



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—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 to 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,

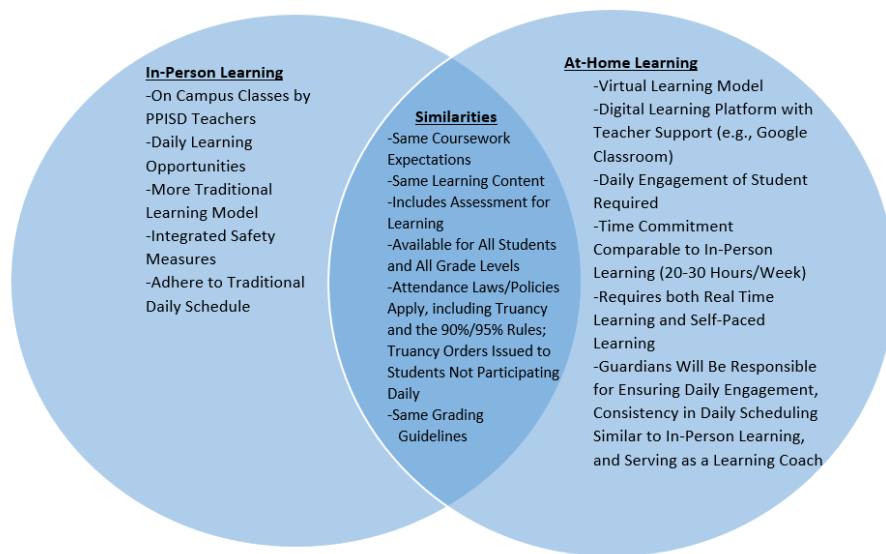
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while also simultaneously providing the best educational opportunities. Finally, please understand that we are not putting these guidelines in place to make life more difficult, though we understand it might, or to make our environment seem unwelcoming 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 nrogers@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

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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 1st 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. 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 will remain in effect until rescinded by PPISD administration. 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.

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

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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

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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.

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.
- 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.