



#mustangSTRONG
Nixon-Smiley CISD
Back-to-School Guidance

As of August 3, 2020

Si necesita ayuda para comprender esta carta en su idioma nativo, comuníquese con el Distrito al 830-582-1536.

TEA Requirement: Providing Notice

Nixon-Smiley CISD is providing notice to parents, families, and the community regarding back-to-school plans and instruction through this document, which is being disseminated via our District web page, social media, and other appropriate means to all families.

This guidance is subject to change based on state and local decisions.

COVID-19 Response Team – Nixon-Smiley CISD 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:

Cathy Lauer	Superintendent of Schools	cathy.lauer@nixonsmiley.net
Jeff Van Auken	Director of Business and Operations	jeff.vanauken@nixonsmiley.net
Bobby Newman	Maintenance Director	bobby.newman@nixonsmiley.net
Jane Dwyer	Director of Curriculum and Instruction	jane.dwyer@nixonsmiley.net
Lisa May Jackson	District RN	lisa.Jackson@nixonsmiley.net

You may also contact campus principals who can help guide your question to the appropriate responder.

TEA Requirement: Prevent and Mitigate

Nixon-Smiley CISD has identified and will implement practices to prevent the virus from entering the school and mitigate or reduce the likely spread inside the school to include the following district practices and guidelines:

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). Please contact your child(ren's) campus principal or counselor if you need help at this difficult time. Nixon-Smiley CISD is also very proud of our *Communities in Schools* program. Representatives can come to your home to assist you with needs for your family's well-being.

- **Masks** – NSCISD IS required to comply with the Governor's Executive Order for wearing masks or face shields, where this is most developmentally appropriate. All adults are required to wear masks when in the building, classroom, and/or office with others when it is not feasible to maintain six feet of social distancing from another person not in the same household. Exceptions to this requirement include employees with medical conditions or disabilities that prevent wearing a face covering, any person while consuming food or drink, any person while the person is giving a speech for a broadcast or to an audience, lunch breaks with appropriate social distancing. Classroom teachers may use face shields and social distancing when providing direct instruction in the classroom. During classroom monitoring and circulations, masks or face shields are required.

Students over the age of 10 are required to wear masks when riding the bus and during the school day. Exceptions to this requirement include during meals and other activities where it is not appropriate. 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 unfeasible for students to wear masks or face shields during those activities, NSCISD will 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. NSCISD may, for example, allow students who are actively exercising to remove masks or face shields, as long as they maintain at least six feet of distance from other students, teachers, and staff who are not wearing masks or face shields. However, NSCISD must require students, teachers, and staff to wear masks or face shields 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.

- **Handwashing/Sanitizing/Cleaning** - Students and staff are expected to use hand sanitizer or wash hands when entering a bus, building, classroom, and/or office. Frequent handwashing and sanitizing will also be incorporated in the daily schedules. Students will be supervised in hand washing for 20 seconds and taught other appropriate hand washing techniques. Also:
 - Students, staff, teachers, and visitors are encouraged to cover coughs and sneezes with a tissue and/or their elbow (even with a mask on.) Used tissues must be thrown in the trash and hands should be washed immediately with soap and water for at least 20 seconds or hand sanitizer should be used.
 - Buses, classrooms, and other common areas within the school will be thoroughly disinfected daily and deep cleaning schedules will be regularly conducted.
 - Additional janitorial staff has been added (extra hours) **FOR** additional cleaning and disinfecting of surfaces that are touched in common throughout the day. This includes objects such as door handles, common tables/desks, shared supplies such as art supplies, and high touch devices such as shared laptops or tablets.
 - When possible, commonly-touched surfaces will be cleaned in classrooms between different class groups, if the same room will be used by multiple class groups.
 - Nixon-Smiley CISD will incorporate the CDC guidance on cleaning community buildings to prevent COVID-19 spread.

- NSCISD will ensure these products are stored safely, including storing harmful products where children cannot access them, and ensuring that harmful cleaning products are not used near children.
 - Whenever possible, NSCISD will open windows or otherwise work to improve air flow by allowing outside air to circulate in the building.
 - If a building has remained dormant for an extended period, NSCISD will use CDC guidance on maintaining water system safety.
 - On the first day a student attends school on campus, NSCISD will provide instruction to students on appropriate hygiene practices and other mitigation practices adopted in the local school system.
- **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 only as needed, for example if a student appears to be exhibiting symptoms of any kind prior to boarding a school bus. If a student's temperature is at or above 100.4°, 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 to school. If no parent is immediately available, the first three rows of the bus will be cleared and the student will sit in the second row with a mask on.

