



**Laredo ISD's Safe Return to In-Person
Instruction and Continuity of Services Plan
Updated June 9, 2022**

Laredo ISD resumed classes for students and employees in January 2022 and experienced a very challenging start of the semester with an increase in the number of positive COVID-19 cases for employees and students in January and February. A decrease in cases occurred in the months of March, April and part of May. Laredo ISD has planned and prepared for a safe return to in-person instruction and continuity of services for its 20,266 students and 4,000 employees and will continue to do so for the 2022-2023 school year. More recently, Laredo ISD and the Laredo community have experienced a very slight number of positive COVID-19 cases at the end of May. LISD consistently monitors the current public health situation on a daily basis through the LISD's COVID-19 Tracker posted on the LISD website. Laredo ISD is fully committed in providing for the health and safety of students, employees, parents, and community. As per ESSER requirements, LISD has updated the Safe Return to In-Person Instruction and Continuity of Services Plan. This Safety Plan references most updated guidelines provided by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), Texas Department of State Health Services (DSHS), most recent Texas Governor's Executive Orders, Texas Education Agency guidelines and preventive measures to **mitigate** the spread of the COVID-19 virus and help keep everyone safe at schools and at extracurricular activities. Laredo ISD collaborates and communicates closely with the City of Laredo Health Department and health authorities for continued direction, guidance, and feedback on our school district's updated plan to ensure students are educated in a safe, secure and healthy learning environment.

Laredo ISD continuously takes necessary steps to reduce the risks of this viral spread to students, teachers, staff and their families. LISD continues to implement required and recommended practices including the following:

- 1) **Notification** of test-confirmed cases in school to the City of Laredo Health Department in accordance with confidentiality requirements of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA).
- 2) **Reporting** to the Texas Department of State Health Services and TEA on a weekly basis upon receipt of information that any teacher, staff member, student, or visitor at a school is test-confirmed to have COVID-19.
- 3) Implementation of **preventive practices** to keep the virus from entering the school,
- 4) **Respond** to a test-confirmed case in the school(s) as per Texas Education Agency's School Health Operations requirements.
- 5) **Mitigation strategies** preventing the spread of COVID-19 and other communicable diseases.

The following updated summary addresses the major points in communicating LISD's Safe Return

to In-Person Instruction and Continuity of Services Plan to **mitigate** COVID-19 spread in LISD schools and departments.

LISD COVID-19 District Contact

Mr. Victor Mora, LISD Director of Safety/Risk Management and Emergency Management, is the LISD designated staff member responsible for responding to COVID-19 cases/concerns. Mr. Mora's contact information is **956-273-1171** or vmora@laredoisd.org. The designated Campus/Department Safety Officer(s) also address COVID-19 concerns at the campus and department respectively.

LISD School Year 2022-2023

Approximately 20,266 LISD students are expected to return safely to school for in-person instruction. All students and approximately 4,000 employees are following all CDC layered preventive measures including but not limited to social distancing 3-6 feet, washing of hands, use of sneeze guards, staying home if sick, covering cough and sneeze, screening/testing and vaccinations. The wearing of face covering for students, employees and visitors is optional and no longer a requirement. However, the district highly encourages facial coverings as measure to mitigate COVID-19.

Student Attendance

According to Texas Education Code (TEC), §25.092, students are required to attend 90% of the days a course is offered (with some exceptions) in order to be awarded credit for the course and/or to be promoted to the next grade. This requirement remains in force during the 2022-2023 school year. All students are required to comply with compulsory school attendance. LISD follows TEA attendance protocols and procedures for students who are absent due to COVID-19 and code accordingly on PEIMS. Each elementary campus has an Attendance Scout to increase student enrollment and improve daily student attendance.

Screening for Students, Employees, Parents and Visitors

Laredo ISD requires all students, employees, parents, and visitors to self-screen before entering the school or district facilities. All teachers and staff must report to their supervisor if they have COVID-19 symptoms, are test-confirmed with COVID-19, or have had close contact with an individual who is test-confirmed with COVID-19. Parents are not to send a child to school if the child has COVID-19 symptoms, is test-confirmed with COVID-19 or if the child has had close contact with an individual who is test-confirmed with COVID-19. If an individual experiences COVID-19 symptoms or is test-confirmed with COVID-19, the individual must **stay home** and cannot return to campus until the most updated CDC and LISD requirements have been met.

