

DEKALB ISD STRONG!



**Return-to-School Plan
2020-2021**

Updated 7/29/2020

IN RESPONSE TO COVID-19

DISCLAIMER: This is subject to change at any point should the Federal, State, Local government entities, or the Texas Education Agency publish information that conflicts with the information published in this document. If any of those entities change their information published, this document will be updated and redistributed to all stakeholders.

This guidance document is being provided based on the public health situation as we understand it today and takes effect immediately. It is to help DeKalb ISD in planning for the 2020-2021 school year. Changes to the public health situation over the course of the school year may necessitate changes to this guidance, but these are the latest guidelines we have from the Federal, State, Local government entities, and the Texas Education Agency.

Parental and Public Notices

DeKalb ISD is developing a plan for On-Campus Activities and Instruction. DISD must post for parents and the general public, **one week** prior to the start of on-campus activities and instruction, a summary of the plan they will follow to mitigate COVID-19 spread in their schools based on the requirements and recommendations outlined here. This summary document serves as an appropriate method to communicate the information from DeKalb ISD to the stakeholders. It should broadly address the major points in this guidance and must be posted on the DeKalb ISD homepage at www.dekalbisd.net. Dr. John Booth, Superintendent, has been designated as the staff person that is responsible for responding to COVID-19 concerns. He may be reached by email at johnbooth@dekalbisd.net or at 903.667.2566.

Attendance and Enrollment

1. Per Texas Education Code (TEC), §25.092, students must attend 90% of the days a course is offered 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.

2. Given the public health situation, student attendance may be earned through the delivery of on-campus or at-home instruction. Student attendance will be taken and the truancy process will be followed. At-home students will be expected to attend online classes and complete work every day in order to be counted in attendance toward the 90% attendance rule. The classroom daily schedule will be published along with the expectations for each student.

The students in middle and high school will receive a schedule that dictates their classes and class times.

Elementary students will receive written notification from the elementary campus regarding their student's daily schedule. It will be distributed to parents prior to school starting and will be posted on the campus' webpage. Their webpage is located at www.dekalbisd.net. Each student should follow the schedule for their grade level.

3. A parent may request that their student be offered virtual, at-home instruction from DeKalb ISD. If a parent who chooses virtual, at-home instruction wants their child to switch to an on-campus instructional setting, they may do so in writing at the end of a grading period only. If the parent does not request a change, it will be assumed the student will remain in virtual, at-home instruction. Students may not return to on-campus instruction once the grading period begins.

4. DeKalb ISD must provide daily on-campus attendance for students whose parents wish for them to attend on-campus instruction each day unless the Superintendent or other government official closes school. If the school is closed due to the virus, all students may be moved on at-home learning for the duration of the closure or the district may choose to make up the missed days within the school calendar. The district will make that announcement when and if needed depending on the length of time and circumstances related to the closure.

Practices to Prevent the Virus from Entering the School

Screening Questions for COVID-19 Before Campus Access

1. DeKalb ISD will require teachers and staff to self-screen for COVID-19 symptoms before coming onto campus each day. Symptoms of COVID 19 are listed at the end of this document. The self-screening will include teachers and staff taking their own temperature. Teachers and staff must report to their campus principal, then the principal will report it to the Superintendent if they themselves have COVID-19 symptoms or are lab-confirmed with COVID-19, and, if so, they must remain off campus until they meet the criteria for re-entry as noted below. Additionally, they must report to DeKalb ISD if they have had close contact with an individual who is lab-confirmed with COVID-19, as defined at the end of this document, and, if so, must remain off campus until the 10-day incubation period has passed or has tested negative for the virus.

2. Parents must ensure they do not send a child to school on campus if the child has COVID-19 symptoms (as listed in this document) or is lab-confirmed with COVID-19, and instead should opt to receive short term virtual at-home instruction until the below conditions for re-entry are met. Parents may also opt to have their students receive at-home instruction if their child has had close contact with an individual who is lab-confirmed with COVID-19 until the 10-day incubation period has passed. DeKalb ISD reserves the right to screen students, when necessary, for COVID-19 as well. Screening is accomplished by asking questions by phone or other electronic methods and/or in person. The screening questions should also be asked of a student's parent if that parent will be dropping off or picking up their child from the parking lot. Elementary students will need to remain in the car until the staff member has taken the child's temperature and asked the parent/adult the screening questions.

