

# Neches ISD

## **RETURN-TO-SCHOOL PLAN** *IN RESPONSE TO COVID-19*



Updated January 4, 2021  
Based on TEA Guidelines

## INTRODUCTION

We have created this plan to aid in navigating the reestablishment of our school where employees, students, and families feel safe and to reduce the impact of COVID-19 conditions upon returning to the district. The guidelines referenced in this plan are based on guidance from the Texas Education Agency (TEA), Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), survey responses from parents/guardians/students. Regular updates will be made to this plan based on any updated information from TEA, CDC or local health departments. Our goal is to provide the best learning environment that resembles the day to day schedules that students enjoyed and participated in prior to Covid-19 with added precautions. This plan is a living document and will be revised as needed.

## PHASES AND TIMELINES

Information and direction about the phases and timeline will be available to all employees, students, and parents before implementation. Please see below for a summary of the phases and timelines.

Phase	Timing	Items
Planning	June-August	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Supplies, equipment</li><li>• Prepare detailed work schedule for phases</li><li>• Prepare building and transportation for reopen with thorough cleaning</li></ul>
Phase 1	June	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Implement social distancing protocol and open facilities with limited access/use</li></ul>
Phase 2	July	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Expand use of school based on recommendations and data from CDC, TEA, Texas Governor, and applicable state and local agencies</li></ul>
Phase 3	August	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Open school</li><li>• Expand full operation based on recommendations and data from CDC, TEA, Texas Governor, and applicable local and state agencies</li><li>• Determine what restrictions/guidelines stay in place</li></ul>

# SECTION 1: STUDENTS

## VISITOR RESTRICTIONS

NISD will restrict visitors on campuses, to minimize interaction and help prevent the spread of COVID-19. NISD will evaluate the health & safety measures and review data to determine the possibility of opening the campus up to visitors at a later time.

\*Schools systems should restrict visits in schools to only those essential to school operations.

## TRAVEL RESTRICTIONS

NISD will discontinue non-essential student travel until further notice unless pre-approved by the campus principal and the superintendent. UIL travel will be determined based on information from the Texas Education Agency & University Interscholastic League.

## PREVENTION MEASURES: as required by TEA

### STUDENT SCREENING BEFORE SCHOOL BEGINS

To help prevent the spread of COVID-19 and reduce the potential risk of exposure, NISD will require students (parents/guardians of students) complete a self-screening survey prior to the start of the school year. This includes a temperature reading and answering a set of questions related to COVID-19 symptoms including:

- 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
- Fatigue o Headache
- Chills
- Sore throat
- Congestion or runny nose 10
- Shaking or exaggerated shivering
- Significant muscle pain or ache
- Diarrhea o Nausea or vomiting

All screening information will be kept confidential.

### STUDENT WEEKLY SCREENING

NISD will require daily self-screenings for students. If a student has ANY of the symptoms previously listed, we ask the parent/guardian to call the office and notify the school nurse in the morning before 7:45am.

## TESTED POSITIVE FOR COVID-19

### Individuals Confirmed or Suspected with COVID-19

1. 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:
  - i. at least one day (24 hours) have passed since recovery (resolution of fever without the use of fever-reducing medications);
  - 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 that is asymptomatic but has received a positive COVID-19 test result, the individual may not return to the campus until ten days have passed since a positive test.
- 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) obtain an acute infection test at an approved testing location (<https://tdem.texas.gov/covid-19/>) that comes back negative for COVID-19.
- If the individual has tested positive for COVID-19 and believes the test was a false positive, 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, though for health privacy reasons the note does not need to indicate what the alternative diagnosis is, or (b) obtain two PCR acute infection tests (at a physician's office, [approved testing location](#), or other site) at least 24 hours apart that come back negative for COVID-19.

### Identifying Possible COVID-19 Cases on Campus

- Schools must immediately separate any student who shows COVID-19 symptoms while at school until the student can be picked up by a parent or guardian.
- Schools should 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 should be given an immediate temperature check to determine if they are symptomatic for COVID-19.

