



# **SAFE RETURN TO SCHOOL & CONTINUITY OF SERVICES PLAN**

**DICKINSON INDEPENDENT SCHOOL DISTRICT**  
**SAFE RETURN TO SCHOOL AND CONTINUITY OF SERVICES PLAN**  
*August 2021*

Dear Parents and Employees,

Dickinson ISD school doors will open to receive students on Monday, August 23, and we look forward to the safe return of all students for face-to-face instruction in our classrooms. The safety and well-being of our students, employees, and visitors are a top priority, and we will continue some of the 2020-2021 procedures and safety guidelines recommended by the Centers for Disease Control (CDC), Texas Education Agency (TEA), and Galveston County Health District (GCHD). Our goal is to ensure that all students, employees, and visitors in district facilities remain safe and secure to the greatest extent possible.

This document outlines the health and prevention procedures we will use for the safe return to in-person instruction and learning. It also includes information for how we will provide continuity of services, use ESSER III funding, and address the social and emotional needs of students and staff.

At a minimum, this plan will be reviewed and, as appropriate, revised at six-month intervals. If adjustments are necessary during the school year, we will promptly inform you of the changes and updates, and we will provide the most current information on our district website.

If you have questions about our procedures and plan, please use the [Just Ask](#) feature on our district website or email a district contact.

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We look forward to a great 2021-2022 school year, and we appreciate your support.

Sincerely,

*Carla Voelkel*

Carla Voelkel  
Dickinson ISD Superintendent

**Version 1 – Posted to the DISD website – August 2, 2021**

*The contents of this document are subject to change based on updated information from the Centers for Disease Control (CDC), Texas Education Agency (TEA), and Galveston County Health District (GCHD).*

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

|   |          |
|---|----------|
| <b>Section One – Health and Safety Procedures .....</b>                       | <b>1</b> |
| Health Screening .....  | 1        |
| Diagnostic Testing .....  | 2        |
| Contact Tracing Protocol .....  | 2        |
| Vaccinations .....  | 2        |
| <b>Section Two – Prevention and Mitigation .....</b>                          | <b>3</b> |
| Face Coverings.....   | 3        |
| Physical Distancing .....   | 3        |
| Enhanced Sanitization .....   | 3        |
| Campus Procedures.....  | 4        |
| Classroom Procedures.....   | 4        |
| Nurses / Clinics .....  | 4        |
| Food & Nutrition Services .....   | 5        |
| Transportation.....   | 5        |
| Extracurricular/UIL Activities .....  | 5        |
| <b>Section Three – Instruction &amp; Continuity of Services.....</b>          | <b>6</b> |
| Instruction & Learning/ESSER/RSSP .....                                       | 6        |
| Academic Calendar.....  | 7        |
| Accelerated Instruction .....   | 7        |
| Attendance Guidelines .....   | 7        |
| <b>Section Four – Social Emotional Learning / Mental Health Support .....</b> | <b>8</b> |
| Professional School Counselors .....  | 8        |
| Social Workers.....   | 8        |
| Social Emotional Learning Specialist .....                                    | 8        |
| Available Supports.....   | 9        |
| Multi-Tiered Systems of Support (MTSS) for Mental & Behavioral Health.....    | 9        |

## HEALTH AND SAFETY PROCEDURES

COVID-19 has impacted everyone in some way, some more severely than others. We have learned a lot about the virus, and we will do everything possible to keep our students, employees, and visitors safe. Using recommendations from the Centers for Disease Control (CDC), Texas Education Agency (TEA), and Galveston County Health District (GCHD), the following procedures for healthcare and virus mitigation will be in place. As the need arises, adjustments may be made to our health and safety procedures.

### Health Screening

Employees and students are expected to self-screen at home for COVID-19 symptoms prior to arriving at a district facility. At this time, the QR Code used in 2020-2021 to report screening symptoms, will not be required. Any employee or student feeling ill or with a fever of 100° or higher must stay at home.

#### Employees:

- Employees must report to the district any symptoms and/or a lab-confirmed case of COVID-19, and must remain off campus until they meet the return to school criteria.
- Employees experiencing symptoms will be offered a COVID-19 diagnostic screening test available at the Gator Hope Clinic located at DHS. Employees may also opt for evaluation by a doctor or testing at another facility. Employees who receive confirmation from a medical doctor that no COVID-19 infection is present or who receive a negative test result may return to work following existing leave and absence management procedures (*DISD Employee Handbook / Board Policy DEC*).
- Employees should notify their supervisor regarding the absence.