For students who are dropped off by parents, temperatures will be taken as needed before the student is allowed in the campus. If a student's temperature is at or above 100.4°, 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.

TEXAS EDUCATION AGENCY GUIDANCE (PREVENT & MITIGATE) --

"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 instruction until the below conditions for re-entry are met. Parents may also opt to have their students receive remote instruction 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. Regularly performing a forehead temperature check of otherwise asymptomatic students in school is not recommended, but the practice is also not prohibited by this guidance."

- **Current List of COVID Symptoms include:**
- Temperature of 100.4 degrees Fahrenheit or higher when taken by mouth;
 - Sore throat;
 - New uncontrolled cough that causes difficulty breathing (or, for students with a chronic allergic/asthmatic cough, a change in their cough from baseline);
 - Diarrhea, vomiting, or abdominal pain; or
 - New onset of severe headache, especially with a fever.

- **Close Contact**

Regulations refer to “close contact” with an individual who is lab-confirmed to have COVID-19. The definition of close contact is evolving with our understanding of COVID-19, and individual 9 scenarios should be determined by an appropriate public health agency. In general, close contact is defined as:

- a. being directly exposed to infectious secretions (e.g., being coughed on); or
- b. being within 6 feet for a cumulative duration of 15 minutes; however, additional factors like case/contact masking (i.e., both the infectious individual and the potential close contact have been consistently and properly masked), ventilation, presence of dividers, and case symptomology may affect this determination.

Either (a) or (b) defines close contact if it occurred during the infectious period of the case, defined as two days prior to symptom onset to 10 days after symptom onset. In the case of asymptomatic individuals who are lab-confirmed with COVID-19, the infectious period is defined as two days prior to the confirming lab test and continuing for 10 days following the confirming lab test.

Teachers and staff are required to self-screen for COVID-19 symptoms before coming on to campus each day. The self-screening includes 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.

Nurses are staffed at each school and Nixon-Smiley CISD also employs a Lead Nurse, Lisa Jackson, RN. These individuals have been trained to support and assist with health and safety matters.

- **Social Distancing** – Staff and students will strive to 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, again, to the extent possible. Staggered lunch periods and social distancing in the cafeteria will be implemented. In classrooms or other areas where social distancing to the optimal degree is not possible, staff will plan for more frequent hand washing and/or sanitizing and seek increased airflow from outdoors if possible.
- **Personal Protective Equipment** – Staff and students are expected to provide their own masks. If individuals need assistance with this matter, the district will have equipment, e.g., masks, sanitizers, etc., available. Fans will be prohibited to minimize indoor air circulation.
- **Students with Health Conditions** – Parents and families know their child’s needs. While we are taking all measure to ensure each student’s safety, parents must place their child’s health needs first. Remote learning options are discussed later.

- **COVID-19 Cases** – Nixon-Smiley CISD will take all safety precautions. However, if a student or staff member tests positive, we will:
 - i. Immediately separate any individual who shows COVID-19 symptoms while at school until the person can leave campus or the child can be picked up by a parent or guardian.
 - ii. Clean the areas used by the individual who shows signs of COVID-19 symptoms while at school (teacher, staff, student, etc.) as soon as feasible.
 - iii. Students who report feeling feverish will be given an immediate temperature check to determine if they are symptomatic for COVID-19.

- Cohorts of students or campuses may experience temporary shut downs to implement appropriate disinfecting. At times, students or staff members may not be allowed to return to campus until they are cleared by a medical professional. While this may cause an added burden on families, our goal is health and safety for all students.

- **TEA Guidance on Individuals Confirmed or Suspected with COVID-19:**
 1. 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:
 - ✓ 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:
 - i. at least one day (24 hours) has 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.

 - ✓ 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.

 - ✓ 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

CAMPUSES AND CLASSROOMS

- **Visitors, Drop-off, and Pick-Up** – All campus and offices will remain locked. Visitors must call the office and will be met at the door. We apologize for this inconvenience, but believe it is in the best interest of our students and staff.

