

# Robert Lee ISD

## Safe Return to In-Person Instruction

### *Continuity of Learning Plan*

#### **2021-2022**



As we approach a new school year, Robert Lee ISD is providing this Safe Return to In-Person Instruction and Continuity of Services Plan for the 2021-2022 and beyond. This plan will be updated a minimum of every six months for a minimum of the next three years. As conditions regarding Covid-19 have improved, Robert Lee ISD expects that many school activities will return to pre-pandemic procedures. At the same time, however, the district will continually monitor CDC, state, and local guidance and is prepared to rapidly adjust procedures to meet challenges as they arise.

### **On Campus Instruction**

Robert Lee ISD ended most remote instruction by the end of the 3rd six weeks of the 2020-2021 school year. Currently, there are no plans for long-term remote instruction in 2021-2022 unless conditions and/or guidance change. All Robert Lee ISD students will be designated **on-campus** and will receive face-to-face and/or electronically-facilitated instruction in person. As such, enrolled students who are not in attendance will be subject to Texas and Robert Lee ISD compulsory attendance laws and regulations. Robert Lee ISD recognizes that students will be absent from time to time. With this in mind, the district will continue to support remote options for students who are required to miss school for an extended period of time. Remote instruction will not be used for normal absences.

***Should TEA requirements and/or health conditions require, Robert Lee ISD is prepared to shift to remote instruction as needed.***

## **Current TEA Guidance**

### **Required Actions if Individuals with Test-Confirmed Cases Have Been in a School**

1. If an individual who has been in a school is test-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. Upon receipt of information that any teacher, staff member, student, or visitor at a school is test-confirmed to have COVID-19, the school must submit a report to the Texas Department of State Health Services via an online form. The report must be submitted each Monday for the prior seven days (Monday-Sunday).

## **Masks**

Per GA-38, school systems cannot require students or staff to wear a mask. GA-38 addresses government-mandated face coverings in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. Other authority to require protective equipment, including masks, in an employment setting is not necessarily affected by GA-38. School systems must allow individuals to wear a mask if they choose to do so.

## **Students Who Have COVID-19**

As provided in this Department of State Health Services (DSHS) Rule, school systems must 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 must ensure they do not send a child to school on campus if the child has COVID-19 symptoms or is test-confirmed with COVID-19, until the conditions for re-entry are met. See the DSHS rule for more details, including the conditions for ending the exclusion period and returning to school.

During the exclusion period, the school system may deliver remote instruction consistent with the practice of remote conferencing outlined in the proposed Student Attendance Accounting Handbook (SAAH) rules.

## **Students Who Are Close Contacts**

As a reference, close contact determinations are generally based on guidance outlined by the CDC, which notes that individuals who are vaccinated are not considered close contacts. Given the data from 2020-21 showing very low COVID-19 transmission rates in a classroom setting and data demonstrating lower transmission rates among children than adults, school systems are not required to conduct COVID-19 contact tracing. If school systems are made aware that a student is a close contact, the school system should notify the student's parents.

Parents of students who are determined to be close contacts of an individual with COVID-19 may opt to keep their students at home during the recommended stay-at-home period.

For individuals who are determined to be close contacts, a 14-day stay-at-home period was previously advised by the CDC based on the incubation period of the virus. CDC has since updated their guidance, and the stay-at-home period can end for students experiencing no symptoms on Day 10 after close contact exposure, if no subsequent COVID-19 testing is performed.

Alternately, students can end the stay-at-home period if they receive a negative result from a PCR acute infection test after the close contact exposure ends.

During the stay-at-home period, the school system may deliver remote instruction consistent with the practice of remote conferencing outlined in the proposed Student Attendance Accounting Handbook (SAAH) rules.

# Robert Lee ISD Procedures

While it is not possible to eliminate all risks of furthering the spread of illness including COVID-19, the current science suggests there are steps schools can take to reduce the risks to students, teachers, staff, and their families. This guidance document contains information on four sets of practices that minimize the likelihood of viral spread:

- **PROVIDE NOTICE:** Requirements for parental and public notices
- **PREVENT:** Required practices to prevent the pathogens from entering the school
- **RESPOND:** Required practices to respond to a lab-confirmed case in the school
- **MITIGATE:** Recommended and required practices to reduce likely spread inside the school

## **NOTICE: *Parental and Public Notice***

### **Developing a Plan for On-Campus Activities and Instruction**

This plan will provide notice to Robert Lee ISD parents and the general public of district procedures for safe return to instruction. This plan will be posted on the Robert Lee ISD website at [www.rlisd.net](http://www.rlisd.net) and will be available in printed form by request.

