



Rule ISD

2021-22 Safe Return to In-Person Instruction and Continuity of Services Plan

*Updated
September 17, 2021*

DISTRICT PRIORITIES

As we begin preparations for the 2021-22 school year, the Rule ISD recognizes that the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic requires us to continue to collaborate with local, regional, state and national health experts. As we have learned since March 2020, we are in an evolving health situation that requires that we partner in good faith to put the best interests of the students, faculty and staff of the RISD at the center of every decision. We have confirmed that the best educational experience for our students is in-person instruction and, therefore, our goal is to return fully to face-to-face instruction and work towards providing our students with the most normal school experiences that we can in the safest and healthiest ways possible. Remote instruction will not be an option for students at RISD during the 2021-2022 school year.

Throughout this document, you will learn about the guidelines that will be in place this year. As with any document during this pandemic, this guide will be adjusted to fit the changing health situation in our community, state and country. The primary priority each day is the health and safety of the students and staff in the RISD, and that priority is the driving force behind the guidelines put in place to keep our campuses as safe as possible during the 2021-22 school year.

SECTION I: School Health Guidelines

As we return to campuses for the 2021-22 school year with a clear indication that COVID continues to be a health risk, we are challenged with the task of providing our students the best educational experiences while ensuring that they occur in a safe and healthy environment. That will be accomplished by providing multiple layers of protocols that have been shown to mitigate the spread of COVID. The availability of the COVID vaccine, the state-wide restriction on the use of masks, and the inability to effectively provide remote instruction are the major considerations in the adjustment of these health and safety protocols from those that were in place for the 2020-21 school year. In this section we will discuss the health guidelines that will remain in place in an effort to mitigate the spread of COVID in our campuses.

Masks/Face Coverings

- The use of face coverings/masks that cover the nose and mouth is strongly recommended for all staff and students. Face coverings/masks protect not only the wearer, but also significantly reduce the risk of spreading COVID-19. While opinions vary, personal choice about mask wearing is always to be respected by staff, students, parents, and visitors. 2
- Rule ISD will continue to provide personal protective equipment (PPE) for all employees and students.
- Campus clinics will have facial coverings / masks and other PPE items available for any employee or student upon request.

Current Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) guidance recommends the wearing of facial coverings / masks for vaccinated and unvaccinated persons when indoors and in confined spaces. Additionally, Gov. Greg Abbott's Executive Order 38 effective as of July 29, 2021, states that no governmental entity including public school districts may mandate the wearing of face coverings / masks.

Student Health

- All parents are responsible for ensuring that a daily self-screening of each student occurs prior to going to school or boarding school transportation. Self-screening includes parents checking their child's temperature and identifying the presence of symptoms of COVID-19 prior to leaving home for school. Symptoms of COVID-19 include the following: feeling feverish or a measured temperature greater than or equal to 100.0 degrees, 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, and nausea or vomiting. Parents will be asked to submit a written attestation affirming that they will comply with this requirement.
- Any child with a fever at or above 100.0 (as established by the Texas Department of State Health Services) or experiencing COVID-19 symptoms should not report to campus.
- To the extent possible, students should practice appropriate social distancing, as well as hand hygiene and respiratory etiquette (i.e. cough/sneeze into arm, cover mouth with tissue, etc.).
- Students will be trained in self-sanitization techniques and, where applicable, participate in scheduled hand washing times throughout the day. Where hand washing is not feasible, students will utilize hand sanitizer as needed.
- Students will be taught and encouraged to clean and sanitize their own workstations after each class. When time permits, custodial staff will sanitize workstations between classes.
- Students are encouraged to bring their own reusable water bottle for use throughout the day and expected to take water bottles home to be cleaned on a regular basis.

Employee Health

- All Rule ISD employees will be required to self-screen prior to going to work. Self-screening includes checking temperature and identifying the presence of symptoms of COVID-19 prior to leaving home. Symptoms of COVID-19 include the following: feeling feverish or a measured temperature greater than or equal to 100.0 degrees, 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, and nausea or vomiting. If employees have any of these symptoms, they should contact their immediate supervisor for guidance. Employees will be asked to submit a written attestation declaring that they will abide by this protocol.