Laredo ISD has rapid testing kits including Quickvue and BinaxNOW for both students and employees. Each campus has certified COVID testing administrators and provides opportunities to students and employees to test for COVID-19.

COVID-19 Symptoms

- Feeling feverish or a measured temperature greater than or equal to 100.4 degrees Fahrenheit

- 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
- Nausea or vomiting

COVID-19 Cases Reported on Campus

If a student, teacher or staff shows COVID-19 symptoms while at school, the individual will be immediately separated from others, sent to the isolation/designated room and school nurse and be picked up by a parent to seek medical assistance. The areas used by the individual are thoroughly cleaned and disinfected. Students feeling feverish are temperature checked to determine if they are symptomatic for COVID-19.

Test-Confirmed Cases on Campus

If there is a test-confirmed COVID-19 case in a school, the school will notify the local health department and follow confidentiality requirements. Areas heavily used by the individual are closed off and thoroughly cleaned and disinfected by trained on-campus custodial staff, as well as by the District's special mitigation crew when called upon. The campus provides timely notification to all teachers, staff and families of the school if a test-confirmed COVID-19 case is identified among students, teachers, or staff of that campus.

LISD Health Guidelines

Laredo ISD will take the necessary steps to reduce the risks of this viral spread to students, teachers, staff, and their families. Our district has implemented and will continue to implement, required and recommended practices from the CDC, TEA, and local health authority. Therefore, this guidance is subject to change as new information becomes available.

Employee Guidelines for returning to work

LISD Employees in "Close Contact" with a COVID-19 positive individual

LISD employees who are not fully vaccinated or have only received one dose of the Pfizer or Moderna must adhere to the following district isolation protocols:

- Stay home for five (5) full calendar days.
- Get tested for COVID-19 at least five (5) calendar days after you last had close contact with someone with COVID-19.
- May return to work on calendar day six (6) after you last had close contact with someone with COVID-19 *if* you have no symptoms, *fever free* **and** test negative on an antigen or PCR test.

- In the event of a conflict between a COVID-19 antigen and PCR test result, the District shall consider the PCR test as the decisive test for the purpose of these protocols.
- LISD highly encourages the use of a well-fitted mask through day 10 after you last had close contact with someone with COVID-19.
- Employees must communicate with the supervisor regarding symptoms (or lack thereof) and COVID-19 test results before returning to work.

LISD employees who meet the close contact threshold, are not symptomatic, and meet the criteria below, will be expected to report to work:**

- Received all recommended vaccine doses (2-Pfizer, 2-Moderna, 1-J&J) including boosters and additional primary shots for some immunocompromised people; or,
- Was confirmed COVID-19 positive within the last 90 days and has fully recovered.

Employees who have symptoms or are positive for Covid-19

Laredo ISD will exclude employees from attending school/work 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, including **Antigen or PCR test**. **Employees that test positive must follow the district protocols below:**

- Stay home for five (5) days and isolate from others to the extent possible.
- May return** after five (5) full calendar days from the day employee tested positive (no sooner than day six (6)) if *fever free and if symptoms have improved.

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

***Additionally, Employees have access to their accrued leave and may consult with Human Resources under extenuating circumstances.*

STUDENT Guidelines for Returning to School

Students Who Have Tested Positive for COVID-19

- As per the document, “Department of State Health Services (DSHS) Rule”, Laredo ISD will 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 will be made aware that they must ensure that they do not send their child to school until the conditions for re-entry have been met.
- In the event of a conflict between a COVID-19 antigen test result and a PCR test result, the District shall consider the PCR test result as the decisive test and result for the purpose of these protocols.