#### Students:

- Parents must ensure they do not send a child to school on-campus if the child has COVID-19 symptoms or is lab-confirmed with COVID-19, and instead should opt for their child to receive make-up work until return to school criteria is met.
- Students experiencing any symptoms or who have a lab-confirmed case of COVID-19 will receive make-up work until they meet the return to school criteria as outlined in the Student Handbook. Parents may also opt for their child to receive make-up work if their child has had close contact with an individual who is lab-confirmed with COVID-19 until the incubation period has passed.
- Teachers will monitor students throughout the school day and refer to the nurse if symptoms are present.
- Parents of students experiencing symptoms and who want to have their child screened for COVID-19, may contact the Gator Hope Clinic to schedule an appointment. Parents may also opt to have students evaluated by a doctor or tested at another facility. Students who receive confirmation from a medical doctor that no COVID-19 infection is present or who receive a negative test result may return to school following existing school illness procedures.
- The Texas Department of State Health Services provides a comprehensive chart for schools and child-care centers with information about conditions, incubations periods, signs and symptoms, readmission criteria, reportable diseases, prevention, and treatment. A link to this document is provided.  
[https://dshs.texas.gov/IDCU/health/schools\\_childcare/School-Health.aspx](https://dshs.texas.gov/IDCU/health/schools_childcare/School-Health.aspx)

## Symptoms

Following guidance from the Galveston County Health District, our nurses are using the clinical criteria below in evaluating whether an individual has symptoms consistent with COVID-19:

- Recently begun experiencing at least two of the following symptoms that are **not** normal for them:
  - Fever (100°), chills, rigors, myalgia, headache, nausea or vomiting, diarrhea, fatigue, congestion, or runny nose

**OR**

- Any one of the following symptoms that are **not** normal for them:
  - Cough, sore throat, shortness of breath, new olfactory disorder, new taste disorder

## Diagnostic Testing

Diagnostic COVID-19 testing will be available at the Gator Hope Clinic located at Dickinson High School. Testing is a rapid, shallow nasal swab, and it will be administered by our Physician's Assistant.

## Contact Tracing Protocol

Case investigation and contact tracing will be conducted by designated school personnel (Nurse/HR) for employees and students. In addition, the district will adhere to notification requirements for communicable diseases including any local or state requirements for reporting purposes.

- Employees will adhere to leave and absence management policies and procedures as outlined in Board Policy DEC Local and the DISD Employee Handbook.
- Students will be provided isolation/quarantine guidance along with the final clearance to return to school based on the unique situation of each student.

## Vaccinations

Per the recommendations of the CDC and Galveston County Health District, Dickinson ISD encourages all employees and students aged 12 and older to get vaccinated for COVID-19.

- COVID-19 vaccinations (Moderna) are available free of charge to all DISD employees and students 18 years of age or older at Gator Hope Clinic.
- The Galveston County Health District provides vaccine opportunities. This information is available on the GCHD COVID-19 Vaccines website at: <https://www.gchd.org/about-us/news-and-events/coronavirus-disease-2019-covid-19/covid-19-vaccines/-fsiteid-1>
- In cooperation with the Galveston County Health District, DISD will periodically host student COVID-19 vaccination opportunities. Signed parental permission will be required.
- A person is considered fully vaccinated:
  - 2 weeks after a single dose, such as Johnson & Johnson's Janssen vaccine
  - 2 weeks after a second dose in a 2-dose series, such as Pfizer or Moderna
- State of Texas vaccine requirements remain in place for all DISD students. Visit <https://www.dshs.texas.gov/IMMUNIZE/SCHOOL/DEFAULT.SHTM> for more information and a list of vaccine requirements.



## PREVENTION AND MITIGATION

Protective measures will be determined by the level of disease activity of COVID-19. DISD will rely on data from the Texas Department of State Health Services (DSHS) and Galveston County Health District to determine the disease activity level and the appropriate protective measures.

### Face Coverings

Schools are expected to comply with the Executive Order issued by Governor Abbott and effective June 5, 2021 regarding face coverings. At this time, face coverings for DISD students and employees are optional; however, face coverings are recommended, especially for those who are not vaccinated.

CDC Guidance - <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/vaccines/fully-vaccinated-guidance.html>

### Physical Distancing

- Students and employees will maintain distance from each other.
- In classroom spaces that allow it, student desks/chairs will be placed a minimum of three feet apart.
- In areas where students are regularly within six feet of one another, more frequent hand washing or hand sanitizing will be encouraged.
- When feasible and appropriate (such as physical education) classes will be conducted outside. Recess and outdoor learning will be encouraged.
- Campuses will plan for entry, exit, and transition procedures that reduce large groups of students in close proximity. Each campus will notify parents of their procedures.
- Congregating will not be permitted in hallways, common areas, faculty workrooms or breakrooms.

