

EAST CHAMBERS ISD

Community Connections



2020-2021 SCHOOL YEAR

Reopening

From the Superintendent

East Chambers ISD schools will reopen on August 17, 2020. We have been researching, studying, planning, and preparing for what that will look like in these times of the pandemic. Our first priority will be to provide a safer environment for all students, teachers, and staff, utilizing the most current guidance from the Centers for Disease Control. The CDC maintains that relatively few children with COVID-19 are hospitalized or have severe symptoms. The American Academy of Pediatrics notes that the risk must be balanced with the need for children to attend school in person because the lack of physical access to school leads to a number of negative consequences, placing children at considerable risk.

East Chambers ISD has considered the guidance in its reopening plan and will be prepared for school to begin. We will have over 15,000 disposable face masks on hand when school starts, along with over 3,500 reusable masks, over 6,000 pairs of gloves, dozens of no touch thermometers, hundreds of gallons of hand sanitizer, and 2,000 face shields. Additionally, we have been able to demonstrate through our onsite summer program that we can successfully hold onsite instruction. Now, it is a matter of being able to scale that up safely. Photos in this pamphlet are of ECISD students and staff using ECISD facilities this summer.

The purpose of this Community Connection is to inform parents, students, staff, and the entire broader community about ECISD's plan for reopening. While we cannot guarantee there will be no cases of the virus this fall, we can say that we are doing what we can to prevent its spread. We also understand that reopening may cause anxiety for some, so we will adjust where needed to meet the needs of all of our students. We would also like to advise you that we have two registered nurses on staff, and you are welcome to contact them regarding COVID-19 concerns. Thank you for taking the time to read this outline of our plan and for doing your part to help prevent the spread in our community.

Attendance and Enrollment

REGARDING ATTENDANCE AND ENROLLMENT DURING THE PANDEMIC:

1. Texas Education Code attendance requirements will be in effect during the 2020-2021 school year.
2. ECISD will be open for on-campus instruction; however, there will also be some form of virtual instruction as well, given the current public health situation.
3. Parents may request that their children be offered virtual instruction.
4. ECISD will provide daily on-campus attendance for students who follow the health procedures and whose parents wish them to attend on campus each day, subject to school closure and other exceptions outlined in our plan.
5. School will begin regular operations on August 17th, ACE will be operating its before and after school program as well, and we will be providing school transportation.



Photo: Brennan Opie using the hands free fountain to refill his water bottle

Prevention

REGARDING OUR PLAN TO PREVENT THE VIRUS FROM ENTERING THE SCHOOL:

1. ECISD will require all teachers and staff to self-screen for COVID-19 symptoms before coming onto campus each day using a form provided by the district and will include taking temperature. Teachers and staff must report to the school system if they themselves have COVID-19, and, if so, they must remain off campus until they meet the criteria for re-entry. They must also report to the school system if they have had close contact with an individual who is lab-confirmed with COVID-19, and, if so, must remain off campus until the 14 day incubation period has passed.
2. Parents must ensure they do not send a child to school on campus if the child has COVID-19 symptoms or is lab-confirmed with COVID-19, and instead should opt to receive remote instruction until conditions for re-entry are met. Parents may also opt to have their children 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. ECISD may screen students for COVID-19 as well by asking questions by phone or other electronic methods and/or in person. Parents may also be questioned if the parent is dropping off or picking up their children from inside the school. Regularly performing a forehead temperature check of otherwise asymptomatic students in school is not planned at this time, but may be reconsidered as conditions warrant.
3. Excluding parental drop-off and pick-up, before visitors are allowed onto campuses, ECISD will screen all visitors to determine if the visitors have COVID-19 symptoms or are lab-confirmed with COVID-19, and, if so, they must remain off campus until the criteria for re-entry are met. Additionally, ECISD will screen to determine if a visitor has 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, ECISD may supplement screening questions with temperature checks of adults.
4. Individuals confirmed or suspected with COVID-19 who are lab-confirmed to have COVID-19 or experience symptoms of COVID-19 must stay at home throughout the infection period and cannot return to campus until ECISD screens the individual to determine the following conditions have been met:

Prevention

- a. 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, the individual has improvement of symptoms (e.g., cough, shortness of breath), and at least ten days have passed since symptoms first appeared.
 - b. 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.
 - c. If the individual has symptoms of COVID-19 and wants to return to school before completing the above stay at home period, the individual must either obtain a medical professional's note clearing the individual for return based on an alternative diagnosis or receive two separate confirmations at least 24 hours apart that they are free of COVID-19 via acute infections tests at an approved COVID-19 testing location found at <https://tdem.texas.gov/covid-19/>.
5. In identifying possible COVID-19 cases on campus, ECISD will:
- a. 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. Clean the areas used by the individual who shows COVID-19 symptoms while at school (student, teacher, or staff) as soon as feasible.
 - c. Students who report feeling feverish should be given an immediate temperature check to determine if they are symptomatic for COVID-19.



Photo: Francisco Torres and Brennan Opie using the hands free handwashing station

Lab Confirmed Case Response

REGARDING OUR PRACTICES TO RESPOND TO A LAB-CONFIRMED CASE AT SCHOOL:

1. If an individual who has been in an ECISD school is lab-confirmed to have COVID-19, ECISD must notify the Chambers County Health Department, in accordance with applicable federal, state, and local laws and regulations, including confidentiality requirements of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA).
2. ECISD will close off areas that were 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 3 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, ECISD will notify all teachers, staff, and families of all students in a school if a lab-confirmed case is identified among students, teachers, or staff who participate in any on campus activities.



Photo: Sarah Thompson, Speech Language Pathologist Teacher using a face shield during speech therapy sessions

Mitigation Practices

REGARDING ECISD PRACTICES TO MITIGATE THE LIKELIHOOD OF COVID-19 SPREAD
INSIDE THE SCHOOL:

1. ECISD will provide hand sanitizer at each entrance and in every classroom.
2. Students, teachers, staff, and campus visitors will be encouraged to sanitize and/or wash hands frequently.
3. ECISD will direct all students to wash their hands for at least 20 seconds at least two times each day, in addition to being directed to wash hands after using the restroom and before eating.
4. ECISD will teach students good handwashing techniques.
5. ECISD students, teachers, staff, and visitors will be encouraged to cover coughs and sneezes with a tissue, and if not available, covered in their elbows. Used tissues should be thrown in the trash, hands should be washed immediately with soap and water for at least 20 seconds, or hand-sanitizer should be used.
6. ECISD will practice frequent cleaning, including additional cleaning by custodial staff, as well as provide the opportunity for children to clean their own spaces before and after they are used in ways that are safe and developmentally appropriate.
7. ECISD will arrange for additional cleaning and disinfecting surfaces that are touched in common throughout the day such as door handles, common tables/desks, shared supplies such as art supplies, and high touch devices such as shared laptops or tablets.
8. ECISD will arrange for cleaning commonly-touched surfaces in classrooms between different class groups, if the same room will be used by multiple class groups, and review guidance from the CDC on cleaning community buildings to prevent COVID-19. Safe handling of disinfecting products will be practiced and harmful products will not be used near students.
9. ECISD will inspect air quality in its HVAC systems for outside air and may also open windows to improve air quality where possible and/or practical
10. ECISD will direct students not to use the manual water drinking fountains but may bring water bottles from home and fill them with our automated no touch fountains.
11. ECISD will refer to CDC printed resources such as posters that promote protective measures that may serve as helpful reminders of best practices, or campuses may create their own reminders.