- If you have symptoms that could be COVID19 and do not get evaluated by a medical professional or tested for COVID19, it is assumed that you have COVID19 and may not return to school until the three criteria listed above have been met.

## CLOSE CONTACT EXPOSURE GUIDANCE (lab confirmed positive)

The following procedures are necessary:

Contact Nurse Kristi Braaton @ 903-584-3401 or [braatonk@nechesisd.net](mailto:braatonk@nechesisd.net)

### *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 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.

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 precautions through day 14
- 7 days after the last close contact, after receiving a negative test result (administered at least 5 days after the last close contact), so long as they continue

to monitor themselves daily for symptoms and take appropriate 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 precautions through day 14, and schools can consider the use of rapid tests for these individuals



14 days after the last close contact

## Quarantine Time

People who have been in close contact with someone who has COVID-19 - excluding people who have had COVID-19 within the past 3 months.

People who have tested positive for COVID-19 within the past 3 months and recovered do not have to quarantine or get tested again as long as they do not develop new symptoms. People who develop symptoms again within 3 months of their first bout of COVID-19 may need to be tested again if there is no other cause identified for their symptoms.

## CLOSE CONTACT (DEFINED)

This document refers to “close contact” with an individual who is test-confirmed to have COVID-19. The definition of close contact is evolving with our understanding of COVID-19, and individual scenarios should be determined by an appropriate public health agency. In general, 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 largely uninterrupted or sustained extended contact period throughout the course of a day of approximately 15 minutes; 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 lab test and continuing for 10 days following the confirming lab test.

### *Screening Questionnaire Information*

- ♦ When asking individuals if they have symptoms for COVID-19, school systems must only require the individual to provide a “Yes” or “No” to the overall statement that they are symptomatic for COVID-19, as opposed to asking the individual for specific symptom confirmation. School systems are not entitled to collect information

during screening on the specific health information of an individual beyond that they are symptomatic.

◆ Once it is determined that individuals who responded “Yes” to either of these questions have met the criteria for re-entry, school systems must destroy those individuals’ responses.

## SOCIAL DISTANCING & STUDENTS

Social distancing is an effective way to prevent potential infection. NISD students will be encouraged to practice social distancing (approximately 6 feet away) in settings that can be controlled by faculty/staff. In settings that students cannot practice social distancing, students will be encouraged to wear masks. Ex. crowded hallways, buses.

- Large gatherings will not be allowed unless social distancing can be practiced
- Restroom capacity will be evaluated

Each campus will have procedures for breakfast, lunch, recess, P.E., etc.

## HYGIENE PRACTICES

Health and Hygiene Practices:

NISD will provide hand sanitizer on each school bus & encourage students to sanitize hands when they enter/exit the school bus. NISD will have sanitizer stands at all entrances & in each classroom. Students will also have access to restrooms with soap, water & paper towels to wash their hands throughout the school day.

- NISD will encourage students to wash their hands for 20 seconds at least 2 times per day (supervised for young students), in addition to being encouraged to wash hands after using the restroom and before eating.
- NISD teachers will review proper handwashing techniques with students At the beginning of the school year.
- Students 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.
- Printed resources such as posters that promote protective measures and can serve as helpful reminders of best practices will be displayed throughout the buildings.

## PERSONAL PROTECTIVE EQUIPMENT (PPE)

**Masks:** Schools are required to comply with the governor’s executive order regarding the wearing of masks. NISD may require the use of masks or face shields for adults or students



for whom it is developmentally appropriate (6th-12th) in areas that are crowded and students cannot practice social distancing.

## **STUDENT DESKS/WORK AREAS/LOCKERS**

NISD will provide each classroom teacher with wipes/small towels that will be used on desks/work areas between each class. The NISD Custodial Team will rotate through and clean the outside of lockers daily.

## **WATER FOUNTAINS**

Students are encouraged to bring their own personal water bottle to school. Water fountains will be cleaned and disinfected regularly.

## **SIGNAGE**

Signage will be located throughout the school. Signs will serve as reminders to clean hands regularly, practice social distancing and other practices to ensure the health & safety of students.