A temperature check of otherwise asymptomatic students in school is not prohibited by this guidance. DeKalb ISD will check the temperature of students when they arrive at school and before being admitted on the school bus. Parents will be contacted for any student who has a fever of 100.0 or greater. If the student has a temperature of 100.0 degrees Fahrenheit or greater, they will not be allowed to attend school that day nor will they be allowed to ride the bus.

DISD SCREENING LOCATIONS: All buses, DES - car rider line & cafeteria, DMS - front door, DHS - athletics & front door

3. Excluding parental drop-off, as discussed above, before visitors are allowed on campuses, DeKalb ISD must screen all visitors to determine if the visitors have COVID-19 symptoms (as listed in this document) or are lab-confirmed with COVID-19, and, if so, they will not be permitted on campus. This year DeKalb ISD will ask that you limit visits to the campus to essential meetings and pre-scheduled teacher and/or administrative conferences. The front doors of each campus will be locked after the start of school each day so that any parents visiting for essential reasons can be screened prior to entry. Any order issued by the state or local government will be enforced. If you need to schedule a meeting, sign your child in or out of school, please call the campus office when you arrive at the school and we will direct you on the process. Each campus will have a location near the front doors for parents or guests to drop off lunches, homework, or any other forgotten items. Please make sure items are clearly labeled with the child's name. We are going to change our policy for this year regarding lunch guests as well. Since we must socially distance in the cafeteria we are not allowing guests in the cafeteria this year. We simply do not have the space available to accommodate additional guests. Thank you for understanding and cooperating with this in advance.

Individuals Confirmed or Suspected with COVID-19 Re-entry Criteria:

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 DeKalb ISD screens the individual to determine any of the below conditions for campus re-entry have been met:

o 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. Fever free without the use of fever-reducing medication for at least 24 hours;
- ii. improvement in respiratory symptoms (e.g., cough, shortness of breath); and
- iii. at least ten days have passed since symptom(s) first appeared.

o 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.

o If the individual has symptoms that could be COVID-19 and wants to return to school before completing the above stay at home period, the individual must either

- (a) obtain a medical professional's note clearing the individual for return based on an alternative diagnosis; or
- (b) receive a negative COVID-19 acute infection test at an approved location. <https://tdem.texas.gov/covid-19/>.

The DeKalb ISD Superintendent will confer with the DISD nurse and the State Health

Department to notify students and staff members when they are clear to report back to campus. The staff must be cleared by the Superintendent through the Human Resources Department prior to reporting back to work. Parents must contact the school nurse once their student has been cleared to return back to school. **The parent will need to discuss the re-entry plan with the nurse prior to the student being admitted back into school.**

Identifying Possible COVID-19 Cases on Campus

- DeKalb ISD will immediately separate any individual who shows COVID-19 symptoms and isolate them while at school until they can be picked up by a parent or guardian or leave campus safely.
- Then DISD 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 should be given an immediate temperature check by the nurse or designee to determine if they are symptomatic for COVID-19.
- DeKalb ISD staff will report the instance to their campus principal, the principal will report it to the Superintendent to determine who has been exposed and the next steps in the process. That could be to close the class, campus, or district down and report to remote learning for a period of time. The school closure will vary and depend on each unique situation.
- The parents/guardians, principal, and staff involved will be notified in the event they come in close contact with someone who has a lab-confirmed case or is believed to have COVID 19. The name of the person who is believed to have COVID 19 will not be released to the public. That is a violation of staff/students' HIPAA rights.
- DeKalb ISD will release a post on Facebook, district alert, and the www.dekalbisd.net to notify the public of any confirmed case of a student or staff member.

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. Schools 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 3 days have already passed since that person was on campus.
3. Consistent with school notification requirements for other communicable diseases, and consistent with legal confidentiality requirements, schools must notify all teachers, staff, and families of all students in a school if a lab-confirmed COVID-19 case is identified among students, teachers or staff who participate in any on-campus activities.