- Employees will practice hand hygiene and respiratory etiquette (i.e. cough/sneeze into arm, cover mouth with tissue, etc.). This includes hand washing throughout the day, either with soap and water or sanitizer. To the extent possible, employees will maintain recommended social distancing from others.

COVID-19 VACCINES

The Rule ISD has partnered with the local pharmacy to provide clinics at the school. The RISD will continue this partnership throughout the year in an effort to facilitate the voluntary vaccination of every eligible student, staff and community member.

Campus Sanitization

- Sanitization stations will be in place throughout the campus to give students, staff and visitors the opportunity to sanitize their hands both entering and leaving the building.
- Campuses will be cleaned and sanitized daily, focusing on major touch entry points in common areas such as desks, counter tops, door handles and doorknobs, chairs, light switches, and soap dispensers. The custodial staff on each campus will thoroughly sanitize the campus at the end of the instructional day.
- Classrooms will be provided with hand sanitizer that students will use when entering and leaving rooms, as well as during the class period. Classrooms with sinks will give students another option for hand-washing during the period.
- Classrooms will be equipped for cleaning between student transitions. Students and staff at all levels will work together to ensure everyone is contributing to a healthy environment by wiping surfaces / desks as each period is completed throughout the day.
- Signage for proper hygiene practices will be posted throughout campuses and other facilities, in restrooms, and at the entrances. In addition, signage will be placed on each campus, reminding everyone of mitigation practices, and to remain socially distanced and to practice other health priorities while in the building.

Classroom Procedures

- Classrooms will be cleared of any non-essential furnishings. Where possible, furniture will be arranged to ensure maximum physical/social distancing and improve traffic flow.
- Teachers will ensure that individual space will be provided for students to keep personalized supplies in the classroom.
- Supplies will not be shared unless they are sanitized between use.
- Teachers will maintain seating charts and classroom procedures will be created to minimize exposure and contact.
- Work areas will be sanitized after each class. Students will be taught and encouraged to clean their own workstation and, as feasible, custodians will sanitize workstations.

Building Procedures

- All buildings will post self-screening and mitigation practices.
- Thorough building sanitization by custodial staff will occur daily.

- Isolation areas for students or staff showing COVID-19 symptoms will be identified.
- Large group meetings and assemblies will be limited, held outdoors when feasible and held virtually when appropriate.
- All campus practices will be reviewed by the campus and whenever feasible adjusted to promote social distancing and limit the spread of COVID-19.

Response to a Positive COVID-19 Case on Campus

Rule 190.101 will follow the guidelines provided by the Texas Education Agency (TEA) and our local public health entities to appropriately respond to a positive COVID-19 case on campus. RISD will coordinate with local public health entities to determine appropriate actions based on the facts of the individual case as needed and the scientific understanding of how the virus spreads. The school will close off areas that are heavily used by the individual with the test-confirmed case (student, teacher, or staff) until the non-porous surfaces in those areas can be disinfected, unless more than three (3) days have already passed since that person was on campus. RISD will communicate with the local health department, parents, students, staff, and other parties in accordance with the Texas Education Agency requirements described below.

The RISD will provide a daily COVID tracker on its website to allow parents to keep up with cases in the district. However, the district will not be sending daily notifications regarding COVID-19 cases on campuses and/or facilities.

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

If an individual who has been in a school is test-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). Upon receipt of information that any teacher, staff member, student, or visitor at a school is test-confirmed to have COVID-19, the school must submit a report to the Texas Department of State Health Services via an online form.