## **FOOD DELIVERY**

Bringing or sharing food will be prohibited in order to limit the risk of contamination. Food deliveries must be dropped off in the office.

## **BUS PROTOCOLS**

Bus drivers & maintenance staff must disinfect the buses at a minimum:

1. Right before starting a route to pick up students
2. Right after the morning and afternoon routes

\* Bus drivers will follow the employee protocol for daily self screenings.  
Masks may be worn if social distancing is not possible.

## **DROP OFF/PICK UP PROCEDURES**

Buildings will be closed to all visitors at the beginning of the year. This includes parents entering the buildings in the mornings and afternoons. Students must be dropped off & picked up in designated areas on each campus. Each campus principal will be responsible for designating areas for students. If a parent needs to drop a student off after school has started please come to the office with your child. If a parent needs to pick a student up early, the parent will need to come to the office and sign the child out.



## CAFETERIA AND MEAL PERIODS

Students may bring their own meals or be served individually plated meals. Each campus cafeteria will have table dividers installed, as needed, to insure social distancing practices. NISD uses disposable food service items to prevent cross contamination.

## MODIFIED ARRANGEMENTS

Space seating/desks at least 6 feet apart when feasible.

Turn desks to face the same direction, or have students sit on only one side of tables, spaced apart.

Create distance between children on school buses when feasible. Students will be asked to wear masks on buses when social distancing is not possible.

Provide physical guides, such as tape on floors or sidewalks and signs on walls, to ensure that staff and children are reminded to practice social distancing when necessary.

## SOCIAL-EMOTIONAL WELL-BEING OF STUDENTS

The district counselor will provide resources for parents and teachers to access. The counselor will work with students individually or in small groups to address any well-being needs.

## NURSE

1. The nurse's office will be divided into a well clinic and sick clinic. The sick child area will contain an isolation area.
2. Daily medications will be given to the student by the nurse if at all possible. If there is a conflict, the student will come to the nurse's office for medication.
3. All minor injuries will be treated in the classroom by the classroom teacher to slow down the traffic in the nurse's office. Each classroom will be equipped with a small amount of bandages and gloves. The nurse can be called to the classroom, if needed.
4. All COVID suspected illnesses will be sent to the nurse immediately for assessment. Nurse will don appropriate PPE before assessing the student. Nurse will contact the parent if deemed necessary.
5. Parents will need to contact the nurse on your student's campus to schedule a time to drop off medication.

## COMMUNICATION METHODS

\*Parent/guardian contact information (phone numbers & email addresses) must be up to date.

To stay updated on the most up-to-date information:

1. Email

2. Webpage @nechesisd.com
3. Google Classroom
4. ZOOM

## SECTION 2: FACULTY / STAFF

### FACULTY/STAFF TRAINING

1. **Pre-return to school training**  
Presented remotely (if needed) to ensure understanding and preparedness to align with this manual
2. **First Day Training/Orientation**  
Align local protocols and procedures with this manual; meeting areas must adhere to social distancing protocols or present via digital platform.
3. **Frequent reminders**  
Faculty/Staff will be frequently reminded of procedures and provided any updates.

It is very important that all employees understand the safety requirements, protocols, and expectations to ensure the safety and health of students & staff and prevent the spread of the virus.

We will structure the training plan to effectively disseminate information.

Content Covered:

1. All training topics can be reinforced with signage in the buildings.
2. School/District checklists
3. Disinfection Measures
4. Isolation protocols
5. Daily self-screenings
6. Cleaning Crew Protocols
7. Students procedures/routines

### CLEANING

The safety of our students and staff is our first priority. Upon reopening, our schools have been completely cleaned and disinfected and we will continue to adhere to all necessary safety precautions. In addition to the deep clean of the office and school before staff and students return, the cleaning steps outlined below are to be taken to disinfect workplace surfaces, chairs, tables, etc. to protect employees and reduce the risk of spread of infection. We will require employees to maintain this safety standard by continuously cleaning and disinfecting based on the frequency stated below.