When an on campus visit is required, visits must be scheduled via an appointment. Sanitizing will occur after each parent meeting. The number of visitors in the school will be limited to only those essential to school operates so that we may ensure that students are safe; therefore, alternative meeting options may be scheduled, including virtual meetings. Each school will have procedures in place for daily drop-off and pick-up. This information will be communicated prior to the first day of school.

Before visitors will be allowed onto campuses in these extremely limited circumstances, NSCISD will screen all visitors to determine if the visitors have COVID-19 symptoms (as listed above in this document) or are lab-confirmed with COVID-19. If the visitor does not pass the screening or if they are lab-confirmed COVID-19, he or she must remain off campus until meeting the criteria for re-entry, noted above under **Individuals Confirmed or Suspected with COVID-19**. NSCISD will also screen to determine if visitors have had close contact with an individual who is lab-confirmed with COVID-19, and, if so, they must remain off campus until the 14-day incubation period has passed. When practical, screening questions may be supplemented with temperature checks of adults.

Traditional campus events such as Open House, Parent Nights, etc., have been temporarily suspended. Once the COVID situation has improved and with local health authority input, 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 (also see Social Distancing above)** – Nixon-Smiley CISD will arrange student learning spaces six feet apart, as feasible. In some instances, common areas may be used for instruction with similar distancing.
- **Restrooms and Water Fountains** – Students' physical needs are extremely important. As previously noted, social distancing and hand washing will remain the priorities during restroom breaks. Because traditional drinking fountains have shared surfaces, these will be disabled/turned off. Students will be asked to bring water bottles, which can be filled at school. Further details can be discussed with your child(ren's) principal.
- **Materials and Supplies** – Students will be expected to use their own materials and supplies which are to 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.

For early childhood classrooms, nap mats will be spaced out according to physical distancing guidelines and will be sanitized daily.

- **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** – To the extent possible, students will be encouraged to maintain social distancing. When practical, classes may be released in a staggered schedule to reduce traffic during passing periods.

- **Field Trips/Pep Rallies/Assemblies** – Campuses will refrain from scheduling field trips, pep rallies, and other academic/social events until further notice.
- **Use of Non-Classroom Spaces** -- When feasible and appropriate (for example, in physical education classes as weather permits), students will gather outside, rather than inside, because of likely reduced risk of virus spread outdoors.
 - NSCISD will continue to offer extracurricular activities and non-UIL extracurricular activities aligned with the guidance found on the UIL website for all UIL activities. Crowd size limitations currently apply. Ticket information and other guidance will be posted on the Nixon-Smiley CISD website.
 - As is the case in typical years, Nixon-Smiley CISD has policies that allow for non-school use of some facilities if the activity is primarily for school aged children. Use and operation will be consistent with the governor’s executive orders for similar activities.
 - Campuses have planned for entry, exit, and transition procedures that reduce large group gatherings (of students and/or adults) in close proximity. When possible, campuses will stagger school entry and dismissal times, assigning students to entries to ensure even distribution of students entering/exiting at each door, providing guidance to students to enter one at a time and wait six feet apart outside the entrance, and require parents to remain outside during drop-off and pick-up.

INSTRUCTIONAL MODELS

Instructional models are further detailed on the Nixon-Smiley CISD webpage but summarized here for your convenience.

- **In-person learning or remote instruction (online or paper packets)** – While Nixon-Smiley CISD is taking multiple precautions to protect both students and staff in school operations, we will offer parents the option for either in-person (face-to-face) or remote instruction (online or paper packets). In both instances, students are expected to participate and remain engaged in high quality instruction. Each of these options is described below:
 - **In-person learning** (traditional classroom experience) -- Students attend school daily, as with the regular school year, and follow safety and sanitation guidelines. Students will also follow any Governor Orders regarding face coverings and distancing.
 - **Remote instruction** – Asynchronous, at-home, either online or paper packets, standard District grading policy applies. Students will not be allowed to participate in extra-curricular activities. Not all electives are available. Students are expected to complete and submit assignments as communicated by the remote learning teacher(s). This home-learning model is an extension of the classroom and includes the same high-level expectations for participation and assignments as in-person.