### Enhanced Sanitization

- Hand sanitizer will be available in each classroom, at all entrances, and throughout common spaces.
- Students, employees, and visitors will be encouraged to sanitize and/or wash hands frequently.
- Students will be encouraged to clean their own spaces before and after use, in ways that are safe and developmentally appropriate.
- Custodial staff will engage in enhanced cleaning procedures of buildings including but not limited to all classrooms, offices, restrooms, and other common areas.
- Custodial staff will use a cleaning process with CDC recommended disinfectants that are proven to kill the COVID-19 virus and certified safe for schools.
- Custodial staff will use electrostatic misters. Misters are designed to spread disinfectant and ensure that disinfectant droplets adhere to and coat surfaces.
- Custodial staff will frequently wipe high traffic surfaces, including handrails, door handles, countertops, restroom surfaces, and cafeteria surfaces continually throughout the day.
- Custodial staff will increase the frequency of cleaning and disinfecting of restrooms and common areas throughout the day.
- Custodial staff will continually monitor sanitizing stations throughout each building to ensure necessary personal disinfectant products are filled and available.

### Campus Procedures

- Campuses will review options to reduce large group gatherings at the start and end of the day.
- Classroom doors will be propped open during transitions to reduce the volume of contact necessary to enter/exit the room.
- Acrylic glass will remain installed in campus office reception areas.
- Students are encouraged to bring their own water bottles from home; *all water bottles must be clear*. Water fountains and bottle-fillers will be cleaned and sanitized multiple times per day and may only be

used to refill bottles.

- Students, employees, and campus visitors are expected to cover coughs and sneezes with a tissue, and if not available, cover 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.
- Visitors on campus will be limited. Volunteers and guest speakers will be scheduled with campus principal approval. If a meeting is needed with an administrator or teacher, please call to schedule an appointment. Zoom will continue to be used for parent conferences, ARD meetings, 504 meetings, LPAC meetings, etc.
- Parents may not drop off students at campuses before the doors open to receive students (7:15 a.m. – junior high and middle school campuses; 8:00 a.m. – elementary campuses), and parents may not accompany their students into the building and to classrooms.
- Outside deliveries of food will not be permitted for employees or students.

### **Classroom Procedures**

- Desks and tables will be arranged to maximize space between students.
- Teachers should plan for limited use of shared equipment and supplies in schools and classrooms.
- Staff will have access to disinfectant spray to sanitize high-touch surfaces, working surfaces, and shared objects regularly.
- Students will be taught effective hand washing techniques and hygiene awareness.
- Students will be taught correct protocol for coughing and sneezing.
- Staff and students will be expected to wash/sanitize their hands before eating, after recess, and after bathroom breaks.

### **Nurses / Clinics**

- Campuses will implement protocols for students who require additional support from clinic staff (diabetes, asthma, medications, and regular care due to illness or injury, etc.).
- Visits to the school clinic will be for essential services only.
- School nurses will provide information for students and employees regarding best practices for health and hygiene.

### **Food & Nutrition Services**

The DISD Food & Nutrition Services Department will provide all students free breakfast and lunch in accordance with 2021-2022 Texas Department of Agriculture guidelines. The following precautionary measures will remain in place for food and nutrition services:

- Students may bring a lunch from home or they may access food available in the cafeteria. Disposable lunch sacks are preferred for food brought from home instead of plastic lunch bags or lunch boxes.
- Students will eat at assigned tables and/or with assigned groups each day. Other areas may be used during lunches to help with physical distancing.
- Hand sanitizer will be available to students at the start of serving lines.
- To provide for physical distancing, visitors will not be permitted in the cafeteria during mealtimes, including breakfast and lunch.
- Students will be prohibited from sharing food with each other.
- Tables will be cleaned and sanitized after each group eats.
- Outside food deliveries will not be allowed for employees or students. If a student forgets to bring a lunch from home, a meal will be provided by the cafeteria staff.

**Transportation**

- If possible, parents are encouraged to drop off and pick up their child each day.
- Students must not enter a bus with a fever that is 100° or higher.
- Hand sanitizer will be available on all buses, and students will be required to use hand sanitizer upon boarding the bus.
- Riders will be kept as far apart as possible while riding the bus.
- Face coverings on buses are encouraged.
- Disinfectant supplies will be on each bus.
- Buses will be cleaned after morning routes, and they will be misted with a disinfectant spray each evening.

