

START STRONG, STAY STRONG



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LETTER FROM THE ROYAL ISD ACTING SUPERINTENDENT



Greetings Royal ISD family,

We are excited to kick off the 2020-2021 school year! We know that the year will look a little different than in the past, but our commitment to successful outcomes for our students remains the same.

All staff members will receive COVID-19 prevention training prior to the opening of school. All students will receive instruction on health protocols related to minimizing the spread of COVID-19.

From the beginning of the pandemic, the primary driver of the district's school-based decisions has been, and will continue to be, the safety of our greater school district family. We must do everything we can to make learning as safe as possible for our students, teachers, employees, and community members.

COVID-19 has taught us that flexibility is key to making decisions with the best interests of our students at heart. Thank you for your continued understanding and your flexibility. We appreciate the feedback you provided in our recent ThoughtExchange. Your input is reflected in the crafting of this document.

This plan encompasses what we know as of today. Like the COVID-19 pandemic itself, this plan will be updated regularly. The district will continue to communicate with parents, students, and employees regularly and will alert you to newer, revised versions of this plan when they are published.

Stay safe and always know that we are stronger together!

Your partner in learning,

Royal ISD

BACK-TO-SCHOOL GUIDANCE

TEA Requirement: Providing Notice

Royal ISD is providing notice to parents, families, and the community regarding back-to-school plans and instruction through this initial document. As further required, one week prior to the start of school, a plan to mitigate COVID-19 will be disseminated via Skyward to all families and posted on the district and school websites. Preliminary information is posted in this guidance and is subject to change based on state and local decisions.

COVID-19 Response Team – Royal ISD has developed a COVID-19 Response Team to respond to concerns and communicate district decisions. Members of the team and email addresses are noted below:

| Name | Title | Email |
|-----------------|--------------------------|-----------------------------|
| Rick Kershner | Superintendent | rkershner@royal-isd.net |
| Kendra Strange | Associate Superintendent | kstrange@royal-isd.net |
| Aronda Green | RES Principal | agreen@royal-isd.net |
| Melissa Baker | STEM Principal | mbaker@royal-isd.net |
| Orlanda Vargas | RJH Principal | ovargas@royal-isd.net |
| Tony Runnels | RHS Principal | trunnels@royal-isd.net |
| Tekisha Housely | DAEP Coordinator | thousley@royal-isd.net |
| Derrick Dabney | Director of Operations | ddabney@royal-isd.net |
| Jesse Gonzalez | KIMCO Unit Director | jessegonzalez@kimcoserv.com |

TEA Requirement: Prevent and Mitigate

Royal ISD must identify and implement practices to prevent the virus from entering the school and mitigate or reduce the likely spread inside the school; therefore, district practices and guidelines have been established for various areas noted below:

Health and Safety Guidance

- **Social and Emotional Well-Being** – Students' social and emotional well-being are a top priority. Together, schools and families can support your child during this challenging time. With the endless COVID coverage, it is natural for your child to experience some changes in behavior and mood. Counselors and staff will continue to work closely with families and students to ease the stress. Keeping routines predictable, sharing COVID facts that are age-appropriate, making time to listen and share feelings, and reaching out to us for support are all important. We are here for you and your child(ren).
- **Masks** – Schools are expected to comply with the Governor's Executive Order for wearing masks. Wearing a mask is required. Masks can either be non-medical and medical grade disposable face masks and cloth face coverings (over the nose and mouth). Full-face shield may be used in addition to a mask, but not in place of a mask. Full-face shields may be used in place of a mask to protect eyes, nose, and mouth whenever a mask is not feasible or whenever the education context may benefit from the ability to see an individual's full face. All adults are required to wear masks when in the building, classroom, and/or office with others. Exceptions to this requirement include lunch breaks with appropriate social distancing.

Students are required to wear masks when riding the bus and during the school day. Exceptions to this requirement include during meals and other activities. For example, it may be impractical for students to wear masks or face shields while participating in some non-UIL athletic or other extracurricular activities. When it is impractical for students to wear masks during those activities, schools must require students, teachers, staff, and visitors to wear masks or face shields when entering and exiting facilities and practice areas and when not actively engaging in those activities. Schools may, for example, allow students who are actively exercising to remove masks, as long as they maintain at least six feet of distance from other students, teachers, and staff who are not wearing masks. However, schools must require students, teachers, and staff to wear masks as they arrange themselves in positions that will allow them to maintain safe distancing.

It is recommended that masks be rotated and thoroughly cleaned daily. Sharing of masks with other family members is extremely risky and discouraged. Masks will need to follow the Royal ISD dress code. No advertisement for alcohol-related products, tobacco or tobacco-related products, drugs or drug-related products, suggestive or obscene writing gang affiliations or pictures on masks. Students are to wear a plain color mask, college spirit, or Royal Falcon spirit mask.