Students Test-Confirmed With or Presenting Symptoms of COVID-19

- As provided by Department of State Health Services (DSHS) Rule, school systems must exclude students from attending school in person who are actively sick with COVID-19 or who have received a positive test result for COVID-19.
- Parents must ensure they do not send a child to school to campus if the child has COVID-19 symptoms or is test-confirmed with COVID-19, until the conditions for re-entry are met.
- The re-entry criteria for students who are test-confirmed COVID-19 positive is as follows:
 - If symptomatic, exclude until at least 10 days have passed since symptom onset, and fever free*, and other symptoms have improved.
 - Children who test positive for COVID-19 but do not have any symptoms must stay home until at least 10 days after the day they were tested.
- The re-entry criteria for students who have COVID-19-like symptoms:
 - Exclude until at least 10 days have passed since symptom onset, and fever free*, and other symptoms have improved. The student may be readmitted after seven (7) days if they are fever free*, have improved symptoms and have a negative COVID test. With a documented alternate diagnosis from a medical health professional, the student may be readmitted once they are fever free and have improved symptoms.

Employees Test-Confirmed with or Presenting Symptoms of COVID-19

- Employees who are actively sick with COVID-19 or who have received a positive test result for COVID-19 will not be permitted to report to work until return-to-work criteria is met.
- The return-to-work criteria for employees who are test-confirmed COVID-19 is as follows:
 - If symptomatic, they may return to work after 10 days have passed since symptom onset, they are fever free*, and their other symptoms have improved. 5
 - Employees who test positive for COVID-19 but do not have any symptoms must stay home until at least 10 days after the day they were tested.
- The return-to-work criteria for employees who have COVID-19-like symptoms:
 - They will not be allowed to return to work until at least 10 days have passed since their symptom onset, they are fever free*, and their other symptoms have improved. Employees may be permitted to return to work after seven (7) days if they are fever free*, they have improved symptoms and they have a negative COVID test. With a documented alternate diagnosis from a medical health professional, employees may be re-admitted once they are fever free and they have improved symptoms.

*Fever free for 24 hours without the use of fever suppressing medications. Fever is a temperature of 100° Fahrenheit (37.8° Celsius) or higher.

Definition of Close Contact

According to the CDC, a primary close contact is defined as someone who was within 6 feet of an infected person (laboratory-confirmed or a clinically compatible illness) for a cumulative total of 15 minutes or more over a 24-hour period (for example, three individual 5-minute exposures for a total of 15 minutes). An infected person can spread COVID-19 starting from two (2) days before they have any symptoms (or, for asymptomatic patients, two (2) days before the positive specimen collection date), until they meet criteria for discontinuing home isolation as described below.

Exception: In the K–12 indoor classroom setting, the close contact definition excludes students who were within 3 to 6 feet of an infected student (laboratory-confirmed or a clinically compatible illness) if both the infected student and the exposed student(s) correctly and consistently wore well-fitting masks the entire time. This exception does not apply to teachers, staff, or other adults in the indoor classroom setting.

- Several factors can influence a person's risk of exposure to COVID-19, including the type, proximity, and duration of their exposure, environmental factors (such as crowding and ventilation), vaccination status, prior COVID-19 infection, and mask use.
- Fully vaccinated individuals or individuals who were previously diagnosed with COVID-19 within the last three months and who are considered close contacts are not required to quarantine.
- Any RISD student or staff member living in the same household as a test-positive COVID-19 case will be considered as a high-risk close contact and will be asked to quarantine for at least ten (10) days if asymptomatic. If symptomatic, the individual may not return to campus after the 10-day period unless their symptoms have improved, and they are fever-free for at least 24 hours.

Students Who Are Close Contacts

- According to the Texas Education Agency, close contact determinations are generally based on guidance outlined by the CDC, which notes that individuals who are vaccinated are not considered close contacts. Given the data from 2020-21 showing very low COVID-19 transmission rates in a classroom setting and data demonstrating lower transmission rates among children than adults, school systems are not required to conduct COVID-19 contact tracing. The Rule ISD will in some instances perform courtesy contact tracing and may notify parents if their child is considered a close contact.
- If the Rule ISD is made aware that a student is a close contact, the district will notify the student's parents. Parents of students who are determined to be close contacts of an individual with COVID-19 may opt to keep their students at home during the recommended stay-at-home period. For individuals who are determined to be close contacts, the stay-at-home period can end for students experiencing no symptoms on Day 10 after close contact exposure, if no subsequent COVID-19 testing is performed.
- Alternately, students can return to school as early as the eighth day after exposure if they receive a negative result from a PCR acute infection test on Day 7.

