



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

Dickinson Independent School District  
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**DICKINSON INDEPENDENT SCHOOL DISTRICT**  
**SAFE RETURN TO SCHOOL AND CONTINUITY OF SERVICES PLAN**

*September 9, 2021 (Update)*

Dear Parents and Employees,

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 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 employees.

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

**Updated and posted to the DISD website –September 9, 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).*

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# 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 health and safety procedures will be in place. As the need arises and as additional updates are received, adjustments may be made to our health and safety procedures.

## Prevention and Mitigation

### Daily Self-Screening

All students and employees are expected to perform a daily self-screening for COVID-19 symptoms and fever before leaving home for school or boarding school transportation.

Per TEA, "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?' A measured temperature greater than or equal to 100.0°F, PLUS one or more symptoms below, could be signs of potential contraction of the COVID-19 virus.

- Loss of taste or smell
- Cough
- Difficulty breathing or shortness of breath
- Headache
- Chills
- Sore Throat
- Congestion or runny nose
- Nausea or vomiting
- Exaggerated shivering
- Significant muscle pain or ache
- Diarrhea

### Stay Home When Sick

- Conduct a medical self-screen before leaving home for school. Do not attend if you have a temperature of 100° degrees or greater.
- Stay home if you test positive for COVID-19.
- Stay home and monitor your health if you have been identified by the Galveston County Health District as having been in close contact with a person with COVID-19.

### If Students/Employees Become Ill at School

- Notify the nurse immediately.
- Students who are ill will be isolated and should be picked up within one hour from the time the campus contacts the parent/guardian.
- Employees who are ill must isolate from students and other employees and depart the campus as quickly as possible.

### Facial Coverings

- Face coverings are strongly recommended for students, employees, and visitors while at district facilities.
- Face coverings are strongly recommended for students and employees on school buses.
- Face coverings are strongly recommended for Pre-K to 6th grade students to reduce potential transmission of COVID-19 until students are eligible for a vaccination and for students age 12 and over if they are not vaccinated.

### Physical Distance

- Students and employees are encouraged to maintain physical distance when possible.
- 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.

### **Practice Proper Hygiene**

- Students and employees are highly encouraged to wash their hands as often as possible or after handling items that others may have recently touched.
  - Wash hands for 20 seconds with soap and water frequently.
  - If soap and water are not readily available, use hand sanitizer that contains at least 60% alcohol.
- Students and employees are highly encouraged to utilize hand sanitizer often especially during situations where immediate hand washing is unavailable.
- Cover coughs and sneezes with a tissue or sneeze or cough into your shoulder/elbow; wash hands immediately afterwards; avoid touching face, eyes, and nose area.

### ***Providing Healthy Environments***

#### **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 shields will remain in campus office areas and in small group instruction areas.
- Hand sanitizer will be available in each classroom, at all entrances, and throughout common spaces.
- 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 fast food/restaurant food by parents or delivery services will not be permitted for students or employees.

#### **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.
- Employees will have access to disinfectant spray to sanitize high-touch surfaces, working surfaces, and shared objects regularly.
- Students will be encouraged to clean their own spaces before and after use, in ways that are safe and developmentally appropriate.
- Students will be taught effective hand washing techniques and hygiene awareness.
- Students will be taught correct protocol for coughing and sneezing.
- Employees 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 employees (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.

### **Cleaning and Disinfection**

- Hand sanitizer will be available in each classroom, at all entrances, and throughout common spaces.
- Custodial teams will engage in enhanced cleaning procedures of buildings including but not limited to all classrooms, offices, restrooms, and other common areas.
- Custodial employees will frequently wipe high traffic surfaces, including handrails, door handles, countertops, restroom surfaces, and cafeteria surfaces continually throughout the day.
- Custodial teams will use electrostatic misters. Misters are designed to spread disinfectant and ensure that disinfectant droplets adhere to and coat surfaces.

### **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.

### **Transportation**

During the 2021-22 school year, the DISD Transportation Department is implementing enhanced cleaning and disinfecting procedures. Bus transportation is provided for all students and whenever possible, efforts will be made to allow for physical distancing. Buses will be cleaned daily, focusing on high-touch surfaces such as bus seats, steering wheels, knobs, and door handles. Additional information related to student transportation:

- Transportation employees are strongly encouraged to wear facial coverings.
- All students, grades K through 12, are strongly encouraged to wear facial coverings upon boarding and while riding school buses.
- Whenever possible, bus seating is assigned, with no more than two students per seat.
- Students and employees are encouraged to use the provided hand sanitizer upon boarding the bus.
- Additional ventilation and air flow will be provided utilizing several open windows on each bus.

