



GISD Employee Handbook Addendum: Safety Protocols Related to COVID-19 2020-2021

Last Updated: August 13, 2020

These protocols are subject to frequent changes as new health and safety information or guidance develops. This document will be posted on the GISD website along with the 2020-2021 Employee Handbook for reference throughout the school year.

Safety Protocols Introduction

The health and safety of our staff is of top priority as we prepare for returning employees and students back to school. The protocols and practices outlined in response to the COVID-19 pandemic are based on the latest guidance from federal, state and local officials and agencies. We will continue to monitor the guidance as it evolves and update these protocols accordingly.

Keeping our workplace as safe as possible requires appropriate measures to maintain this priority, which includes implementation of the following employee protocols.

GISD is committed to a plan for returning to school for the 20-21 school year that considers guidance from federal, state, and local authorities. Sources consulted include:

- Texas Education Agency
 - [SY 20-21 Public Health Guidance](#)
- Office of the Texas Governor
 - [Coronavirus Resources & Response Webpage](#)
 - [Report to Open Texas](#)
 - [Governor's Executive Order Relating to the Use of Face Coverings](#)
- Texas Department of State Health Services
 - [Coronavirus 2019 Webpage](#)
- Center for Disease Control and Prevention Guidance ([CDC](#))
 - [CDC Guidance for School Administrators](#)
 - [CDC Guidance for Employers](#)
- Williamson County
 - [COVID-19](#)

Employee Safety Protocols

The safe and successful return to school, as well as the health of yourself and others, is dependent on every employee's adherence to the following protocols while working. It is the everyday practices and precautions we take as individuals who will make the transition back to on-site work a success. The following are required protocols for all staff, at all times:

State and Federal Guidance

All employees should follow the guidance within this handbook addendum document, as well as:

- [TEA Public Health Guidance](#); and
- CDC guidance such as:
 - [Steps to Stay Safe](#)
 - [How to Protect Yourself](#)
 - [Recognizing Symptoms of Coronavirus](#)
 - [What to Do If You Are Sick](#)
 - [Managing COVID-19 Anxiety and Stress](#)

Daily Self-Screen for All Employees

The Texas Education Agency requires teachers and staff to self-screen for COVID-19 symptoms before coming onto campus each day. **The self-screening includes teachers and staff taking their own temperature.** Self-screening is intended to prevent the spread of COVID-19 and reduce the potential risk of exposures to our staff and students. We are working to secure a self-screener website (Screen & Go) that can be used by employees at home before they come to work, unless your department directs you to screen in another way. Some auxiliary departments already have screening protocols in place and may continue to use alternative methods of screening. The self-screener website will be required to be used by employees daily as a self-screening tool, until the District notifies employees that self-screening is no longer needed. The website should be operational by mid-late August. Skyward is also working on a self-screening application; when it is released, we may consider changing to the Skyward self-screener.

- **COVID-19 Symptoms.** In evaluating whether you have symptoms consistent with COVID-19, consider if you have recently begun experiencing any of the following in a way that is not normal for you:
 - Feeling feverish or a measured temperature greater than or equal to 100.4 degrees Fahrenheit
 - Loss of taste or smell
 - New uncontrolled cough
 - Difficulty breathing/shortness of breath
 - Fatigue
 - New onset of severe headache, especially with a fever
 - Sore throat
 - Congestion or runny nose
 - Shaking or exaggerated shivering/chills
 - Significant muscle pain or body aches
 - Diarrhea, vomiting or abdominal pain

Use of Protective Equipment and Face Coverings

- **Face Coverings.** Pursuant to the Texas Education Agency, all school employees are required to comply with the governor's executive order regarding the wearing of masks or face covering ([Governor's Executive Order Relating to the Use of Face Coverings](#)) until that order has been lifted and is no longer required by the District. Every employee shall wear a face covering over the nose and mouth as required in public buildings, especially when it is not feasible to maintain six feet of physical distancing. Masks or face coverings should be worn in common or shared spaces (restrooms, hallways, etc.). Likewise, face coverings are required in outdoor public spaces, wherever it is not feasible to maintain six feet of social distancing from another person not in the same household.
 - Face coverings (as defined in the TEA Public Health Guidance) include non-medical grade disposable face masks, cloth face coverings (over the nose and mouth), or full-face shields to protect eyes, nose, and mouth.
 - Face coverings will be made available for employees at all district facilities, but employees are welcome to provide and wear your own, as long as they meet the following requirements and are approved by your supervisor:

- Must cover nose and mouth to maintain effectiveness.
 - Must not have a valve that is designed to facilitate easy exhaling, or be made of porous material, mesh or have openings, holes, or visible gaps in the design or material that would allow secretions to escape.
 - Must be work-appropriate and professional.
- o Employees who cannot wear a face covering due to a health condition should contact HR to discuss the process for determining whether a reasonable alternative is appropriate. Employees whose job conditions are such that wearing a face covering may increase the risk of heat-related illness or cause safety concerns due to introduction of a hazard (e.g., straps getting caught in machinery) should consult with their supervisor to determine the appropriate face covering for the work assignment or setting.
- o Please carry with you and wear Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) necessary to safely carry out the specifics of your job (face coverings, gloves, etc.). Alert your supervisor if you need additional PPE appropriate for your assignment.
- o **Exceptions.** Exceptions to the use of face coverings at the workplace include:
 - (1) when working alone in your personal workspace without others present (face coverings to and from personal workspaces or when others enter your work space are required)
 - (2) while consuming food or drink (please practice this exception as needed with appropriate social distancing from others and preferably on designated breaks)
 - (3) during scheduled face covering breaks outdoors if appropriate social distancing is in place.

How to safely remove a face covering:

- o Clean your hands with soap and water or hand sanitizer before touching the face covering.
- o Avoid touching the front of the covering. The front of the covering may be contaminated. Only touch the ear loops/ties/band.
- o Throw disposable covering in the trash.
- o If reusable, store safely in a plastic bag until it can be washed. Wash reusable covering on a daily basis.
- o Clean your hands with soap and water or hand sanitizer. As a reminder, face coverings do not replace the need to maintain social distancing and frequent handwashing.

Gloves. Gloves are not generally required, except in the following circumstances:

- (1) When you are assisting a student or cleaning, disinfecting, or sanitizing an area where you are likely to come into contact with bodily fluids; or
- (2) If directed by your supervisor to wear gloves pursuant to your job duties or specific tasks.
 - o Touching your face with contaminated hands, whether gloved or not, poses a significant risk of infection.
 - o Wearing gloves does not diminish the need to wash your hands. Please remember to wash your hands properly as it is the number-one defense against any virus.
 - o Additionally, the proper removal of gloves reduces the risk of being exposed to contamination.

- **Please note that social distancing should still be practiced when possible, even with the use of gloves and face coverings.**

Appropriate Distancing and Hygiene Practices

Our daily safety practices will have a significant impact on creating a safer workplace for yourself and others, as well as a safer school environment for our students. Please be sure to follow these practices:

- Practice [appropriate social distancing](#):
 - Maintain at least 6 feet of space between yourself and others at all times.
 - Avoid small (single-office) closed-in spaces for in-person meetings or discussions.
 - Do not gather in large groups. Virtual meetings are still encouraged when there are large numbers of people involved and/or when social distancing cannot be maintained.
- Frequently wash your hands with soap and water for at least 20 seconds, especially before and after eating or using the restroom.
- Maintain a practice of regular use of hand sanitizer with at least 60% alcohol between washes as you leave and enter different rooms or buildings.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth unless you have just washed your hands.
- Regularly disinfect workspaces and equipment (particularly shared spaces) before and after use as feasible.
- Minimize teacher or student visitors from other classrooms outside teams or grade levels and only permit visits as necessary.
- Keep workstations/desks clear to allow for appropriate cleaning by custodial staff.

Employees with Symptoms or Diagnosis of COVID-19

Teachers and staff must report to their supervisor or to HR if you have COVID-19 symptoms or are lab confirmed with COVID-19, and, if so, you must remain off campus or away from district facilities until you meet the criteria for re-entry. Contact your supervisor and refer to the [Employee Workplace Process Map](#) for guidance on re-entry and complete the COVID [health services reporting form](#).

- If you are sick or exhibiting symptoms related to COVID-19, **DO NOT REPORT TO WORK!**
- Should you have COVID-19 symptoms, please seek medical advice.
- You must inform your supervisor or HR as soon as possible if you have COVID-19 symptoms or are lab-confirmed with COVID-19 for guidance on accessing additional leave options available to you ([FFCRA](#)).

Return to Work Requirements. Any employees who themselves either: (a) are lab-confirmed to have COVID-19; or (b) experience the symptoms of COVID-19 must stay at home throughout the infection period, and cannot return to campus until the below conditions for campus re-entry have been met:

- **Diagnosed.** In the case of an employee who was diagnosed with COVID-19, the employee may return to school and work when all three of the following criteria are met:
 - (1) at least one day (24 hours) have passed since recovery (resolution of fever without the use of fever-reducing medications);
 - (2) the individual has improvement in symptoms (e.g., cough, shortness of breath); **and**
 - (3) at least ten days have passed since symptoms first appeared.
- **Symptomatic.** In the case of an employee who has symptoms that could be COVID-19 and who is not evaluated by a medical professional or tested for COVID-19, the employee is assumed to have COVID-19 and may not return to the campus until the employee has completed the same three-step set of criteria listed above. If an employee has

symptoms that could be COVID-19 and wants to return to school before completing the above stay at home period, the employee must either:

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

Close Contact with Someone Confirmed to Have COVID-19

Employees must report to their supervisor or HR if they have had close contact with an individual who is lab-confirmed with COVID-19 and must remain off campus until the 14-day incubation period has passed. (See [Employee Workplace Process Map](#))

(1) Determine Close Contact. This document refers to “close contact” with an individual who is lab-confirmed to have COVID-19, using TEA's definition and other public health guidelines.