Release from Quarantine Rule for Positive Students

- five (5) days have passed since symptoms first appeared – student may return on day six (6)
- five (5) days have passed since test date (those with no symptoms) – student may return on day six (6)
 - Should wear a well-fitting mask around others until day ten (10) (day six (6) to day ten (10))
- Twenty four (24) hours without fever and no use of fever-reducing medication.
- Improvement in symptoms (Example: at times cough may linger)

Students Who Have Symptoms, Possibly Related to COVID-19

- Parents must ensure that they do not send a child to school if the child has COVID-19 symptoms.
- If symptoms begin while the student is on campus, they will be sent home with a medical referral.
- **Any student who has symptoms that could be related to COVID-19 is to remain at home until the conditions for re-entry are met.**

Re-Entry Criteria for Students with COVID-19 Related Symptoms

- A student must provide a negative COVID-19 PCR test result; the test must be dated after exposure/symptoms onset. A rapid antigen test will not be accepted for re-entry, **OR,**
- Student must obtain a note from a United States Licensed Medical Professional indicating that the student is cleared to return to school based on an alternative diagnosis; **AND,**
- Students must have an improvement in symptoms, and be fever-free for twenty four (24) hours (without fever-reducing medication).

Students in Close Contact with a COVID-19 Positive Individual

- Parents are to monitor the student for symptoms for the ten (10) day incubation period.
- If a student develops symptoms they are to remain at home and will need to meet the re-entry criteria for students with COVID-19 related symptoms, that is specified in the previous paragraph.
- If a student is asymptomatic, the student may return to school; however, parents have the option of keeping their child home for the recommended stay at home period.

Health and Hygiene Practices

Trained LISD custodial staff thoroughly clean and disinfect Laredo ISD campuses and facilities using cleaning solutions and misters. Frequently touched areas in the classrooms are consistently cleaned before and after use. Campuses throughout the day will implement additional cleaning practices. Hand sanitizer will be available for use by students, teachers, and staff. Frequent hand washing (for at least twenty (20) seconds) is highly encouraged, monitored, and practiced by students, teachers and staff. Everyone will be encouraged to cover coughs and sneezes with a tissue, with used tissues thrown in the trash as well as washing hands immediately. Campuses will practice improving airflow by allowing outside air to circulate in the building and improve the ventilation through increased maintenance and improvements/upgrades of the HVAC system. Air filtration units (Jade Air Purifiers SCA5000C) have been placed in every District classroom to add another level of protection for students and staff and prevent the spread of communicable diseases. These air purifiers have two layers of filtration (Carbon and HEPA) and a UV lamp and are easy to operate. Water fountains throughout the school district campuses have been retrofitted with Elkay EZH2O Retrofit bottle filling station kits, which include the following features: Hands Free, Visual Filter Monitor, Filtered, Green Ticker, Laminar Flow, Antimicrobial, Real Drain, Electronic Bottle Filler and Sensor activation. Laredo ISD has also employed twenty (20) additional Custodian I Mitigation Crew members whose sole purpose is to mitigate the extra workload added to address the COVID-19 pandemic. This crew will continue to be performing the necessary cleaning and sanitizing during the 2022-2023 school year. These twenty (20) FTEs have been assigned one (1) to each elementary campus.

Facial Coverings/Masks/Face Shields

As per Texas Governor Greg Abbott's Executive Order-36 and the Federal government, facial coverings are no longer mandatory and therefore, LISD may not enforce or require students or staff to wear a mask. LISD recommends and highly encourages use of facial coverings and will allow individuals to wear a mask if they choose to do so. Reusable masks and face shields are available if requested by the students. LISD continues to provide masks for the new school year from the District's inventory.

Social Distance

All students, employees, parents, and visitors are to practice social distancing of three to six (3-6) feet apart from others and taking responsibility for the safety of others. Classrooms, hallways and cafeterias are arranged and designed allowing for social distancing of three to six (3-6) feet using labels, stickers, or markers for students to know where to sit, stand or wait. As per CDC guidelines, six (6) feet social distance is practiced in gyms and choir rooms. Entry and exit areas also have labels or marker indicating the three to six (3-6) feet distance between individuals to avoid any close proximity or close contact with others.

Teachers and Staff

District employees must continue to meet the work expectations set by their employer subject to any applicable employment contract terms or legal requirements. LISD works with teachers and staff on a case-by-case basis to address teacher and staff needs of those in a higher risk category and those staff members who have not been fully vaccinated or received their third dose or second booster shot.

Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)

LISD has an inventory of personal protective equipment (PPE) to provide for the protection of students, employees, parents, and visitors and continues to reach out to TDEM and DSHS to address any district needs. These resources include face shields, disposable and reusable masks, Plexiglas barriers, hand sanitizer, sneeze guards for classrooms/cafeteria, and protective gear for custodial staff.