Mitigation Practices

REGARDING ECISD PRACTICES TO MITIGATE THE LIKELIHOOD OF COVID-19 SPREAD INSIDE THE SCHOOL:

12. ECISD will instruct students on their first day to attend school on campus on appropriate hygiene practices and other mitigation practices on their campus.
13. ECISD is required to comply with the Governor's executive order regarding the wearing of masks and may require the use of masks or face shields for adults or students for whom it is developmentally appropriate.
14. ECISD recognizes it may be impractical for students to wear masks or face shields while participating in some activities; however, they will be required when entering and exiting facilities and practice areas and when not actively engaging in those activities; e.g., students who are actively exercising may remove their masks or shields as long as they maintain at least 6 feet of distance from other students, teachers, and staff who are not wearing masks or face shields; however, students, teachers, and staff must wear masks or shields as they arrange themselves in positions that will allow them to maintain social distancing.
15. ECISD will encourage, where feasible, students to practice social distancing, and will spread desks in the classroom 6 feet apart when possible. When social distancing is not possible, ECISD will plan for more frequent hand washing/sanitizing.
16. ECISD will, when feasible and appropriate, encourage outside activities, weather permitting, for physical education classes and other activities as appropriate.
17. ECISD will continue to offer extracurricular activities, within the guidance of this reopening plan, for non-UIL and UIL extracurricular activities with guidance provided by the UIL.
18. ECISD will continue to allow use of the facilities by the public outside the school day, e.g., walkers may use the track but not during the school day or when students are practicing inside the stadium area.
19. ECISD will monitor and adjust entry, exit, and transition procedures to reduce large group gatherings of students or adults in close proximity, e.g., staggered bells, separate entries for different groups of students, staggered lunch times, and encouraging parents to remain outside during pick-up and drop-off.
20. ECISD will eliminate large assemblies that bring large numbers of students or staff together.

Mitigation Practices

REGARDING ECISD PRACTICES TO MITIGATE THE LIKELIHOOD OF COVID-19 SPREAD INSIDE THE SCHOOL:

21. ECISD will continue its effort to convert all remaining water fountains that are not hands free and continue to upgrade restroom facilities.
22. ECISD will work to allow students flexibility at lunch to prevent close contact by large groups, e.g. eating outside, eating in classrooms, or other places where they can practice social distancing. All meals will continue to be served with disposable plates and utensils.
23. ECISD will provide students and staff with hand sanitizer when boarding and exiting buses.
24. ECISD will, when possible, allow windows to be opened to circulate outside air on buses and encourages parents to drop off and pick up students to reduce possible exposure on school buses.
25. ECISD will thoroughly clean buses after each trip, focusing on high touch surfaces such as seats, steering wheels, knobs, and door handles.
26. ECISD requires visitors to follow virus prevention and mitigation efforts while visiting the school and will be restricted to visits only for essential school operations.
27. ECISD expects its employees, like employees of any organization, to meet work expectations set out by their supervisors, subject to applicable employment contracts.
28. ECISD will train teachers and staff on the protocols outlined in the reopening plan and practices adopted by their supervisors and will provide a free online course by the Texas Agri-Life Extension service called "Special Considerations for Infection Control During COVID-19. The course is intended for frontline childcare workers, but the principles of the course apply equally to those working in school settings.
29. ECISD will reduce in-person staff meetings or other opportunities for adults to congregate in close settings and discourage large gatherings of teachers during conference and planning periods. When such meetings are unavoidable, mask protocols must be followed, and social distancing must be maintained.