### **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 \(UIL\)](#) 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.



## **COVID-19 Response Protocol**

As provided in Department of State Health Services (DSHS) Rule, school systems must exclude students from attending school in person who are actively sick with COVID-19, who are suspected of being actively sick with COVID-19, or who have received a positive test result for COVID-19, and must immediately notify parents if this is determined while on campus. ([TEA Public Health Guidance – Sept. 2, 2021](#))

### **Notification**

Dickinson ISD will provide notification to parents and employees of each positive case in a campus grade level that the district receives from the self-reporting form, Gator Hope Clinic, and Galveston County Health District. The district can only report verified information, and we will notify parents of positive cases on campuses.

### **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. *In the near future, diagnostic testing will be available in the nurse's office at some campuses.*

### **COVID Positive Students and Employees**

- Students and employees with a lab-confirmed positive case will complete the [COVID-19 Self Reporting Form](#).
  - Report will include test date, symptoms date, campus, and individuals living at home in close contact.
  - This information, including the name of the employee or student, will be kept confidential.
  - Dickinson ISD is required to report all confirmed positive COVID-19 tests to the Galveston County Health District, and we will cooperate with them for the purpose of contact tracing. In addition, the Galveston County Health District has the legal authority to collect information on reportable infectious disease cases to conduct and complete community investigations/contact tracing.
- Students and employees with a lab-confirmed positive test may not return until they have met the guidelines established in this document to return or otherwise been advised by a medical professional.
- Individuals identified as having close contact will be individually notified of potential exposure by the Galveston County Health District.
- Maintenance and Operations will ensure all exposed areas are thoroughly cleaned and disinfected.
- The District Lead Nurse will coordinate with the Galveston County Health District as required.

### **Guidelines for a Student Returning to School**

- If the student tested positive for COVID-19 – With or Without Symptoms:
  - It is recommended the parent/guardian consult with a primary care physician for guidance of care and testing.
  - Complete the [COVID-19 Self Reporting Form](#).
  - Scenarios for the return of a COVID-19 positive student:
    - Student has tested positive, **with symptoms**, may return to campus:
      - ✓ After symptoms have improved, **AND**
      - ✓ At least 10 days have passed since symptoms first appeared, **AND**
      - ✓ At least 24 hours have passed since recovery (resolution of fever without the use of fever-reducing medication).
    - Student that has tested positive, **with no symptoms**, may return to campus
      - ✓ After 10 days from the test date
      - ✓ At least 24 hours have passed since recovery (resolution of fever without the use of fever-reducing medications)
    - If the student has tested positive for COVID-19 and believes the test was a false positive and want to return to school before completing the above stay at home period, the individual must either:

- ✓ Obtain a medical professional’s note clearing the individual for return based on an alternative diagnosis, **OR**
- ✓ Obtain two laboratory confirmed, PCR acute infection tests (at a physician’s office, approved testing location, or other site) at least 24 hours apart that comes back negative for COVID-19.

*DISD does NOT accept over-the-counter or home tests results for students to return to school.*

In addition to the criteria and processes described above, a student who has been diagnosed with COVID-19 must receive clearance from a physician prior to returning to participation in UIL marching band, drill team, or athletic activities.

During the stay-at-home/quarantine period for positive COVID, DISD will provide assignments for students. They can be accessed by contacting the school directly, contacting the teacher by email or using Schoology.

### **Guidelines for an Employee Returning to Work**

- If an employee tested positive for COVID-19 – With or Without Symptoms:
  - It is recommended the employee contact a primary care physician for guidance of care and testing.
  - Complete the [COVID-19 Self Reporting Form](#).
  - Enter absences in EAC or Frontline for personal illness and notify your supervisor of your absences due to testing positive for COVID-19.

*Up to 10 days of COVID-19 paid leave may be provided for employees who are positive for COVID-19. Employees who must be absent because they are positive for COVID-19 must provide documentation of their laboratory confirmed, positive test result directly to the Human Resources Department.*
- Employee that has tested positive for COVID-19 without symptoms, may return to work
  - ✓ After 10 days have passed with no developing symptoms.
- Employee that tested positive with no symptoms but then develop symptoms after the test date, but before the 10-day period has ended, may return to work
  - ✓ After symptoms have improved **AND**
  - ✓ At least 10 days have passed since symptoms first appeared **AND**
  - ✓ 24 hours have passed since recovery (resolution of fever without the use of fever-reducing medications).
- Employees that test positive for COVID-19 and believe the test was a false positive and want to return to work before completing the above stay at home period, must either:
  - ✓ Obtain a medical professional’s note clearing the individual for return based on an alternative diagnosis. DISD recognizes the privacy of medical information therefore, the note does not need to indicate the alternative diagnosis.