Transportation

LISD provides transportation to students following the normal routes to school. Students are seated following social distance protocols. If students have fever greater than 100.4 degrees Fahrenheit, have COVID-19 symptoms, are test-confirmed COVID-19 or have had close contact with an individual who is test-confirmed COVID-19, students are not allowed to board the school bus. Wearing masks and facial coverings are not required but are allowed if individual chooses to wear one. Students board the bus from back to front and unload from front to back. Buses are cleaned and disinfected before and after each route. Hand sanitizer and masks are available for bus riders.

School Visits

Parents are encouraged to continue to participate and support their child's education through remote meetings and conferences, telephone conferences as well as in person visits during open houses and student recognition activities. Administrators and teachers stand ready to provide open communication with parents to address the student's educational needs through telephone, email,

school messenger, remote setting or in-person meetings.

Human Resources

The LISD Human Resources Department has provided updated employee information, flyers and resources on district policies and protocols related to COVID-19.

Infectious and Communicable Disease Plan

Laredo ISD has adopted the Infectious/Communicable Disease Plan from the Texas School Safety Center to provide standardized guidance in response to the onset and spread of an infectious/communicable disease within the district. This plan is embedded in the LISD Multi-Hazard Emergency Operation Plan.

Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs)

With the presence of the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, LISD uses standard operating procedures in conducting school business and explaining how the district continues to operate during the course of the 2022-2023 school year as students return to school. LISD provides Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) to guide LISD students, employees, parents and community in the following areas: 1). Operations, including Fixed Assets, Child Nutrition Program, Transportation and Maintenance; 2). Student Services, including Athletics, Police Department, Parent Engagement, UIL activities, and Health Services; 3). Health and Occupational Safety Support Services, including school safety and security and Emergency Operations Plan; 4). Curriculum and Instruction, including Assessments, Special Education, Counseling, and Instructional continuity; 5). Human Resources; 6) Communications and 7) Finance including attendance and discipline.

Vaccinations and Coordination with Local Health Officials

Laredo ISD is an approved vaccine provider in the State of Texas and continues administering vaccines to students, employees, parent volunteers and community members.

Laredo ISD has collaborated with the City of Laredo Health Department as well as formed partnerships with other health organizations such as Gateway Community Health Center, Army National Guard, hospitals, and other health agencies, to enhance efforts to vaccinate as many members of our school communities as possible to keep everyone safe from COVID-19.

The practice includes scheduling vaccination clinics for District employees and students at the elementary, middle and high school campuses providing them opportunities to participate in the District's vaccination program. All doses and boosters for Moderna and Pfizer are available to participants.

After the approval in November 2021, the Pfizer 100 Pediatric (Ages 5-11) vaccines have been provided by the LISD Health Services Department through implementation of a vaccination program for 5-11 year olds with parental consent. Vaccination clinics will be scheduled at each of the elementary campuses and middle schools at an as needed basis to offer these vaccines to eligible students throughout the 2022-2023 school year. In collaboration with other health agencies including the Army National Guard, second booster vaccinations will also continue to be provided to employees and those who meet the requirements.

Continuity of Services

Laredo ISD offers extended day, extended week academic support to accelerate instruction by providing small group and differentiated instruction for students not mastering skills taught during that week. The extended year will also continue, with a major focus on intervention and enrichment activities that will foster student engagement and improve student learning and progress for the different student groups. The new school year begins with the Jump Start Summer Program, which takes place two weeks prior to the start of the 2022-2023 school year providing accelerated instruction through project-based learning. Instructional support through daily and Saturday tutorials is part of the instructional continuity program for identified students.

Other initiatives that Laredo ISD provides as continuity of services are:

- Reading and Math Practitioners who provide specialized instruction that meet the needs of all student groups.
- Tutors who serve all grade levels and meet the individual instructional/learning needs of all students, including low-income, English learners, children with disabilities, students experiencing homelessness, children in foster care and highly mobile students.
- High Quality and researched based programs that enhance instruction and provide the most effective strategies to differentiate based on the student's needs (e.g., Blended Learning, Newsela, NoRedink, IXL, Education Galaxy, Empowering Writers, K-12 Summit, etc.).
- Capital Outlay and Instruction that enhances the curriculum and instructional strategies integrating technology and research-based strategies to meet the needs of all learners (e.g., Screencastify, KAMI, Google Enterprise, etc.).