## GENERAL DISINFECTION MEASURES

Category	Area	Frequency
<b>Workspaces</b>	Classrooms, Offices	Teachers will spray & wipe down all desks in between class rotations At the end of each day all classrooms will be sprayed and student surfaces wiped down
<b>Appliances</b>	Refrigerators, Microwaves, Coffee Machines	Daily
<b>Electronic Equipment</b>	Copier machines, Shared computer monitors, TV's, Telephones, keyboards	At the end of each use/day and/or between use
<b>General Used Objects</b>	Handle, sinks, restrooms, commonly touched obj.	At least 3 times a day
<b>Buses</b>	Bus seats, handles/railing, belts, window controls	At the end of each use/day
<b>Common Areas</b>	Cafeteria, Library, Conference rooms, Gyms, Common Areas	At the end of each use/day; between groups

The goal is to establish a sanitary baseline before the campus opens.

## PREVENTION MEASURES:

### STAFF SCREENING BEFORE SCHOOL BEGINS

To help prevent the spread of COVID-19 and reduce the potential risk of exposure, NISD will require staff to complete a self-screening survey prior to the start of the school year. This includes a temperature reading and answering a set of questions related to COVID-19 symptoms.

All screening information will be kept confidential.

## **STAFF SCREENING DAILY**

Staff will be required to self-screen daily PRIOR to arriving on campus. The self-screening will include a daily temperature check and acknowledgement that they do not have any of the above listed symptoms. Staff will adhere to daily self-screening protocol.

## **TESTED POSITIVE FOR COVID-19**

Procedures will be the same as students.

## **SOCIAL DISTANCING - STAFF & STUDENTS**

Social distancing is an effective way to prevent potential infection. NISD staff will be encouraged to practice social distancing (approximately 6 feet away) with other staff members. In settings that staff cannot practice social distancing, staff will wear masks. Teachers & principals will work to provide social distancing in the classrooms, to the best extent possible.

## **DEEP CLEANING AND DISINFECTION PROTOCOL**

Deep cleaning is triggered when an active employee or student is identified as positive for COVID-19 based on testing. Deep cleaning should be performed as soon as the confirmation of a positive test, as practical. While the scope of deep cleaning is presumed to be the full site, sites may reduce the footprint to be deep cleaned if there is sufficient rationale to do so, and they gain consensus of the superintendent. Notwithstanding the above, if an active employee is confirmed to have a COVID-19 positive test, in lieu of performing deep cleaning, sites may shut down the site for a period of 72 hours to allow for natural deactivation of the virus, followed by site personnel performing a comprehensive disinfection of all common surfaces.

## **PREVENTIVE MATERIAL AND HYGIENE PRACTICES**

1. The school district has an adequate supply of soap, disinfection, hand sanitizer, paper towels, and tissues. Inventory will be regularly updated.
2. Confirm a supply of gloves and other protective gear.
3. Touchless thermometers on-site for employee and student screening, if needed.
4. Students & staff should sanitize and/or wash hands frequently. NISD encourages staff to supervise younger students as students engage in handwashing for at least 20 seconds two times a day, in addition to washing hands after using the restroom and before eating.

## **RESTROOM USAGE DURING THE WORK DAY**

Supplies will be provided for employees to spray disinfectant after use in staff only restrooms. Restrooms will be cleaned mid-day and at the end of each day.

## TRANSPORTATION CHECKLISTS

Sanitation logs will be maintained and document each cleaning in the morning and afternoon. All surfaces must be cleaned with a disinfectant solution. Bus drivers are encouraged to wear masks or shields at all times.

1. For routes where students sit in close proximity within the bus, students are encouraged to wear masks or face shields while on the bus.
2. When possible, windows will be open to allow outside air to circulate throughout the bus.

## NURSE

See information in student section.

## PERSONAL PROTECTIVE EQUIPMENT (PPE)

**Masks:** Schools are required to comply with the governor's executive order regarding the wearing of masks. NISD may require the use of masks or face shields for adults.

**Gloves:** Touching your face with contaminated hands, whether gloved or not, poses a significant risk of infection. Wearing gloves does not diminish the need to wash your hands. Please remember to wash your hands properly as it is the number-one defense against any virus. Additionally, the proper removal of gloves reduces the risk of being exposed to contamination.