Practices to Mitigate the Likelihood of COVID-19 Spread Inside the School

Operational Considerations: *Health and Hygiene Practices: General*

1. DeKalb ISD will have hand sanitizer at the entrance and in the classroom.
2. Students, teachers, staff, and campus visitors will need to sanitize and/or wash hands frequently.
 - o DeKalb ISD will encourage students to engage in handwashing for at least 20 seconds at least two times or more each day, in addition to being encouraged to wash hands after using the restroom and before eating. Students and staff will use hand sanitizer upon entering the classroom each time they leave.
 - o DeKalb ISD will teach students good handwashing techniques when they begin school.
3. DISD campuses 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.

- o The campuses will arrange for additional cleaning and disinfecting of surfaces that are touched frequently throughout the day. This will include objects such as door handles, common tables/desks, and high touch devices such as shared laptops or tablets.

- o Campuses will arrange for the cleaning of commonly-touched surfaces in classrooms between different class groups if the same room will be used by multiple class groups.

4. DISD will provide a range of printed resources such as posters that promote protective measures and can serve as helpful reminders of best practices. These posters will be hung in high traffic areas to help remind students of the importance of safety precautions.

5. On the first day a student attends school on campus, DeKalb ISD will provide instruction to students on appropriate hygiene practices and other practices that have been adopted or mandated.

Health and Hygiene Practices: Masks

1. For the purposes of this document, masks include non-medical grade disposable face masks, cloth face coverings (over the nose and mouth), or full-face shields to protect eyes, nose, and mouth. Face shields may be superior to cloth face coverings in many circumstances, given improved ability to see mouth movements and improved air circulation. Students and staff who have medical issues may choose to wear a face shield.

2. DISD is required to comply with the governor's executive order regarding the wearing of masks/shields. Students aged 10/4th grade and up will be required to wear a mask or face shield. DISD reserves the right to reevaluate this requirement once the governor's executive order expires.

3. In addition to the executive order, DISD may require the use of masks or face shields for other students on campus. Facemasks or shields are encouraged for all students including PK-3rd graders. Ultimately, that will be determined by the campus principal and the classroom teacher. We have some employees and students who have

underlying health conditions and may require students to wear masks/shields for the employees and students safety.

4. All students riding a school bus will be required to wear a mask regardless of their age.

5. It may be impractical for students to wear masks or face shields while participating in some non-UIL athletic, UIL athletic, or other extracurricular activities. When it is impractical for students to wear masks or face shields during those activities, schools must require students, teachers, staff, and visitors to wear masks or face shields when entering and exiting facilities and practice areas and when not actively engaging in those activities. Schools may, for example, allow students who are actively exercising to remove masks or face shields, as long as they maintain at least six feet of distance from other students, teachers, and staff who are not wearing masks or face shields. However, schools must require students, teachers, and staff to wear masks or face shields as they arrange themselves in positions that will allow them to maintain safe distancing. Students who choose to attend virtual, at-home learning will not be allowed to participate in UIL or non-UIL competitions or any other extracurricular activities. Students who are on a 10 day quarantine period will not be allowed to participate during the quarantine period.

Student-Teacher Groupings

Where feasible without disrupting the educational experience, encourage students to practice social distancing.

1. In classroom spaces that allow it, student desks will be arranged to promote social distancing to the maximum extent possible.
2. In classrooms where students are regularly within six feet of one another, schools should plan for more frequent hand washing and/or hand sanitizing and will increase airflow from the outdoors as much as possible.

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 the likely reduced risk of virus spread outdoors.

2. DeKalb ISD will 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. Campuses have a specific plan for entry, exit, and transition procedures that reduce large group gatherings (of students and/or adults) in close proximity. This plan will ask them to wait six feet apart outside the entrance, and parents should remain outside or in their vehicle during drop-off and pick-up.

4. DeKalb ISD will be eliminating assemblies and other activities that bring large groupings of students, staff, and community together. This may change as the year progresses depending on the current situation with COVID 19. Some outdoor events may be scheduled in the future at the discretion of the administration.