**OR**

  - ✓ Obtain two laboratory confirmed, PCR acute infection tests (at a physician’s office, approved testing location, or other site) at least 24 hours apart that comes back negative for COVID-19.

*DISD does NOT accept over-the-counter or home tests results for employees to return to work.*

  - ✓ Employee must submit documentation for return to work to the Human Resources Department.

**Student Develops FEVER and One or More Symptoms** (See list of COVID-19 symptoms on page 1) that could be COVID-19 and is not evaluated by a medical professional or tested for COVID-19, such individual is assumed to have COVID-19. It is recommended that the parent/guardian consult with their primary care physician for guidance of care and testing. The student may **NOT** return to the campus until the individual has completed the criteria listed below:

- ✓ Symptoms have improved, **AND**
- ✓ At least 10 days have passed since symptoms first appeared, **AND**



- ✓ At least 24 hours have passed since recovery (resolution of fever without the use of fever-reducing medications), **OR**

If student continues to have one or more symptoms that could be COVID-19 and wants to return to school before completing the above stay at home period of at least 10 days, then the student must be fever free for the past 24 hours without fever reducing medication and either:

- ✓ Obtain a medical professional's note clearing the individual for return based on an alternative diagnosis. **OR**
- ✓ Submit a negative result from a laboratory confirmed, acute infection test (PCR or antigen test) to the campus nurse.

**Employee Develops FEVER and One or More Symptoms** (See the COVID-19 symptoms listed on page 1) that could be COVID-19 and is not evaluated by a medical professional or tested for COVID-19, the employee shall NOT return to work until they:

- ✓ Obtain a laboratory confirmed acute negative infection test (PCR or antigen test). **OR**
- ✓ Obtain a medical release stating an alternative diagnosis
- ✓ Notify supervisor
- ✓ Enter absence(s) in EAC or Frontline for personal illness and notify supervisor of absence(s).

A doctor's release is required for all personal illness absences that exceed 5 consecutive days or longer. When returning to duty, it must be submitted to the Human Resources Department.

### **Students Who Are Close Contacts**

As a reference, close contact determinations are generally based on guidance outlined by the CDC, which notes that individuals who are fully vaccinated may not need to follow the stay-at-home period.

School systems may choose to require household-based close contact students to stay at home during the below stay-at-home period if they are in an area with high or rising COVID case rates. This applies specifically to students who are close contacts because an individual who lives in the same household is COVID-19 positive. (TEA Public Health Guidance – Sept. 2, 2021)

DISD will require students who are close contacts because an individual who lives in the same household is COVID-19 positive to stay-at-home until return to school criteria is met.

Independent of whether a school system chooses to implement the above requirement, 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. In cases when it is permitted, parents who opt to send their children to school in the two weeks following exposure are encouraged to closely monitor their children for symptoms.

If a student lives in a home with a lab-confirmed positive family member, they have two quarantine options:

- **Shortened Quarantine with Testing:** Quarantine can end after **day 7** if a viral test is negative and no symptoms are reported during daily symptom monitoring.
  - The viral test must be collected no sooner than day 5 after exposure in order to shorten quarantine, but quarantine cannot be discontinued earlier than the completion of day 7.
  - Viral tests include those collected by a swab of the nose or throat (PCR or antigen tests). Blood tests for antibodies nor do it yourself home tests can not be used to shorten quarantine.
- **Without Testing:** quarantine can end after **day 10** without testing and if no symptoms have been reported during daily monitoring.

Students who are fully vaccinated or have tested positive for COVID-19 in the last 90 days are not required to quarantine if exposed to a positive COVID-19 case. Proof of vaccination or testing positive in the previous 90 days must be confirmed. The CDC does recommend that fully vaccinated individuals get tested 3-5 days after the date of their exposure and wear a mask in public indoor settings for 14 days after exposure.

During the stay-at-home/quarantine period, DISD will provide assignments for students. Assignments can be requested by contacting the school directly, contacting the teacher by email or accessing through Schoology.

### **Employees Who Are Close Contacts**

Employees who are fully vaccinated **OR** have tested positive for COVID-19 in the last 90 days are not required to quarantine if exposed to a positive COVID-19 case. Proof of vaccination or testing positive in the previous 90 days must be confirmed. The CDC does recommend that fully vaccinated individuals get tested 3-5 days after the date of their exposure and wear a mask in public indoor settings for 14 days after exposure.