Employees Who Are Close Contacts

- All employees considered close contacts should inform their immediate supervisor prior to reporting to work.
- Employees considered primary close contacts who are fully vaccinated and asymptomatic will be permitted to work and will be encouraged to test for COVID regularly and to utilize a face covering.
- Employees considered primary close contacts who are not fully vaccinated may be required to quarantine for ten (10) days or seven (7) days with a negative COVID test. Symptomatic close contacts who are fully vaccinated will be required to quarantine until symptoms improve and are fever free for at least 24 hours. A negative COVID test with improved symptoms could reduce the number of quarantine days.
- Employees considered primary close contacts to household members will be required to quarantine for the full ten (10) days. Extenuating circumstances regarding quarantine status may be appealed by your supervisor to the Executive Director of Human Resources.

Identifying Possible COVID-19 Cases on Campus

- Any student who shows COVID-19 symptoms while at school must be immediately separated from students and staff until the student can be picked up by a parent or guardian.
- Areas used by the individual who shows COVID-19 symptoms while at school (student, teacher, or staff) will be cleaned and sanitized as soon as possible.
- Students who report feeling feverish should be given an immediate temperature check to determine if they are symptomatic for COVID-19.
- Decisions regarding the closure of classrooms or campuses will be made in coordination with the local health department and other medical advisors.

SECTION II: Situational Safety Guidelines

It is essential to create a healthy and safe learning environment for students and staff whenever possible by limiting exposure to COVID-19. Creating this environment begins with transportation to campus, includes visits and deliveries to campuses or other district facilities,

transition protocols, meal service, and arrival/dismissal procedures. We must all work together to create that safe environment on each RISD campus and facility throughout the 2021-22 school year. We will limit visitors to campuses to only those essential to school operations as defined by the campus administrator. Each campus will establish guidelines for greeting visitors and how they will be screened. RISD administrators – in consultation with local health advisors – will re-examine the visitor policy after the first grading period of the school year.

To limit COVID-19 exposure and promote social distancing, guidelines governing arrival and dismissal of students, as well as transitions between classes on each campus, have been put in place. The following section details the ways the RISD is working to promote safety when students and staff are moving throughout buildings and campuses.

Transportation

- As a response to COVID-19, the Rule ISD encourages all families to transport students to and from school if possible.
- Bus transportation will be offered. However, the standard number of transported students compromises the ability to socially distance. For this reason, the RISD is strongly recommending students utilizing bus transportation wear face coverings/masks.
- Bus seating will be assigned for all students. Generally, seats will be assigned in the order that students board, beginning with the seats at the back and progressing forward.
- When possible, siblings or students residing in the same household will be seated together.
- Students will use hand sanitizer upon entry to the bus.
- It is strongly recommended that all bus drivers and monitors wear face coverings/masks.
- All students and staff on out-of-town extracurricular trips (athletics, fine arts, etc.) are strongly recommended to use face coverings/masks, covering the nose and mouth.
- Each bus will be sanitized between routes, and transportation staff members will be trained in proper sanitizing procedures.
- When possible, windows and roof vents will be opened while the bus is operating to increase the fresh air flow through the bus.
- Air conditioners will continue to be used in conjunction with the open windows.
- Bus stop locations may be adjusted according to student count.
- This may result in longer or shorter walking distances for some students.
- Close coordination between the campus and transportation will occur to ensure the orderly, structured, and safe loading and unloading of students.
- Bus waiting areas on campuses will be assigned and procedures will be established that ensure the greatest physical distance possible.
- To the extent that they can occur with minimal risk of exposure to COVID, every effort will be made to permit academic field trips. All field trips must be approved by the Associate Superintendent of Curriculum and Instruction.