5. A limited number of students will be allowed in the restrooms and other small, enclosed spaces at one time.

6. DISD campuses have developed a social distance plan to reduce the likelihood that students meet the “close contact” definition (defined below) at lunch... Also, it will include the use of seats that are spaced apart for social distancing. This will serve the purpose of shielding the students from respiratory droplets with which they might otherwise come into contact. The district has banned sharing food and drinks for this year. Please make sure you discuss with your child the importance of not sharing those items at this time. In most cases, covered meals will be delivered to the students’ table to reduce possible exposure while standing in the lunch line.

Transportation Recommendations

1. Students and staff will use hand sanitizer upon boarding the bus. Your student’s temperature will be checked prior to allowing them on the bus. If your child is running a fever of 100.0 or greater, they will not be allowed on the bus. The parents will be contacted and the student will remain at home for the day. They may engage in short term, virtual at-home learning so they are not counted absent if they feel well enough to do so.

2. Weather permitting, the bus windows should be open to allow outside air to circulate

in the bus.

3. DISD would like to encourage families to drop students off, carpool, or walk with their students to school to reduce possible virus exposure on buses.

4. Buses will be thoroughly cleaned after each bus trip, focusing on frequently touched surfaces such as bus seats, steering wheels, knobs, and door handles. During cleaning, bus windows will be open windows to allow for additional ventilation.

Visits to Schools

1. Parents and other adults may visit schools for essential reasons. During these visits, parents and other visitors must follow the virus prevention requirements of the school. The campuses may use a doorbell system outside the buildings in order to communicate with visitors. If you are dropping off items, there will be a place for you to leave the items so the student can pick them up.

2. School visits will be restricted to visits that are essential to school operations. We are not able to accommodate lunch guests this year. With the social distancing requirements, the cafeteria will not be able to accommodate parents for lunch at this time.

Staffing

1. Employees of DISD, like employees of any organization, must continue to meet the work expectations set by their employers, subject to any applicable employment contract terms. Employee leave policies will be updated and reviewed during the first week the staff returns to work.

2. School teachers and staff should be trained specifically on the protocols outlined in this document and the practices adopted by DISD.

3. DeKalb ISD will reduce in-person staff meetings or other opportunities for adults to congregate in close settings. When those meetings are necessary and cannot be done via electronic means, everyone must follow the mask/face shield protocols in this guidance, remain at least 6 feet apart where feasible, consider the use of dividers and consider whether increased airflow from the outdoors is possible in those settings.

COVID-19 Symptoms

Last update 7/29/2020 per CDC guidelines

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?

COVID-19 Symptoms Any of the following symptoms indicate a possible COVID-19 infection:

- Temperature of 100.0 degrees Fahrenheit or higher when taken by mouth;
- Shaking or exaggerated shivering;
- Significant muscle pain or ache;
- Sore throat;
- New uncontrolled cough that causes difficulty breathing (or, for students with a chronic allergic/asthmatic cough, a change in their cough from baseline);
- Diarrhea, vomiting, or abdominal pain; or
- New onset of severe headache, especially with a fever.

Close Contact

This document refers to “close contact” with an individual who is lab-confirmed to have COVID-19. Close contact is determined by an appropriate public health agency. 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; 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, and case symptomatology may affect this determination.

Either (a) or (b) defines close contact if it either 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 confirmation of the lab test.

TEA initially removed whether an individual is wearing a face mask or not as a consideration, but added the additional considerations on August 4th.

1. 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.

2. 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.

Instructional Expectations for the 20-21 School Year

School grading, attendance, class rank, and course credits will be the same expectation that it was prior to COVID 19 for **ALL** students. If they attend school virtual, at-home or on-campus, **ALL** school expectations will follow our Board policy.

There are no special rules this year like there was in the spring after COVID 19. School will **NOT** look like it did from March 16th - May 22nd. We will have STAAR testing and accountability so instruction must be as rigorous as it was before COVID 19.

DISD does not want parents to be misled to think if a student should choose to remain at home to attend school that paper packets are available. Students who attend at-home instruction will have **the same course work** as the students who attend on-campus instruction along with the same or similar due dates.

Instructional Models

DeKalb ISD will offer two options of instructional delivery models for our students. **On-Campus Learning or Virtual At-Home Learning.** The Virtual At- Home learning option is being provided for our families who have health and safety concerns with sending their children back to school. We want to encourage as many students as possible to attend on-campus Learning as long as they feel safe to do so.

