

JEFFERSON ISD “RETURN TO SCHOOL” FAQs and PROTOCOLS FOR THE 20-21 FALL SEMESTER

Revised: 7-28-2020

As everyone knows, JISD students, staff, and community members have been dealing with the effects of the Covid-19 crisis for months. As the fall semester nears, this information is intended to help everyone understand the protocols and procedures that will be followed as we attempt to plan for the start of school. Please understand that these plans will be updated/amended as we receive new mandates and/or guidance from the CDC, TEA, and the governor’s office. Therefore, expect changes as time goes by.

Frequently Asked Questions below:

How will instruction be delivered this fall?

Governor Abbott has stated that schools “will be in session” this fall. Therefore, JISD will be offering on-campus classes with face-to-face instruction, beginning on August 17th, 2020. However, parents have the right to opt for remote instruction for their students regarding most curricular offerings. Students who choose either remote or on-campus instruction will be expected to remain in that instructional setting throughout the 9-week grading period. **Registration for either on-campus or remote instruction is from August 3rd through August 12th. Parents may register by accessing a link on the JISD website, which will be made available on August 3rd. Parents may also contact their child’s campus to register at any time during normal business hours. Changes (from remote to on-campus and vice-versa) will not be made after August 12th.**

JISD will offer asynchronous, remote instruction for those who choose the remote method of education. Asynchronous instruction is defined as instruction that does not require having the instructor and student engaged virtually at the same time. This form of learning may include various forms of digital and online learning, pre-recorded video lessons or game-based learning tasks that students can perform on their own, and/or pre-assigned work and formative assessments made available to students. Students will be expected to be engaged every day and teachers will be expected to monitor engagement and progress on a daily basis. Communication is a MUST, and may take place through phone calls, emails, teleconference, or other workable methods. The appropriate methods of engagement are: 1) Daily progress in the Learning Management System (LMS), or 2) Daily progress via teacher-student interactions, or 3) Completion/Submission of assignments from students to teacher (potentially via email, on-line, or mail). **A student will be considered absent if he/she does not show documented engagement with the LMS and/or daily contact with the teacher and documentation of completion/submission of daily assignments.** Each district across the state that chooses to provide asynchronous remote instruction must submit a plan to TEA for approval. JISD is currently working on the development of that plan.

Parents who choose remote instruction for their children should determine whether or not their technology capabilities at their homes will be acceptable enough to have a positive remote learning experience. JISD staff will attempt to do whatever they can in order to assist folks with this endeavor, but due to the fact that many rural areas in our county have varying degrees of service regarding internet/bandwidth/connectivity, some homes in the community won’t be able to support such remote

instruction simply due to geographical issues. It will be very important for parents who are planning to choose this remote option to research this subject and ensure it is feasible for their area. If it is determined that remote instruction is NOT possible due to lack of internet service, students in that household will need to consider on-campus instruction.

Also, some classes are simply not set up to be successful in a remote setting. For example, appropriate instruction and/or learning cannot take place within some parts of the curriculum regarding specific electives such as band, athletics, and various CTE classes. These types of classes have an innate “physical” component that require hands-on lessons and/or projects. We cannot expect those classes to be successfully facilitated unless the student is on-site with an instructor. Parents are encouraged to communicate with their child’s campus principal to ensure a complete understanding of the curricular offerings and the feasibility of remote instruction for each. For example, elective classes that have extra-curricular activities tied to them such as band and athletics will require the student to choose to be on campus all day. Remote learners will not be allowed to participate in those programs. Also, these high school CTE classes will only be offered to on-campus students: Intro to Welding; Ag Fab; Ag Mechanics; Floral Design; Culinary Arts; Automotive (Paint/Body); and EMT. More specific guidelines related to on-campus and remote instruction can be found on the district’s website at www.jeffersonisd.org under the link titled “BACK TO SCHOOL 2020”.

Will JISD offer extra-curricular activities for students to participate in?