**Extracurricular / UIL Activities**

- Participation in extracurricular activities on campus will align with guidance in this document for non-UIL extracurricular activities and with guidance from the UIL for all UIL activities.
- Hand washing and/or hand sanitizer must be available for any activity.
- The district will open facilities to the public for school-sponsored activities in accordance to the Governor's executive orders.
- At this time, we expect all UIL processes to return to pre-pandemic formatting for the 2021-2022 school year. Any exceptions will be posted at the [University Scholastic League \(UIL\)](#) website as they become available.
- Visit the [2021-2022 UIL COVID-19 Risk Mitigation Guidelines](#) for the most up-to-date COVID related risk mitigation guidelines. Any updates will be maintained at this link as they become available.



## INSTRUCTION AND CONTINUITY OF SERVICES

### Instruction and Learning

At this time, in-person instruction will be the only form of instruction available to DISD students. After careful consideration and input from teachers, administrators, students, and families, the DISD Board of Trustees determined that in-person instruction is in the best interest of the students of DISD.

Parents may complete the [Special Programs Parent Inquiry Form](#) for students who have a fragile medical condition *which prevents them from attending school* and who may qualify for homebound instruction. Parents will be contacted after the form is submitted, and additional information will be required.

### Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief (ESSER)

As a part of the American Rescue Plan in response to the COVID-19 pandemic, the federal government provided additional funding to schools districts across the country to address the impact of the pandemic on students over the next three years. In May, DISD solicited feedback from multiple stakeholder groups to help determine how the ESSER III funds should be utilized. A plan was developed, and a public meeting was held on July 12<sup>th</sup> to share the plan. On July 14<sup>th</sup>, the DISD application for these funds was submitted to TEA and it has been approved. In Dickinson ISD, ESSER III funding priorities will provide the following:

- Supported Classrooms and Teachers
  - Additional instructional support staff
  - Targeted intervention (whole group, small group, individual)
  - Accelerated learning cycle
  - Professional Development and Instructional Coaching (K-3 Reading Academy, Accelerated Learning, Collaborative Culture)
  - Staff retention incentive
- High Quality Instructional Materials
  - Learning Management System
  - Blended learning software
  - Instructional resources based on identified campus needs
- Additional Time
  - Retention of additional 10 minutes in the school day
  - Instructional support during the day and tutoring after school
  - Saturday Acceleration Sessions
  - Summer Acceleration Camps
- Mental and Emotional Health Support
  - Additional counseling support from Family Service Center of Galveston County
  - Additional family support from Communities in Schools
  - Implementation of campus SEL Squads
- Facility Support
  - Technology devices, infrastructure upgrades (bandwidth, electrical)
  - Portable instructional spaces

### Resilient Schools Support Program (RSSP)

Dickinson ISD applied and was selected by TEA to be part of the Resilient Schools Support Program. Through a partnership with the National Institute for Excellence in Teaching (NIET) we will receive customized technical assistance to build robust COVID recovery and acceleration plans using continuous improvement cycles. DISD will seek to improve student outcomes in an approach that is inclusive and supportive of the broader school community, particularly campus leaders, teachers, and families.

## **Academic Calendar**

The first day of instruction for students will be Monday, August 23. The hours of operation are provided below:

|                           |                       |
|---------------------------|-----------------------|
| High School               | 7:05 a.m. – 2:35 p.m. |
| Junior High/Middle School | 7:45 a.m. – 3:15 p.m. |
| Elementary School         | 8:30 a.m. – 4:00 p.m. |

School times are the same as the 2020-2021 school year. The extra 10 minutes that was added to the school day in 2020-2021 was retained.

## **Accelerated Instruction**

Teachers are expected to teach, and students are expected to learn, the Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills for their current grade level and subject. The Dickinson ISD Accelerated Learning Plan includes support for teachers and students in all core content areas, but particularly in Reading Language Arts and Mathematics.

The key learning acceleration strategies include:

- prioritizing essential grade-level knowledge and skills,
- using evidence-based instruction in Reading Language Arts and Mathematics, and
- crafting just-in-time prevention, intervention, and extension.

## **Attendance Guidelines**

Per Texas Education Code (TEC), §25.092, students must attend 90% of the days a course is offered to be awarded credit for the course and/or to be promoted to the next grade. For more information, please review the Absences/Attendance section of the Student Handbook.