- **Handwashing/Sanitizing** - Students and staff are required to use hand sanitizer when entering a bus, building, classroom, and/or office. Frequent handwashing and sanitizing will also be incorporated in the daily schedules. Each classroom will be provided with sanitation kits that will be used during transitions. Buses, classrooms, and other common areas within the school will be thoroughly disinfected daily and deep cleaning schedules will be regularly conducted.
- **Temperature Checks/Screening** – Per Center for Disease Control (CDC) guidelines, initial monitoring of symptoms begins at home. Individuals who are feeling ill, including symptoms like fever, cough, shortness of breath, sore throat, abdominal pain, fatigue, muscle aches, or headache, should stay at home and consult with a medical professional regarding school participation.

Temperatures will be taken for each student before entering a school building. If a student's temperature is at or above 100.4 or higher, the student will be sent home and be given a medical/safety informational form with guidelines that must be followed before he/she is allowed to return to school.

For students who are dropped off by parents, temperatures will be taken before the student is allowed in the campus. If a student's temperature is at or above 100.4° or higher, the student will not be allowed to stay in school and will be given a medical/safety informational form which, again, must be followed before he/she is allowed to return to school. In some instances, a release from a medical professional may be required.

TEA Guidance is as follows for students:

"Parents must ensure they do not send a child to school on campus if the child has COVID-19 symptoms (as listed in this document) or is lab-confirmed with COVID-19, and instead should opt to receive remote learning until the below conditions for re-entry are met. Parents may also opt to have their students receive remote learning if their child has had close contact with an individual who is lab-confirmed with COVID-19 until the 14-day incubation period has passed. School systems may consider screening students for COVID-19 as well. Screening is accomplished by asking questions by phone or other electronic methods and/or in person. The screening questions should also be asked of a student's parent if that parent will be dropping off or picking up their child from inside the school."

Teachers and staff are required to self-monitor. The self-screening should include teachers and staff taking their own temperature. Teachers and staff must report to the school system if they themselves have COVID-19 symptoms or are lab-confirmed with COVID-19, and, if so, they must remain off campus until they meet the criteria for re-entry as noted below. Additionally, they must report to the school system if they have had close contact with an individual who is lab-confirmed with COVID-19, as defined at the end of this document, and, if so, must remain off campus until the 14-day incubation period has passed.

Royal ISD schools are staffed with nurses or nurse assistants. These individuals have been trained to support and assist with health and safety matters. The district head nurse is Holly Bousquet.

- **Social Distancing** – Staff and students will maintain six feet of social distancing in indoor and outdoor settings, to the extent possible. Classrooms will be arranged to allow for six feet of space between seating areas, as feasible, and transitions will be limited in the elementary campuses. Students will be assigned to their classroom to minimize their interactions with others.
- **Personal Protective Equipment** – One reusable mask per student will be provided. Students are expected to keep their masks clean. If individuals need assistance with this matter, the district will have the personal protective equipment, e.g., masks, sanitizers, etc., available. Fans will be prohibited to minimize additional air circulation.
- **Students with Health Conditions** – Parents and families know their child’s needs. While we are taking all measures to ensure each student’s safety, parents must place their child’s health needs first. Remote learning options are discussed later in this document.
- **COVID-19 Cases** – Royal ISD will take all safety precautions. However, if a student or staff member tests positive, the classroom will shift to remote learning. Staff and students who test positive will not be permitted to return to school until they are cleared by a medical professional. Staff and students who were directly exposed may be asked to self-quarantine for 14 days. If a student or staff member has been in close and/or prolonged contact with someone who has tested positive, the class will transition to remote learning for a minimum of one day and not exceed five days to allow for additional sanitation and disinfecting. Royal ISD will immediately sanitize all areas that had exposure from someone who tested positive. Our goal is the health and safety of all students and staff. District communication will be provided to the staff and students who came in contact with anyone who tests positive for COVID-19.

TEA Guidance on Individuals Confirmed or Suspected with COVID-19:

Any individuals who themselves either:

- a. are lab-confirmed to have COVID-19; or*
- b. experience the symptoms of COVID-19 (listed below) must stay at home throughout the infection period, and cannot return to campus until the school system screens the individual to determine any of the below conditions for campus re-entry have been met:*
 - i. In the case of an individual who was diagnosed with COVID-19, the individual may return to school when all three of the following criteria are met: at least three days (72 hours) have passed since recovery (resolution of fever without the use of fever-reducing medications);*
 - ii. the individual has improvement in symptoms (e.g., cough, shortness of breath);*
and
 - iii. at least ten days have passed since symptoms first appeared.*