We plan to offer all the extra-curricular activities that are normally offered every year. However, UIL has sent districts specific guidance related to extra-curricular events which includes many restrictions and mandatory actions. Much of that information may be found under the “BACK TO SCHOOL” link on the district’s website, titled “UIL COVID-19 Guidelines”. More updated restrictions/mandates regarding workouts and/or contests are forthcoming, so expect future changes. Suspended athletic seasons are even possible. We will also use this guidance from UIL to help us with local decisions regarding our non-UIL activities. For example, if UIL decides to suspend sports or band activities, JISD will consider suspending other extra-curricular activities such as dance teams, pep squads, FFA, or other student groups that meet, travel, and/or compete as teams which are not governed by UIL. Students who wish to participate in extra-curricular activities will be expected to attend on-campus instruction. (Students who voluntarily choose remote instruction for the 20-21 school year will not be allowed to participate in extra-curricular activities.)

All districts must restrict the number of attendees at each athletic contest/venue to 50% of normal capacity. Therefore, we are investigating options to only have “pre-sale” tickets available, with no tickets to be sold on-site. Also, no passes (e.g. district-issued, UIL, senior citizen) will be accepted at the gate in order to ensure the 50% capacity rule is adhered to. Everyone must have a ticket to enter contests. If someone is normally eligible to use a pass for entry, such as a senior citizen or “golden age” pass, they should contact the school in order to be given a free ticket for each contest he/she plans to attend. The district is also investigating the possibility of live streaming the home varsity football games. All varsity football games are expected to be broadcast on the radio as normal. For more information, please contact the school.

Will students be able to use school transportation to and from school?

JISD is preparing to run our bus routes as usual. However, TEA recommends that school districts encourage parents to transport their own children to and from school, if possible, to reduce the amount of students on buses at one time. It is imperative that parents communicate with their principal and/or

the transportation director in order for us to know who plans on riding the buses. Students will be assigned to sit in seats that allow them to separate themselves from other riders as much as possible. However, there are no “maximum capacity” restrictions related to buses or other forms of transportation at this time, so social distancing can NOT be guaranteed. Students will be required to wear face coverings while being transported in buses or other school-owned vehicles. Bus drivers will wear face coverings, and the buses will be completely sanitized before and after each route/trip. Sanitizing stations will be available on all buses.

How will breakfasts and lunches be handled in the cafeterias?

JISD plans to serve free breakfasts and lunches to all students each day. We plan to utilize all appropriate areas of our campuses in order to distance individuals as much as possible, including cafeterias, gymnasiums, outdoor areas, and/or classrooms. However, as stated before, distancing of more than six feet between individuals cannot be guaranteed 100% of the time.

Will the Food Service Department deliver meals to my home if my child is receiving remote instruction?

Unfortunately, due to the responsibilities associated with our employees’ jobs while on-campus instruction is taking place, JISD staff will not be able to deliver food to individual homes. Food will be available for “pick up” on campus for our remote learners, however. For more information, please feel free to call the school to talk with the Food Service Director about this subject.

What will be expected regarding sanitization?

JISD is making sanitation stations available throughout district facilities and on buses. Proper hand washing techniques will be explained to all students and staff. Routine hand washing will be encouraged for all students and staff throughout each day. Schedules (i.e., time between classes, breaks, etc.) will be flexible so that there will be ample opportunity for all students and staff to wash their hands several times during the day. Gloves will be worn where applicable. Proper usage/disposal of gloves will also be communicated with everyone who may use gloves. Extra cleaning/sanitizing supplies are being purchased in order to properly disinfect all areas, several times, each day. Custodial schedules will be adjusted to allow for deep cleaning/sanitizing to take place after school is out each day in order for them to have full access to all areas, especially high-traffic areas/touch-points.

Will social distancing be required for students and staff while at school and school activities?

Social distancing is recommended by the CDC, Local Health Departments, Governor Abbott, and the Texas Education Agency, among others. While it is universally accepted that social distancing is optimal, it is also understood that social distancing will be impractical in a school setting. We plan to separate desks/students as much as possible. We will also attempt to stagger class changes/times to limit situations in which large groups of people are around each other at one time as much as possible. However, with limited space inside our buildings, along with limited staff to provide adequate supervision of students, social distancing cannot be guaranteed 100% of the time. Therefore, although we intend to take precautions and plan ahead as much as possible, it must be understood that schools normally have large groups of people in small spaces, which makes successful social distancing problematic, at best. When weather permits, and if it is deemed appropriate by the teacher and administrator, some instruction and/or other school activities may be able to take place outside the buildings.