### **Quarantined Students:**

Quarantined students are defined as students being required to stay home for COVID-19 related reasons by district or campus administrators, campus nurse, or county health officials. Any absences accrued while a student is awaiting COVID-19 test results will be corrected in Skyward when the student is coded as “@”, or quarantined. *Quarantine status will be confirmed through DISD Health Services and the Galveston County Health District.*

## **SOCIAL EMOTIONAL LEARNING (SEL) / MENTAL HEALTH SUPPORT**

Dickinson ISD is dedicated to social emotional learning, mental health support and awareness, resiliency, trauma informed practices, transition services, and overall wellness. For social emotional learning, the focus will be on the core competencies: Self-Awareness, Self-Management, Social Awareness, Relationship Skills, and Responsible Decision-Making. All staff will be trained in Character Strong and will be expected to support and teach using this character development and social emotional learning program along with Restorative Practices. The Dickinson Gator Wellness Center is our central location for all Mental Health Related Supports and it is located at McAdams Junior High. A multi-tiered system of support (MTSS) for mental and behavioral health is put in place and will assist our team in supporting our students. Through a collaborative approach, we strive to meet the needs of our students and families. Our team of professional school counselors, licensed professional counselor, social workers, and community mental health partners under the leadership of our social emotional learning specialist will be offering the following support:

### **Professional School Counselors will:**

- Offer Guidance lessons.
- Support all staff on the implementation of Character Strong and Restorative Practices.
- Provide individual planning to guide students as they plan, monitor and manage their individual educational, career, personal, and social development.
- Provide responsive services to support students that have an immediate personal concern or circumstance, including providing individual and group counseling (virtually and face to face following all required guidelines).
- Communicate with students, staff, and the community available supports and resources.
- Provide mental health referrals to outside agencies.
- Promote self-care/wellness for students, staff, and families.

### **Social Workers will:**

- Link families to community resources, including special education transition services in coordination with the transition specialist.
- Provide families assistance with medical and prescription needs.
- Assist families with applying for governmental benefits.
- Act as a liaison between home and school for social work-related needs.
- Provide additional supports to our homeless population.
- Coordinate homebound services.

### **Social Emotional Learning Specialist will:**

- Coordinate and supervise the Dickinson Gator Wellness Center and its supports.
- Communicate available resources to staff, parents and community.
- Serve on district and community committees to ensure continuity of care.

### **Available Supports include:**

- Family & Community Resource Center
  - Books and materials are available for checkout. These resources support social emotional learning and mental health awareness. For more information, please call our Gator Wellness Center at 281-229-6005 or refer to the Dickinson ISD website.
- Mental Health & Wellness Referrals
  - DePelchin (parenting support)
  - UTMB Texas Child Health Access Through Telemedicine (TCHAT)
  - Family Service Center (Counseling)

- School Counseling
- Communities in Schools (CIS)
- Bay Area Council on Drugs & Alcohol (BACODA)
- Basic Needs (food, clothing, & shelter)
- Other referrals are available depending on support needed
- Self-Care & Wellness
  - Offer supports and resources
  - Communicate utilizing the Dickinson Gator Wellness Facebook Page, Dickinson ISD website and through email
  - Care for the Caregiver (by Save the Children)
- Mental Health Calling Center
  - The calling center offers a listen and refer system.
  - If you have questions or need to be linked to resources and/or supports, please call 281-229-6005.
- Professional School Counseling
  - Counseling support
  - Curriculum and resources
- Transition Services for students receiving special education
  - Instruction and related services for students who are 18+
  - Assistance with the Gulf Coast Center and Workforce Solutions referral process

### **Multi-Tiered Systems of Support (MTSS) for Mental & Behavioral Health**

Dickinson ISD utilizes a tiered approach for supporting our students. Some of the supports that our staff will be implementing include the following:

#### **Tier 1**

- Character Strong and Restorative Practices
- Emotional Backpack Project (mental health, suicide prevention, trauma informed practices and mindfulness)
- Project Protect Our Children
- Trauma Informed Practices
- Youthworks Prevention and Positive Action (provided by BACODA)
- Child Safety Program (provided by The Child Advocacy Center of Galveston County)
- 2nd Steps Curriculum (PreK-8th)

#### **Tier 2**

- Journey of Hope (from Save the Children small group)
- Calm Crusaders curriculum for anxiety small groups
- Superhero Social Skills
- Niroga Dynamic Mindfulness
- Bounce Back small group
- Cognitive Behavioral Intervention for Trauma in Schools (CBITS)
- Crisis Prevention Intervention (CPI)
- Gator Wellness Small Group Toolkits

#### **Tier 3**

- Texas Children's Hospital Trauma and Grief Therapy
- Bounce Back
- Cognitive Behavioral Intervention for Trauma in Schools
- Mental Health Referral