Public Health Plan. For information regarding visitors on campus and mask mandates, please see “Prevent: Practices to Prevent the Virus from Entering the School” section of this document.**

#### *Student-Teacher Groupings*

Where feasible without disrupting the educational experience, students will be encouraged to practice social distancing.

1. In classroom spaces we will try placing student desks as far apart as possible.
2. In classrooms where students are regularly within six feet of one another, the district will attempt to provide for more frequent hand washing and/or hand sanitizing.
3. Students will continue to be in self-contained classrooms.

#### *Use of Non-Classroom Spaces*

1. When feasible and appropriate (for example, in physical education classes as weather permits), we will attempt to allow students to gather outside, rather than inside, because of likely reduced risk of virus spread outdoors.
2. The district has a plan for entry, exit, and transition procedures that reduce large group gatherings (of students and/or adults) in close proximity. A few examples:
  - Students will enter one at a time and wait six feet apart outside the entrance while screenings are occurring; visitors will not enter the building other than the office.
  - There will be convenient markers and posters around the building helping students remember social distancing with ease of understanding.
  - Lunches are scheduled in such a way that social distancing can be maintained.
  - Dismissal will be handled to allow for appropriate social distancing; fortunately, because we are a small district, our dismissal is completed very quickly.
3. Restrooms will be closely monitored by staff to ensure social distancing to the greatest extent possible.
4. Palo Pinto Elementary at this time will be eliminating assemblies and other activities that bring large groups of students/adults in close proximity, including field trips, Grandparents Day, programs, etc.

#### *Transportation/School Bus Recommendations*

1. For those riding the school bus, we will be requiring students and staff to use hand sanitizer upon boarding the bus.
2. **Schools are required to comply with the governor’s executive order regarding the wearing of masks.** Further, for the protection of bus riders, even after the lifting of the executive order, administration may continue to require masks on buses. The bus driver will also wear a mask. **(See revision to this Public Health Document per Governor’s Executive Order No. GA-34 as of 3/2/2021, TEA’s updated Public Health Planning Guidance as of 3/3/2021, and PPISD’s Board action as of 3/23/2021.)**
3. When possible, weather permitting, the district will encourage the opening of bus windows to allow outside air to circulate in the bus.
4. When possible, the district encourages families to drop students off, carpool, or walk with their student to school to reduce possible virus exposure on buses. However, the district will continue to run bus routes and the buses are definitely available if needed following district policy.
5. When possible, students who live in the same household will sit together in the same seat. For all other students, an attempt will be made seat riders by themselves against the window.

6. Buses will be thoroughly cleaned after each bus trip, focusing on high-touch surfaces such as bus seats, steering wheels, knobs, and door handles.

#### *Visits to Schools*

- Parents and other adults will be permitted in the front office only, unless administration approves otherwise in rare circumstances or when there is no available option to accomplish a task/goal. During these visits, parents and other visitors are highly recommended/required to wear a face mask or shield before entering the office as communicated by signage and/or verbally upon admittance, use hand sanitizer, practice social distancing, and limit the time on campus. Schools are required to comply when governor's executive orders as long as executive orders are in place; after orders are lifted, such requirements will be decided by district administration and/or the Board of Trustees. Upon entrance to the office, visitors will be screened by questionnaire and by thermometer to determine if: (a) they have COVID-19 symptoms listed in this document; or (b) they have had close contact with an individual who is lab-confirmed with COVID-19. Further, parents and visitors must follow virus prevention and mitigation requirements of the school or refusal of admittance may transpire.
- Everyone will be screened upon entry as noted elsewhere in this plan.
- The district will cautiously restrict visits in school to only those essential to school operations.

#### *Staffing*

1. 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.
2. School teachers and staff will be trained specifically on the protocols outlined in this document and the practices adopted by the district.
3. The district will attempt to reduce in-person staff meetings or other opportunities for adults to congregate in close settings. When those meetings are necessary, staff may wear a mask or sit in an area to allow for as much social distancing as possible.

## **COVID-19 Symptoms**

In evaluating whether an individual has symptoms consistent with COVID-19, consider the following questions:

Have they 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 Fahrenheit when taken by mouth (school has the authority to revise the target temperature for which students/staff can be excluded)
- Loss of taste or smell
- Sore throat
- Fatigue
- Chills, shaking, or exaggerated shivering
- New uncontrolled cough that causes difficulty breathing (or, for students with a chronic allergic/asthmatic cough, a change in their cough from baseline)
- Significant muscle pain or ache
- Diarrhea
- Vomiting
- New onset of severe headache, especially with fever.