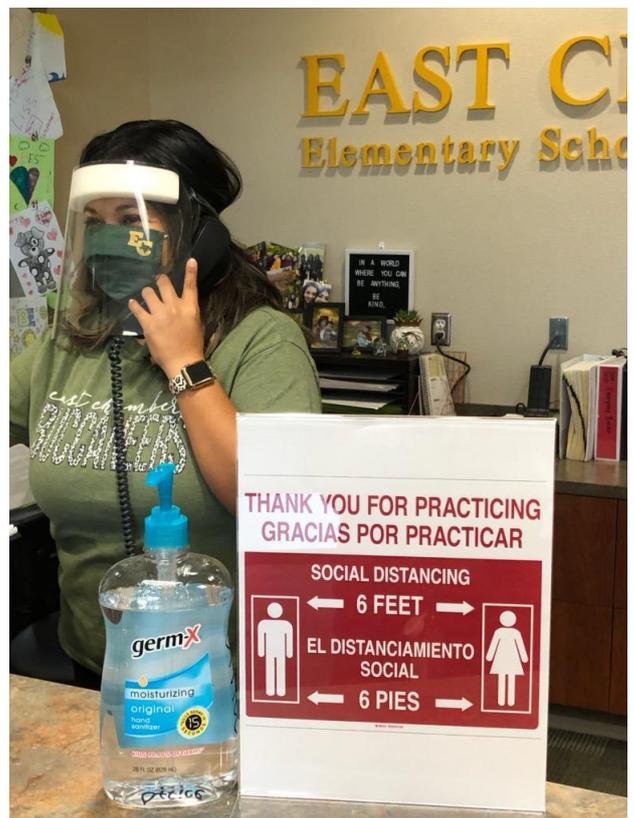


Photo: Liz Padron, Secretary using her face shield and mask

COVID-19 SYMPTOMS

COVID-19 SYMPTOMS:

In evaluating whether an individual has symptoms consistent with COVID-19, consider the following:

Have you begun experiencing any of the following in a way that is not normal for you?

1. Feeling feverish or a measured temperature greater than or equal to 100.0 degrees Fahrenheit.
2. Loss of taste or smell.
3. Cough.
4. Difficulty breathing.
5. Shortness of breath.
6. Headache.
7. Chills.
8. Sore throat.
9. Shaking or exaggerated shivering.
10. Significant muscle pain or ache.
11. Diarrhea.



Photo: Zanei Garza using the hand sanitizing station at the primary. Stations similar to these have been installed throughout the district.

What is close contact with an individual who is lab-confirmed to have COVID-19? First, close contact is determined by an appropriate public health agency, but for clarity, close contact is defined as the following if occurring at any time in the last 14 days at the same time the infected individual was infectious:

1. Being directly exposed to infectious secretions; e.g., being coughed on while not wearing a mask or face shield.
2. Being within 6 feet for a cumulative duration of 15 minutes, while not wearing a mask or face shield.

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. When asking individuals if they have symptoms of COVID-19, ECISD will only require a “Yes” or “No” response to the overall statement that they are symptomatic for COVID-19, as opposed to asking the individual for specific symptom confirmation. ECISD will not collect information during screening on the specific health information of an individual beyond that they are symptomatic. Once it is determined that individuals who responded “Yes” to either of these questions have met the criteria for re-entry, ECISD will destroy those individual responses.

From the Superintendent

ECISD understands the anxiety created by these pandemic times, and we want you to know that we are doing what we can to keep your children and your teachers and staff safer while balancing the need for our students to return to school. We will use good sense as we work through this, and we will do our best to accommodate your needs. We are committed to finding the best ways to deliver instruction during the pandemic by using combinations of virtual classrooms, on-site classrooms, and outdoor classrooms, as we attempt to spread out our students and staff as much as possible to permit social distancing. We are committed to providing face shields, face masks, hand sanitizers, hand washing, and hygiene education from the onset. We will continue to explore the best method of providing instruction and adjust as needed in the coming weeks and months. This document is subject to change as conditions warrant.

When future generations read this document from the archives of East Chambers ISD, it is my fervent hope and belief that they will know that we did our best, we adapted, we overcame, and we prospered.

I wish good health to all and look forward to our reopening on August 17, 2020.

Sincerely,



Superintendent



Photo: Chris West in the High School Multi Purpose Facility

*"You are braver than you believe, stronger than you seem,
and smarter than you think." - Christopher Robin*



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