- c. *In the case of an individual who has symptoms that could be COVID-19 and who is not evaluated by a medical professional or tested for COVID-19, such individual is assumed to have COVID-19, and the individual may not return to the campus until the individual has completed the same three-step set of criteria listed above.*
- d. *If the individual has symptoms that could be COVID-19 and wants to return to school before completing the above stay at home period, the individual 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 (<https://tdem.texas.gov/covid-19/>) that comes back negative for COVID-19.*

Identifying Possible COVID-19 Cases on Campus

- a. *Schools must immediately separate any student who shows COVID-19 symptoms while at school until the student can be picked up by a parent or guardian.*
- b. *Schools should clean the areas used by the individual who shows COVID-19 symptoms while at school (student, teacher, or staff) as soon as is feasible.*
- c. *Students who report feeling feverish should be given an immediate temperature check to determine if they are symptomatic for COVID-19.*

Campuses and Classrooms

- **Classrooms** – In elementary schools, students and staff will be assigned to their class. They will stay together for defined periods of time. Each class will use common areas, such as cafeterias, gyms, playgrounds, etc., together as a group. This concept is intended to minimize the interactions of classes with other students and staff.
- **Visitors, Drop-off, and Pick-Up** – Campuses will be closed. Parent meetings will occur virtually. Each school will have procedures in place for daily drop-off and pick-up. Traditional campus events such as Open House, Parent Nights, etc., have been temporarily suspended. Once the COVID situation has flatlined, we will reevaluate how to proceed with these activities. Campuses will use other means to keep parents and families up-to-date and engaged in their child's learning, including online platforms.
- **Classroom Configurations** – Royal ISD will arrange student learning spaces as space permits.
- **Restrooms and Water Fountains** – Students' physical needs are extremely important. Social distancing and hand washing will remain the priorities during restroom breaks. Because water dispensers have shared surfaces, these will be disabled. **Students must bring their own filled water bottle from home.**
- **Materials and Supplies** – Students will be expected to use their own materials and supplies which will be kept in individually-assigned boxes. Sharing of materials will not be allowed. In instances where technology, books, calculators, etc., are used with multiple students, proper sanitation protocols will be enforced.
- **Additional Instructors in Classrooms** – In certain instances, additional staff members may be assigned to classrooms to instruct specific students. These individuals will sanitize prior to entering and exiting the classroom, and masks will be required as they interact with students using social distancing.
- **Class Transitions for Secondary Campuses** – We are currently developing guidance regarding models for junior high and high school campuses, including limiting the number of passing periods and creating smaller lunch groups.
- **Field Trips** – Campuses will refrain from scheduling field trips and other academic/social events until further notice.

Learning Options

- **Face-to-Face Learning and Remote Learning** – Our goal is to **Start STRONG and Stay Strong!** While Royal ISD is taking multiple precautions to protect both students and staff in school operations, we will offer parents the option for either face-to-face or remote learning. In both instances, students are expected to participate and remain engaged in high quality instruction. Each of these options is described below:
 - **Face-to-Face Learning** – Students attend school daily, as with the regular school year, and follow safety, sanitation, and social distancing expectations.
 - **Remote Learning** – Students participate in classroom instruction via remote learning daily and are expected to complete and submit assignments as communicated by the remote learning teacher(s). **Daily attendance in remote learning is mandatory. This model includes the same high-level expectations for participation and assignments as face-to-face.**

In both models, the campuses must provide instruction in the Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills (TEKS) for the required grade level/subject/course. Monitoring student learning and progress remains integral to the success of the students. This includes attendance, grades, formative/summative assessments, and other monitoring systems that help teachers know how students are making progress.

Unless otherwise noted by the campus administrator, once a commitment to the instructional model has been communicated by the parent/family, a request must be submitted in writing to shift to the other model. These transitions must be approved and processed by the school and may take up to two weeks. Attendance in the current model is mandatory. Instructional model changes will only be allowed at the end of the grading period. Please note that if a student switches between Face to Face Instruction and remote learning, then that student may not have the same teacher(s) or course schedule, as teachers may or may not be teaching both.

Remote learning will be delivered through asynchronous instruction that does not require having the instructor and student engaged at the same time. In this method, students learn from instruction that is not necessarily being delivered face-to-face or in real time. This type of instruction may include various forms of digital and online learning, such as prerecorded video lessons that students complete on their own, and pre-assigned work and formative assessments made available to students on paper. The instructional method must address the required curriculum, per TEC, §28.002.

- **Attendance** – Attendance will be **taken each day** for both face-to-face **and** remote learning to ensure that students are actively engaged. During remote instruction, students are expected to participate and fully engage as communicated by the teacher to receive attendance credit. *The Royal ISD Remote Learning Agreement further details expectations for attendance and academic credit. This document will be distributed prior to the first day of school.*

In addition, per Texas Education Code (TEC), §25.092, students must attend 90% of the days a course is offered 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 2020-21 school year. This requirement applies to both face-to-face and Remote instruction.