Visitors and Deliveries

- Rule ISD will limit visitors to schools to those essential to school operations. Virtual presentations will be encouraged.
- The determination of essential visitors will be made by the campus principal in collaboration with district personnel when necessary. All essential visitors will follow the Rule ISD health and safety protocols while on campus.

- Visitors who will not be allowed access on campus at this time include parent volunteers in the classrooms, LRC support, church groups, FCA, Young Life, Big Brothers Big Sisters, Foster Grandparents, Young Audiences (performances), and other visitors deemed non-essential. These lists are not intended to be exhaustive and may be modified by the Executive Director of Student Services at any time.
- Visitors will not be allowed in the cafeteria during breakfast or lunch hours. Parents and/or guardians will not be permitted to eat breakfast or lunch on campus with their child.
- Excluding the parental drop-off and pick-up times, before visitors are allowed on campuses, they will be screened for COVID-19 symptoms.
- To the greatest extent possible, meetings will be done by appointment or through a virtual format.
- When possible, campus staff will establish a “no contact” system to allow parents/guardians to drop off essential items to students during the school day.

Arrival

- Staff and students are expected to conduct a COVID-19 daily self-screening prior to going to school each morning.
- Parents will not be permitted to walk students inside the school.
- Hand sanitizer stations will be placed at entrances and exits of buildings. Students will be encouraged to sanitize their hands upon entering the building.
- Multiple entry points will be established (where applicable).
- Parents are encouraged to avoid dropping off students too early. Student drivers will also be encouraged to avoid early arrival.
- All areas of the building (gym, cafeteria, larger classrooms, common areas, etc.) will be utilized to limit the size of student groupings.
- Staggered arrival and release will be instituted wherever possible. Additional staff supervision will be scheduled as available.

Dismissal

- Multiple exit points will be established (where applicable).
- Additional staff supervision will be scheduled as available.
- Campuses will implement staggered release procedures (where applicable).
- Parents will be encouraged to pick up students immediately after school. Student drivers and those walking home will be encouraged to leave campus immediately.
- Distribution of student groupings will be utilized to reduce crowd sizes. Types of groups include students walking home, students riding the bus, and students who are being transported by car.
- Parents picking up students during the day will be encouraged to call ahead so students can be sent or accompanied to parent vehicles upon arrival.

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Transitioning

- Work areas will be sanitized after each class. Students will be taught and encouraged to clean their own workstation and, as feasible, custodians will sanitize workstations.
- Indoor traffic patterns/schedules will be established throughout the campus to separate individuals to the greatest extent possible.
- Signage and floor markings will be posted to reinforce physical distance expectations. Additional staff will also be present to support this effort.

- Students will be encouraged to move directly from one class to the next without congregating in the hallway during transitions.
- Considerations will be made at all levels based on student needs.

Meal Service

All Student Nutrition staff will use Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) while performing job responsibilities and will be trained to practice health and hygiene regulations. Visitors will not be allowed in the cafeteria during breakfast/lunch times. While all RISD students will receive breakfast and lunch free of charge for the 2021-22 school year, parents may wish to make online payments for a la carte purchases in order to reduce exchange of cash at the point of service.

Breakfast

- Breakfast in the classroom will continue in schools that have implemented this model and expansion will be considered for campuses that don't currently use classrooms for meal service.
- Students will be seated in order to allow for maximum social distancing and there will be assigned seating at the elementary and middle school level.
- Cafeteria and serving areas will be cleaned and sanitized during student transition times.

Lunch

- Students will be seated in order to allow for maximum social distancing and there will be assigned seating at the elementary and middle school level.
- Campuses may designate additional eating areas to maximize social distancing.
- Lunch time may be extended and staggered in a way that increases opportunities for social distancing and maximum use of cafeteria and other spaces.