Cafeteria employees, custodians, nurses will be required to wear masks and gloves while performing job duties. Other faculty/staff members will wear masks in common areas where social distancing may be difficult.

## PERSONAL WORKSPACE/CLASSROOM

NISD staff will use signs (when needed) to indicate the room for sanitizing and disinfecting. Employees will disinfect their own personal workspace (teacher desk, phone, etc) throughout the day, giving special attention to commonly touched surfaces.

## SHARED WORKSPACE

Employees will disinfect their own workspace throughout the day, giving special attention to commonly touched surfaces. NISD has alcohol-based hand sanitizers throughout the workplace and in common areas. Wipes are also available to clean and disinfect frequently touched objects and surfaces such as telephones and keyboards. The NISD Custodial Team will clean all workspaces at their designated cleaning time.

*Please note that proper equipment such as acceptable disinfectant and PPE should be used when cleaning individual workspaces.*

There will be limited access to certain workspaces to reduce exposure to risks and ensure employee safety. Workspace usage is as follows:

**Capacity**– NISD will be monitoring the number of employees in the offices while the risk of infection exists.

**Conference Rooms**– Conference rooms will be available. After use, employees must wipe down surfaces they used.

**Breakrooms or Teacher Lounge/Multipurpose Room**–These spaces can be used while maintaining social distancing. Employees must clean surfaces after use.

**Copy Room** – There will be limited access to the copy room. Employees must clean surfaces after use.

## SECTION 3: ACADEMICS AND INSTRUCTIONAL OPTIONS

### TRADITIONAL FACE-TO-FACE INSTRUCTION

Students and teachers will attend class in-person, five days a week, with additional safety measures in alignment with state and federal guidelines and recommendations. In this setting, teachers will provide face-to-face instruction.

Students in face-to-face learning will attend school for the duration of the school day per the start and end times established.

- Teachers will plan instruction that is quickly and easily transferable from face-to-face to remote in the event of a temporary school closure due to COVID-19 spread.
- District-directed and campus-designed safety procedures will be implemented.
- Grades 6-12 students will be assigned schedules.

#### What happens if a student tests positive for COVID-19?

The student must be home for a period of 10 days due to illness.

#### How will I know if my child has had close contact (as defined) with a positive case?

NISD will provide notification to those that have been in close contact with a confirmed positive case.

## IN THE EVENT OF A STATEWIDE SCHOOL CLOSURE

- NISD will transition to asynchronous learning.
- Instruction will be delivered virtually.
- NISD will work with families that need devices and/or do not have internet. Technology Agreements & fees are required.
- NISD grading policy will be followed. \*see handbook
- Attendance will be determined by student engagement on a daily basis.

## SECTION 4: EXTRACURRICULAR & DISTRICT WIDE ACTIVITIES

Participation in extracurricular activities on campus must align with UIL and non-UIL activities. Use of facilities must be done consistently with the governor's executive orders.

### Athletics

Depending on the direction of UIL requirements, and local, state, and federal regulations, NISD will make decisions on how to proceed with events and activities.

### Cheer

Depending on the direction of UIL requirements, and local, state, and federal regulations, NISD will make decisions on how to proceed with events and activities. UIL will provide guidance.

### Ag

AG events and activities will follow the direction of local, state and federal regulations. NISD will closely monitor to determine best practices.

### Use of Non-Classroom Spaces

1. When feasible and appropriate (for example, in physical education classes as weather permits), it is preferable for students to gather outside, rather than inside, because of likely reduced risk of virus spread outdoors.
2. Schools may continue to offer extracurricular activities, at their discretion and consistent with the guidance in this document, for non-UIL extracurricular activities and with the guidance found on the UIL website for all UIL activities.
3. As is the case in typical years, school systems with policies that allow it may open facilities to the public. Operation of the facilities should be done consistent with the governor's executive orders for similar activities.
4. Depending upon local conditions, school systems should consider eliminating assemblies and other activities that bring large groupings of students and/or teachers and staff together.