- **Grading** – State law requires each district to adopt its own grading policies. This policy must require a classroom teacher to assign a grade that reflects the student's relative mastery of an assignment. Royal ISD grading policies are published annually in the Student Handbook. Progress reports and report cards will be available in the Parent Portal in Skyward. **Both face to face and remote learning options will follow district grading guidelines.**

- **State and Local Testing** – All students are expected to follow state and local testing requirements, whether participating in face-to-face or remote learning.

Meals

Royal ISD must comply with child nutrition guidelines.

Face-to-face learners (after the first four weeks):

- Breakfast is universal for all students.
- **Lunch at STEM, Royal Junior High, and Royal High School** - Students will eat in the cafeteria while practicing social distancing. For lunch, students will go through the line and eat in designated areas adhering to social distancing.
- **Lunch at Elementary Schools** - Students will eat in their classrooms.
- **DAEP** - Breakfast and lunch will be provided in a sack lunch.

Remote learners:

Royal ISD will serve meals at Royal Elementary School (2nd-5th) and Royal High School on Mondays and Wednesdays ONLY, between 7:30am and 11:30am.

- Monday - students will receive breakfast and lunch for 2 days.
- Wednesday - students will receive breakfast and lunch for 3 days.

They will receive meals with heating instructions, so that students have a variety of meals. Parents may pick up meals even if the student is not in the vehicle. Parents may pick up student meals without the student being present. Parents will need to provide each student's ID number to the cashier to receive meals.

Transportation

Temperatures will be taken for each student before boarding the bus. If a student's temperature is at or above 100.4° or higher, the student will not be allowed on the bus and will be given a medical/safety informational form with guidelines that must be followed before he/she is allowed to return school. **It is required that parents wait at the bus stop with their child(ren). The district highly encourages parents to bring his/her child to school and pick him/her up from school.** Siblings will sit together on the bus. Buses will be disinfected daily after each route and thoroughly cleaned after each bus trip, focusing on high-touch surfaces such as bus seats, steering wheels, knobs, and door handles.

Electives: Band, P.E., CTE Courses, Other Electives: Dance, Cheer, etc.

- **Band** – Students participating in these programs are required to have their own instrument. Protocols established by U.I.L. will be followed for band, including marching, competitions, etc.
- **Physical Education (P.E.)** – Details are being developed for P.E. programs to align with the TEKS course expectations and U.I.L. COVID guidelines for athletics.
- **CTE Courses** – Each pathway of CTE coherent coursework will be available in both remote, and face-to-face models of instruction. Students who choose to engage in face-to face learning will follow safety

protocol(s) of sanitation and social distancing defined by the CDC. Royal ISD CTE staff will provide personal protective equipment for students enrolled in face-to-face shop/lab settings.

- **Other Electives: Dance, Cheer, etc.** – Each course will be reviewed individually to ensure that social distancing and sanitation requirements are established and communicated prior to the beginning of school.

Special Programs

- **Program Participation and Services** – Students currently participating in special program services, e.g., special education, 504, Bilingual/ESL, etc., will continue to receive services whether through face-to-face or remote learning. Parent meetings may be held using virtual meeting platforms.
- **Evaluations and Testing** – District protocols have been established to evaluate students who have been referred for special programs. Social distancing and/or personal protective equipment (PPE) will be used, as appropriate.

Extracurricular and After-School Program

- **Extracurricular Programs** – Students in both face-to-face and remote learning will be allowed to participate in extracurricular programs as long as UIL requirements are met. Program sponsors will provide information to students and parents/families as information is available.
- **After-School Program** – The Boys & Girls Club has not finalized their plan for the 2020-2021 school year at this time. Additional information will be provided as it becomes available.

TEA Requirement: Respond

Royal ISD must identify and implement responsive actions to address the situation if there are lab-confirmed cases in a school.

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

1. *If an individual who has been in a school is lab-confirmed to have COVID-19, the school must notify its local health department, in accordance with applicable federal, state and local laws and regulations, including confidentiality requirements of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA).*
2. *Schools must close off areas that are heavily used by the individual with the lab-confirmed case (student, teacher, or staff) until the non-porous surfaces in those areas can be disinfected, unless more than 7 days have already passed since that person was on campus.*
3. *Consistent with school notification requirements for other communicable diseases, and consistent with legal confidentiality requirements, schools must notify all teachers, staff, and families of all students in a school if a lab-confirmed COVID-19 case is identified among students, teachers or staff who participate in any on campus activities.*

Close contact is defined as:

- *being directly exposed to infectious secretions (e.g., being coughed on); or*
- *being within 6 feet for a cumulative duration of 15 minutes;*
- *if either occurred at any time in the last 14 days at the same time the infected individual was infectious.*

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. In all instances, RISD will maintain the confidentiality of the student or staff.