## **Close Contact**

This document refers to “close contact” with an individual who is lab-confirmed to have COVID-19. For clarity, close contact is defined as:

- a. being directly exposed to infectious secretions (e.g., being coughed on); or
- b. being within 6 feet for a cumulative duration of 15 minutes throughout the course of the day; however, additional factors like case/contact masking (i.e., both the infectious individual and the potential close contact have been consistently and properly masked), ventilation, presence of dividers, and case symptomology may affect this determination.

Either (a) or (b) defines close contact if it occurred during the infectious period of the case, defined as two days prior to symptom onset to 10 days after symptom onset. In the case of asymptomatic individuals who are test-confirmed with COVID-19, the infectious period is defined as two days prior to the confirming test and continuing for 10 days following the confirming test.

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Resources: Teas Education Agency. *SY 20-21 Public Health Planning Guidance*. June 23, 2020.

Center for Disease Control

Texas Education Code

Texas Department of Emergency Management

Local Department of State Health Services

Americans with Disabilities Act

Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act

District Policy and Regulations

Numerous meetings with professionals, officials, PPISD SHAC and District Improvement Committee, other districts, TEA, and other stakeholders

## Revisions/Amendments

### PREVENT: Practices to Prevent the Virus from Entering the School

#### **December 4, 2020**

##### *Stay-at-Home Period for Close Contacts of Individuals Who Tested Positive*

For individuals who are close contacts to individuals who tested positive, a 14-day stay-at-home period was previously advised by the CDC based on the incubation period of the virus.

As of December 2, 2020, the CDC amended their guidance to allow two shorter **options** (not requirements) for the stay-at-home period. Based on current CDC guidance, the stay-at-home period **can** end for individuals experiencing **no symptoms**:

- On Day 10 after close contact exposure without testing,
- On Day 7 after close contact exposure and after receiving a negative test result.

If individuals return to school from these shorter stay-at-home windows, they should regularly monitor themselves for symptoms to ensure they remain symptom-free and take appropriate precautions (e.g., more consistent mask usage) for the duration of the 14-day incubation period. In PPISD, individuals allowed to return to school from these shorter stay-at-home windows will be required to wear a mask/face covering at all times for a minimum of 14 days except for those times not appropriate, such as meal times or times of physical activity. During times of exception, individuals must maintain at least 6 feet between themselves and another person. If a person has a medical reason and documentation not to wear a mask when required, for purposes of a shorter stay-at-home window, the individual will not be allowed remittance into the facility until the 14-day stay at home period is completed. PPISD maintains the right to revise requirements as needed to ensure utmost safety for its constituents.

Finally, the CDC has also advised that critical infrastructure services—which includes schools—may permit close contact staff members who are asymptomatic to continue to work in select instances when it is necessary to preserve school operations. Per the CDC, this option should be used only in limited circumstances. When using this option, school systems may consider adding additional protocols to increase monitoring for these individuals, which might include the use of COVID-19 tests (e.g., on Day 3 and/or Day 7 after the close contact exposure).

Taking into account all of the above, school systems **may** apply **any** of the following stay-at-home periods to those individuals who are identified as close contacts. Specifically, the stay-at-home period can be:

- 10 days after the last close contact, so long as they continue to monitor themselves daily for symptoms and take appropriate/required precautions through day 14;
- 7 days after the last close contact, after receiving a negative test result. The negative COVID-19 test must be from a specimen collected within 48 hours of the end of the quarantine (i.e., on day 6 or 7 after exposure), so long as they continue to monitor themselves daily for symptoms and take appropriate/required precautions through day 14;
- For staff who are necessary to preserve school operations, school systems can **choose** not to require any stay-at-home period, so long as the affected staff continue to monitor themselves daily for symptoms and take appropriate/required precautions through day 14, and schools can consider the use of rapid tests for these individuals
- 14 days after the last close contact

**March 2021**

Mask mandate revisions throughout plan per Governor's Executive Order No. GA-34 as of 3/2/2021, TEA's updated Public Health Planning Guidance as of 3/3/2021, and PPISD's Board action as of 3/23/2021.