JISD is also taking steps to provide high-traffic areas, such as receptionist desks, offices, etc., with plexi-glass barriers to help with separating breathed air and encourage distancing.

Regarding communication, we will encourage meetings or other necessary conversations to take place remotely (i.e., via phone, texts, emails, teleconference, etc.) when appropriate.

Will students and staff be required to wear masks?

Currently, Governor Abbott's order (GA-29) requires face coverings to be worn by everyone over 10 years old inside public buildings and outside where social distancing is not possible, with a few exceptions. This order affects most Texas counties, including Marion County. Therefore, JISD plans to follow those orders and expects face coverings to be worn by staff and students as much as practical. Students and staff should attempt to provide their own coverings, but the district is preparing to provide face coverings to all students and staff, to the point feasible, as we start the school year. A copy of the Governor's order has been posted on the school's website titled "Governor's Order GA-29".

Will screening for Covid-19 symptoms or temperature checks take place at school?

JISD has developed screening procedures based on recommendations from the CDC and other health department guidelines. All staff are expected to self-screen each day to ensure no one is entering school facilities, buses/vehicles, or school-related events who: 1) have received a lab-confirmed positive Covid-19 test; or 2) who are exhibiting symptoms; or 3) who may have been in "**close contact**" (described below) with anyone who has received a lab-confirmed positive Covid-19 test. **Parents must also ensure this screening has taken place daily for each of their children before they are allowed to attend school, ride school transportation, or attend school-related functions.** These screening documents can be found on the school's website under the title "Screening Required for Covid-19".

What are the specifics related to the term "Close Contact"?

First, individuals are presumed infectious at least two days prior to symptom onset or, in the case of asymptomatic individuals who are lab-confirmed with COVID-19, two days prior to the confirming lab test.

This document refers to "close contact" with an individual who is lab-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 cumulative duration of 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 lab-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.

****Individuals who have had "close contact" with an infected person should contact the school to inform them of such and should **not** enter school facilities, use school transportation, or attend any school related function for the duration of a 14-day incubation period.**

Screening procedures will determine if anyone is exhibiting ANY of the following Covid-19 symptoms.

In evaluating whether an individual has symptoms consistent with COVID-19, consider the following question: 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**
- **Loss of taste or smell**
- **Cough**
- **Difficulty breathing**
- **Shortness of breath**
- **Fatigue**
- **Headache**
- **Chills**
- **Sore throat**
- **Congestion or runny nose**
- **Shaking or exaggerated shivering**
- **Significant muscle pain or ache**
- **Diarrhea, Nausea or vomiting**

Students/parents must ensure that the self-screening has taken place BEFORE each student enters a bus, school facility, or school-related function on a DAILY BASIS. Parents must ensure they do not send a child to school if the child is lab-confirmed (positive) with COVID-19, or if the child has COVID-19 symptoms, or if the child has been in close contact with a person who has received a lab-confirmed positive test result. Instead, parents should communicate with the school in order to receive remote instruction until the conditions for re-entry are met.

When appropriate, some screening may be accomplished by asking questions by phone, electronic methods, and/or in person. The screening questions will also be asked of a student's parent or visitor when it is necessary for him/her to enter a school facility. TEA has strongly suggested that students, as a general rule, NOT be checked for fever (temperature checks) by district staff while on campus unless he/she is exhibiting or complains of Covid-19-related symptoms. However, under some circumstances, it may be determined by a school staff member that a student should be checked. It has been determined by health officials that school-aged children do not normally exhibit symptoms, even if they contract Covid-19. Also, there are many factors that result in "false readings" regarding temperature checks, which would become very problematic in a school setting. Therefore, school nurses and/or other school personnel will not be making diagnoses, but fever will be checked on a case by case basis, as appropriate, when students are feeling ill or exhibiting symptoms. Students who exhibit any of the symptoms of Covid-19 will be removed from the general population and be sent home in order to follow the quarantine procedures until all re-entry criteria are met as directed by TEA.