Disabilities or Other Health Care Needs

In accordance with the CDC, the Rule ISD will provide accommodations, modifications, and assistance for students, teachers and staff with disabilities and other health care needs when implementing COVID-19 safety protocols: •

- Work with families to better understand the individual needs of students with disabilities
- Remain accessible for students with disabilities:
 - Help provide access for direct service providers (e.g., paraprofessionals, therapists, early intervention specialists, mental health and healthcare consultants, and others). If DSPs who are not fully vaccinated provide services at more than one location, ask whether any of their other service locations have had COVID-19 cases.
 - Ensure access to services for students with disabilities when developing cohorts.
- Adjust strategies as needed:
 - Be aware that physical distancing and wearing masks where recommended or required can be difficult for young children and people with certain disabilities (for example, visual or hearing impairments) or for those with sensory or cognitive issues.
 - For people who are not fully vaccinated and only able to wear masks some of the time for the reasons above, prioritize having them wear masks during times when it is difficult to separate students and/or teachers and staff (e.g., while standing in line or during drop off and pick up).

- Consider having teachers and staff who are not fully vaccinated wear a clear or cloth mask with a clear panel when interacting with young students, students learning to read, or when interacting with people who rely on reading lips.
- Use behavioral techniques (such as modeling and reinforcing desired behaviors and using picture schedules, timers, visual cues, and positive reinforcement) to help all students adjust to transitions or changes in routines.

SECTION III: Instructional Plan

Instruction Model

All learning in the Rule ISD will occur in person for the 2021-22 school year.

Specialized Programs

Students in specialized programs including but not limited to Special Education, Section 504, Dyslexia, ELL, Dual Language, GT, CTE or Dual Credit will continue to receive appropriate support. Individual education plans, accommodations and modifications will be followed.

Social and Emotional Needs for Students and Staff

The Rule ISD employs counselors on each campus who are available to assist students. In addition, a team of social workers is also equipped to address the needs of families. Please feel free to contact these support personnel as needs arise.

SECTION IV: Additional Guidelines

Registration and New Student Enrollment

- Registration and enrollment will be virtual whenever feasible. To register your student, a new student or a transfer student, please go to the RISD website (www.Ruleisd.org).
- Appointments will be scheduled as needed to complete the process including the selection of student schedules.
- Appointments may be by phone, Zoom, or in person. Documents may be mailed to the campus or dropped off at a secure location/drop box.

Scheduling, Open House and Meet the Teacher

- School personnel will make contact with parents and students through virtual means, phone, or by appointments to ensure accurate scheduling of students.
- Every effort will be made to create an in-person experience for students meeting their teacher and open house (especially for kindergarten, sixth and ninth grade students). These events might occur for longer periods of time or over several days to reduce the number of individuals on campus at one time.

Extracurricular/Non-Academic Activities

- In-person student assemblies/group activities are essential to the student experience in the RISD. These events will be scheduled in venues large enough to social distance, outdoors, or on staggered schedules.
- Athletics and extracurricular activities will be conducted in alignment with UIL guidelines.
- All UIL indoor extracurricular activities and events may be subject to capacity limitations. When feasible, these activities may be presented via live stream (audio and video).
- In order to avoid capacity limitations and provide as much participation by parents and students as possible, face coverings/masks are strongly recommended at indoor extracurricular activities and events.
- At the middle school level, face coverings/masks are strongly recommended for everyone in attendance at indoor extracurricular activities and events. No students are allowed to attend indoor extracurricular activities or events as a fan unless accompanied by a parent.
- For all UIL activities, elementary and middle school students will only be allowed to attend with a parent/guardian.
- Every effort will be made to provide students and parents with the most normal yet safe and healthy experiences in person.
- Hand washing or hand sanitizing stations must be available for all activities.
- Clubs and campus organizations will be encouraged to seek safe and healthy ways to meet in person, which might require larger or outdoor venues.

Facility Rental and Usage

- The Rule ISD will not make any facility (stadium, campus, auditorium, gymnasium, athletic field or court) available for rental or any outside use. RISD administrators – in consultation with local health advisors – will re-examine the policy after the first grading period of the school year.