In both models, the campuses will 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 approved 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 until the transition occurs. **Students will be expected to remain in their chosen delivery**

method until the end of a grading period (nine-weeks) unless extenuating circumstances are approved by the principal and an appropriate placement can be made.

Remote instruction 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 in-person or in real time. This type of instruction may include various forms of digital and online learning, such as prerecorded video lessons or game-based learning tasks that students complete on their own, and/or pre-assigned work and formative assessments made available to students on paper. The instructional method will address the required curriculum, per TEC, §28.002.

- **Attendance** – Attendance will be taken each day for both in-person learning **and** remote instruction 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.

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/virtual instruction.

- **Grading** – Nixon-Smiley CISD has a grading policy that requires classroom teachers to assign a grades that reflects the student's relative mastery of assignments and TEKS. The District's grading policies are Board approved and can be requested from campus principals. The policy will be used for both in-person learning and remote instruction. Progress reports and report cards, along with parent conferences, will be used to communicate each student's progress and performance.
- **State and Local Testing** – All students are expected to follow state and local testing requirements, this applies to both in-person and remote instruction.

MEALS AND TRANSPORTATION

- **Meals** – Nixon-Smiley CISD must comply with child nutrition guidelines. Meals will be a combination of Grab and Go, in-class, and in the cafeteria as appropriate for the age level and current status of the pandemic. Health and safety guidelines previously outlined in this document will apply, including frequent sanitation, hand-washing, and social distancing when possible.

Transportation – Families are encouraged to drop off students or walk with students to reduce possible exposure to the virus on school busses. However, safety measures will be implemented for those using bus transportation:

- Students will be expected to comply with the Governor's Order regarding face masks/shields while using school transportation.
- Hand sanitizer will be offered to students prior to boarding the school bus. We recognize that some students may have sensitive skin and thus unable to use it day after day.
- Temperatures *may* be taken for students before boarding the bus if symptoms are apparent. If a student's temperature is at or above 100.4°, the student will not be allowed on the bus. Parents should discuss medical/safety informational with the campus nurse and ensure compliance with guidelines before the student is allowed to return school. If no parent is immediately available, the first three rows of the bus will be cleared and the student will sit in the second row with a mask on. The parent will be required to pick the

child up front school as soon as possible. If the parent is not available, campus staff will contact the alternate emergency contact individuals noted on the student's registration form.

- Bus seating arrangements will be established to comply with TEA's social distancing requirements for school transportation when practical. Buses will be disinfected daily.
- When possible, windows will be open to allow outside air to circulate in the bus.
- Buses will be cleaned after each bus trip/route, focusing on high-touch surfaces such as bus seats, steering wheels, knobs, and door handles.

IN-SCHOOL ELECTIVES: BAND, P.E., CTE COURSES, OTHER ELECTIVES

- **Band**— Protocols established by U.I.L. will be followed for band and mariachi, including marching, competitions, etc. Other safety protocols are being developed and will be available from the HS Band Directors.
- **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. Protocols will be available from campus principals as they are developed.
- **CTE Courses** – Many CTE courses include hands-on experiences. Social distancing and sanitation requirements will be further defined and communicated prior to the beginning of school. Students enrolled in advanced, hands-on CTE courses might not be able to take these courses remotely. See information on the Nixon-Smilely CISD webpage.

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 in-person learning or remote instruction. 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** – Each program will be evaluated on a case-by-case basis to determine implementation guidelines. Program sponsors will provide information to students and parents/families as information is available. Information will also be posted on the Nixon-Smilely CISD web page as it becomes available.
- **RISE After-School Program** – The after-school program will be available on the first day of instruction for in-person students only. Pre-registration will be required through Ms. Rogers at the Elementary Campus (830) 582-1536 ext. 411. This program will follow the same sanitation and social distancing requirements established during the regular instructional day.

TEA Requirement: Respond

Nixon-Smilely CISD has identified and will implement responsive actions to address the situation if there are lab-confirmed cases in a school. *These include:*

1. If an individual who has been in a school is lab-confirmed to have COVID-19, Nixon-Smiley CISD must notify our local health department (*Department of State Health Services- Public Health Region 8*), 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. We will close off areas that are heavily used by the individual with the lab-confirmed case (student, teacher, staff, etc.) 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, NSCISD 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 on any on campus activities.