All staff shall perform the self-screening test for symptoms each day. Thermometers must be used for checking fever. Staff should maintain documentation of these daily screenings. Teachers and staff must report to their supervisor or school nurse if they themselves have received a lab-confirmed positive test for COVID-19, are exhibiting COVID-19 symptoms, or if they have been in close contact with an individual who has tested positive for Covid-19 within the previous 14 days. If so, they must remain off campus until they meet the criteria for re-entry, which will be explained in this document below. Screening documents will be developed in a way that will not inquire about an individual's specific health issues or conditions. Screening will be utilized only to determine whether or not an individual has tested positive for COVID-19, has been in close contact with an individual who has tested positive, or has exhibited or experienced any of the symptoms associated with Covid-19 within the past 14 days of the screening.

Will students or staff be required to quarantine (or not allowed to be physically at school and/or school-related events) should they be diagnosed with Covid19 or exhibit symptoms?

There are 3 scenarios that invoke action/mitigation steps to be taken. Those are: 1) individuals who have tested positive for COVID-19; 2) individuals who exhibit symptoms of COVID-19; and 3) individuals who have been in “close contact” with a person who has a lab-confirmed, positive COVID-19 test result.

Individuals Confirmed with COVID-19 or Suspected with COVID-19 due to symptoms:

Any individuals who **themselves either:** (a) are lab-confirmed to have COVID-19; or (b) experience the symptoms of COVID-19 (listed above) must stay at home throughout the infection period and cannot return to campus or school activities until the school system screens the individual to determine if ALL the below conditions for campus re-entry have been met:

- 1) at least one day (24 hours) have passed since recovery (resolution of fever must be without the use of fever-reducing medications);
- 2) the individual is no longer exhibiting symptoms such as cough, shortness of breath; and
- 3) at least ten days have passed since symptoms first appeared.

****To clarify, 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 school facilities, ride a school bus, or attend school-related activities until the individual has completed the **same three-step set of criteria listed above.****

If the symptomatic individual intends 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.

Individuals who have been in “close contact” with an infected person:

For any individual who has been in close contact with a person with a confirmed case of Covid-19, and that individual is not evaluated by a medical professional or tested for COVID-19, it will be assumed he/she has COVID-19. In that case, the individual may not return to the campus or school-related activities until the individual is quarantined for a 14-day incubation period. If that individual develops/exhibits symptoms or if they are tested as positive for COVID-19 during that 14-day period, then they will follow the three-step re-entry criteria as noted above.

What must the school do if there is a Covid-19 case within the school or if someone has symptoms?

JISD staff will immediately separate individuals from the general population who show COVID-19 symptoms while at school. Students will remain isolated until they can be picked up by a parent or guardian. In the case of a staff member, he/she will be directed to leave the facilities. Of course, re-entry criteria must be met before these individuals return in all cases.

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).

TEA's public health guidelines say that schools must close off areas that are heavily used by the individual until the surfaces in those areas can be disinfected, unless more than 7 days have passed since that person was in those areas. However, JISD intends to disinfect all areas even if 7 days have passed since that person was in those areas.

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 district if a lab-confirmed COVID-19 case is identified among students, teachers or staff who participate in any school-related activities.

Will visitors be allowed at school?

As with the case in typical years, JISD does not intend to disallow visitors from coming to our campuses. However, we are encouraging everyone to limit visits to a minimum and for only necessary situations. Visitors will be required to complete a screening upon entry and wear face coverings while in JISD facilities.

If I am a staff member and I am not allowed to go to work due to COVID-19, will I have to use my personal days of leave, and will I be paid while I must remain off work?

The "Families First Coronavirus Response Act" deals with this situation. Information related to this subject can be found on JISD's website or at: <https://www.dol.gov/agencies/whd/pandemic/ffcra-employer-paid-leave>

Extra:

We all can agree that this current Covid-19 situation has been, and will continue to be for the foreseeable future, difficult to deal with. It's very frustrating for everyone involved. Mandates and directives from the federal, state, and/or local levels make our attempt to "have school" in a normal fashion impossible. We at JISD realize that our workloads will be increased and our responsibilities will be expanded. But we also realize this situation is very difficult for the students and parents too. Together, we will get through this. It is our sincere hope that we all maintain as much patience and understanding as possible, and we must have confidence in the fact that this won't last forever. JISD thanks everyone for their cooperation and assistance.