- For clarity, **close contact is defined as:**
 - (a) being directly exposed to infectious secretions (e.g., being coughed on while not wearing a face covering); or
 - (b) being within 6 feet for a cumulative duration of 15 minutes if either of the above close contact occurred at any time in the last 14 days at the same time the infected individual was infectious. Additional factors such as masks, ventilation, etc. may affect this determination.
- Individuals are **presumed infectious** at least two days prior to symptom onset or, in the case of asymptomatic individuals who are lab-confirmed with COVID-19, two days prior to the confirming lab test.

(2) Next Steps if Close Contact Occurred. If you were in close contact with an individual who is lab-confirmed to have COVID-19 as defined above, **DO NOT REPORT TO WORK!**

- Please self-report to your supervisor or directly to HR before returning to work and seek guidance on accessing additional leave options available to you ([FFCRA](#)). See [Employee Workplace Process Map](#) for guidance and for reporting form. The [health reporting form](#) can be submitted by the employee or supervisor.
- If you had a less substantial contact than defined above or an indirect exposure to an individual with COVID-19, please seek advice from your supervisor or HR on any necessary heightened precautionary measures needed, monitor daily for symptoms, and contact HR if any of your circumstances change.

Employee Travel Protocols

- Please coordinate with your supervisor before registering or committing district funds for any travel outside of the Region 13 boundaries. Follow the GISD Travel Guidelines for all out-of-state/international travel.
- International travel is risky and the CDC has directed travelers to stay home for 14 days after returning home. However, even travel within the U.S. carries a risk. The CDC COVID-19 [data tracker](#) provides real-time data on cases by state.
- Any employee who voluntarily travels to COVID hotspots or high risk areas and is subsequently required to self-isolate upon return from voluntary travel, will be required to use leave.
- If more than one employee is traveling in a vehicle to a destination, the CDC recommends the individuals try to separate themselves in the vehicle as much as possible (i.e. utilize backseat, if available). Face coverings should always be worn and other personal protective equipment (PPE) should be utilized as appropriate (e.g., gloves). Cleaning and disinfecting of the hard surfaces in the vehicle should be done after each use.

Employee Training

- It is very important that all employees understand the safety requirements, protocols, and expectations to ensure everyone at school stays safe and helps prevent the spread of the virus.
- All staff should watch this 9 minute video: [Coronavirus 101: What you need to know.](#)

Remote Instruction During COVID-19

Remote Instruction

- If teachers are assigned to remote learning at any time during the school year, these [Guidelines for Staff E-Communication](#) should be followed.
- Remote teaching is an assignment based on student enrollment, certification, and other factors and is temporary in nature. Teachers can be reassigned to in-person instruction at any time should student enrollment dictate.

Related Resources for Employees

- [Families First Coronavirus Response Act](#)
- [CDC Guidance - Coronavirus \(COVID-19\)](#)

Administrator & Supervisor Protocols for Workplace Safety

District administrators and supervisors should refer to the following for guidance:

- Ensure that the [Governor's Checklist for All Employers](#) and the [TEA Public Health Guidance](#) are being followed at the campus or department you lead.
- Ensure employee protocols for return to work are respected and enforced.
- Ensure that workspaces are designed to allow and encourage appropriate social distancing (furniture arrangement, marking 6-foot distances where lines form or people tend to congregate, etc.)
- Ensure proper cleaning and disinfecting of workspaces are conducted after employee use.
- Ensure the appropriate workplace posters with proper protocols are prominently displayed (contact HR if needed.)
- Ensure that staff have access to Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) as needed (e.g., masks or face coverings; hand sanitizer, workspace disinfectants, or daily cleaning of workspace.) Contact HR if needed.
- Ensure staff receive any additional training or information needed to comply with required protocols
- Provide this 9 minute video for all staff to view: [Coronavirus 101: What you need to know.](#)
- Attempt to reduce in-person staff meetings or other opportunities for adults to congregate in close settings. When those meetings are necessary and cannot be done via electronic means, everyone must follow the mask protocols, remain at least 6 feet apart where feasible and consider whether increased airflow from leaving doors open is possible in those settings.
- Ensure frequent monitoring by supervisors of staff and students for symptoms or signs of illness.
- In the event of a notification of COVID-19 diagnosis or exposure, follow the [Employee Workplace Process Map](#) for guidance and reporting the employee diagnosis /exposure using the [Employee Health Reporting Form.](#)