Employees who are not fully vaccinated who meet the close contact threshold with a COVID-19 positive individual are strongly encouraged to remain off campus during the stay-at-home period. For employees who meet the close contact threshold with a COVID-19 positive individual, if these employees continue to work on campus, rapid testing must be performed periodically for 10 days post-exposure. ([TEA Public Health Guidance – Sept. 2, 2021](#)) In DISD, periodic testing must occur on day 3 and day 7.

- Enter absences in EAC or Frontline as personal illness or family illness and notify your supervisor of your absence(s) due to close contact with someone who has tested positive for COVID-19.
- *Up to 10 days of COVID-19 Paid Leave may be provided to employees who must be absent because their child (**school age or younger**) is positive for COVID-19. Employees must provide documentation of their child's laboratory confirmed, positive test result directly to the Human Resources Department.*

### **Contact Tracing**

Case investigation and contact tracing will be conducted by the Galveston County Health District. In addition, the district will adhere to local and state notification requirements for communicable diseases.

- 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.

# Dickinson ISD Infectious Disease Action Levels

<b>Level 1</b> <b>Minimal Transmission</b>  <b>Limited or no confirmed cases of COVID-19 among employees or students</b>	<b>Level 2</b> <b>Moderate Transmission</b>  <b>Two or more confirmed case(s) of COVID-19</b>	<b>Level 3</b> <b>Significant Transmission</b>  <b>A cluster of confirmed COVID-19 cases in one specific area; i.e. classroom</b>	<b>Level 4</b> <b>Facility Closure</b>  <b>Evidence of widespread COVID-19 cases at <u>one</u> facility</b>	<b>Level 5</b> <b>Substantial Transmission</b>  <b>Evidence of widespread COVID-19 cases within multiple facilities</b>
<p>DISD Safe Return to School procedures implemented daily.</p> <p>Notification sent to employees and parents at the campus.</p> <p>Monitor positivity data of infectious virus in the district and in community, monitor attendance, and communicate with Local Health Authorities.</p>	<p>DISD Safe Return to School procedures implemented daily.</p> <p>Notification sent to employees and parents at the campus.</p> <p>Continue to monitor positivity data of infectious virus in the district and in community, monitor attendance, and communicate with Local Health Authorities.</p>	<p>Local Health Authority issues an order to temporarily close an individual class or group at a campus due to a high percentage of positive cases.</p> <p>Notification sent to employees and parents at the campus.</p> <p>Possible cancellation of after-school/extra-curricular activities at the campus.</p>	<p>Local Health Authority issues an order to temporarily close a campus due to a high percentage of positive cases.</p> <p>District-wide notification sent to employees and parents.</p> <p>All employees and students at closed campus will move to online instruction via Schoology.</p> <p>All events and activities at closed campus are canceled.</p>	<p>Governor or Local Health Authority issues an order to close the district based on transmission and positivity data of infectious virus.</p> <p>District-wide notification sent to employees and parents.</p> <p>All employees and students will move to online instruction via Schoology.</p> <p>All district and campus events and activities are canceled.</p> <p>Outside use of facilities are canceled.</p> <p>No travel outside of the district by employees or students for conferences, meetings, competitions, or special events.</p>

## **INSTRUCTION AND CONTINUITY OF SERVICES**

### **Instruction and Learning**

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 employees
  - Targeted intervention (whole group, small group, individual)
  - Accelerated learning cycle
  - Professional Development and Instructional Coaching (K-3 Reading Academy, Accelerated Learning, Collaborative Culture)
  - Employees 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.

## Stay-at-Home/Quarantined Students:

Stay-at-Home/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, is confirmed COVID positive, or is identified as a household or other close contact will be excused and coded in Skyward as quarantined. *Quarantine status will be confirmed through DISD Health Services and the Galveston County Health District.*

During the stay-at-home/quarantine period, DISD will provide assignments for students. Assignments can be accessed by contacting the school directly, contacting the teacher by email or using Schoology. If a student needs additional support to complete assignments, extra help/tutorials will be provided when they return to school. Students will have the same number of days they were out for stay-at-home/quarantine to make up their work when they return to school.

## **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 employees 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 employees 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, employees, and the community available supports and resources.
- Provide mental health referrals to outside agencies.
- Promote self-care/wellness for students, employees, 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 employees, 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 employees 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