What is the difference between On-Campus Learning, At-Home Learning and Homeschool?

On-Campus Learning:

Students will attend school on a regular instructional schedule and will engage in face-to-face learning on campus during school hours. The following are characteristics of on-campus learning:

- Available for students in Prekindergarten through Grade 12
- Student participation required 5 full days per week
- Implementation of preventive safety measures
- Instruction in core content and elective areas
- Participation in extracurricular activities and UIL events

Virtual At-Home Learning:

Students will remain at home and will engage in learning activities that are primarily delivered through an online learning management system. Daily student participation in the learning activities will be required. Instructional time will also be dedicated for independent learning activities. A structured schedule will be provided to students indicating required amounts of time for participating in instruction.

Virtual At-Home instruction will be designed for mastery of student learning outcomes based on the academic standards called the Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills (TEKS) for each content area.

- Available for students in Kindergarten through Grade 12
- Commitment for at-home learning is for a full nine-week grading period, **after the initial 2 week grace period ending September 4th.**
- Online instruction may be asynchronous (not LIVE instruction)
- A teacher could request to communicate with students in a LIVE Google Meet as well
- Student participation required 5 full days per week
- Attendance and Grading policy will follow Board policy

- Internet connection and device required
- District and State assessments required to come on campus and test is a secure testing center
- Some electives and CTE courses have on-campus requirements
- Unable to participate in extracurricular and UIL events per local decision
- Students will be required to come to campus to test in a secure testing environment as requested by teachers

Listed below are the two learning models for At-Home Learning that are required by the Texas Education Agency.

What is the difference between synchronous and asynchronous learning?

Remote Synchronous Instruction – Two-way, real-time/live, virtual instruction between teachers and students when students are not on campus. In this method, the required amount of instructional time is scheduled each day, and funding is generated when attendance is recorded daily at a locally selected snapshot time. Synchronous instruction is provided through a computer or other electronic device or over the phone. The instructional method must address the required curriculum, per TEC, §28.002.

Remote Asynchronous Instruction – Instruction that does not require having the instructor and student engagement at the same time. In this method, students learn from instruction that is not necessarily being delivered in-person or in real-time. This type of instruction may include various forms of digital and online learning, such as prerecorded video lessons or game-based learning tasks that students complete on their own, and pre-assigned work and formative assessments made available to students on paper. The instructional method must address the required curriculum, per TEC, §28.002.

DeKalb ISD has elected to provide asynchronous instruction. However, students may be required to video conference with their teachers during the school day if requested by the teacher.

If you do not want your child receiving instruction by means of virtual, at-home instruction, or face-to-face classroom instruction, the instructions for withdrawing to homeschool are below.

HOMESCHOOL According to the Texas Education Agency (TEA) policy you must **officially withdraw** your child(ren) from DeKalb ISD if they are already enrolled.

The date that you will begin homeschooling is now required by TEA in order to withdraw a child from public school. It is important to make certain that your students are withdrawn before homeschooling begins and that homeschooling begins as soon as your student is withdrawn in order to avoid the public school counting your student as absent and potentially filing truancy charges.

DISD enrollment process for HOMESCHOOL students should you decide to return to public school after attending a homeschool:

1. Assessments are used for determination of placement, the passing standard is 70%.
2. Per TEA, school districts may assess students by administering valid and reliable achievement tests as stated in Board policy FD Local. The determination of whether or not to use such instruments is a local matter.
3. Districts may place students according to a review of the homeschool curriculum, course of study, and work of the student coming from a homeschool environment if the local criteria listed below are met. §28.021 of the Texas Education Code (TEC) requires advancement or credit to be awarded on the basis of "academic achievement or demonstrated proficiency of the subject matter."
4. Local Criteria for placement of Homeschool students once they enroll or reenroll at DeKalb ISD. **If any or all of the following criteria are not met, the students may be retained in the previous grade level as determined by the principal.**
 - a. Scores on achievement tests, which may be administered by appropriate District personnel.
 - b. Recommendation of the sending school.
 - c. Prior academic record.
 - d. Chronological age and social and emotional development of the student.
 - e. Other criteria deemed appropriate by the principal.