## **PREVENT: *Required practices to prevent the pathogens from entering the school***

1. Robert Lee ISD will require teachers and staff to self-screen for illness including COVID-19 symptoms before coming onto campus each day. COVID-19 symptoms are listed at the end of this document. The self- screening should include teachers and staff taking their own temperature as needed. 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.
2. Parents must ensure they do not send a child with illness including COVID-19 to school. Students with a fever of 100°F or greater should remain at home until they are fever free for 24 hours without fever-reducing medication. Robert Lee ISD may consider screening students for COVID-19.
3. Students with an illness requiring three consecutive days missed may only be admitted with clearance from their primary care physician.

## 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:

1. 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 one day (24 hours) have passed since recovery (resolution of fever without the use of fever-reducing medications);
  - the individual has improvement in symptoms (e.g., cough, shortness of breath); and
  - The individual has completed any required quarantine period.
    - Currently the CDC recommends a quarantine period of a minimum of ten days (or 7 days with a negative COVID test.).
    - Local health officials will make final decisions on quarantine periods.
2. In the case of an individual that is asymptomatic but has received a positive COVID-19 test result, the individual may not return to the campus until the quarantine period has ended.

### Identifying Possible COVID-19 Cases on Campus

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

### **RESPOND: *Practices to Respond to a Test-Confirmed Case in the School***

1. If an individual who has been in Robert Lee School is test-confirmed to have COVID-19, Robert Lee School will notify the 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. Consistent with school notification requirements for other communicable diseases, and consistent with legal confidentiality requirements, Robert Lee School will 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.
3. Upon receipt of information that any teacher, staff member, student, or visitor at a school is test-confirmed to have COVID-19, the school must submit a report to the Texas Department of State Health Services via an online form. The report must be submitted each Monday for the prior seven days (Monday-Sunday).

## **MITIGATE: *Practices to Mitigate the Likelihood of COVID-19 Spread Inside the School***

### **General: Health and Hygiene Practices**

1. Robert Lee School will provide hand sanitizer at each school entrance and each classroom.
2. Students, teachers, staff, and campus visitors will be encouraged to sanitize and/or wash hands frequently.
  - Students will be encouraged to engage in supervised handwashing for at least 20 seconds at least two times each day, in addition to being encouraged to wash hands after using the restroom and before eating.
  - Robert Lee School will teach students good handwashing techniques.
  - Students, teachers, staff, and campus visitors will be encouraged to cover coughs and sneezes with a tissue, and if not available, covered in their elbows, throw used tissues in the trash immediately and wash hands with soap and water for at least 20 seconds or use hand sanitizer should be used.
3. Robert Lee School has hired additional custodial staff and will institute more frequent cleaning practices, including additional cleaning by janitorial 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.
  - Robert Lee School will ensure that cleaning products are stored safely, including storing harmful products where children cannot access them, and ensuring that harmful cleaning products are not used near children.
4. On the first day a student attends school. Robert Lee School will provide instruction to students on appropriate hygiene practices and other mitigation practices.

## **Face Coverings**

For the purposes of this document, face coverings include non-medical and medical grade disposable face masks and cloth face coverings (over the nose and mouth). 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.

Robert Lee ISD *will allow* individuals to wear a mask if they choose.

## **Student-Teacher Groupings:**

Where feasible without disrupting the educational experience, students will be encouraged to practice social distancing.

## **Use of Non-Classroom Spaces**

1. When feasible and appropriate Robert Lee School will allow students to gather outside, rather than inside, because of likely reduced risk of virus spread outdoors (such as for physical education classes or pep rallies.)
2. As is possible, Robert Lee School, at its discretion, will continue to offer extracurricular/co-curricular activities consistent with the guidance in this document and UIL activities with the guidance found on the UIL website.
3. Operation of all the facilities will be consistent with the governor's executive orders for similar activities.
4. Robert Lee School will plan for entry, exit, and transition procedures that reduce large group gatherings (of students and/or adults) in close proximity.
5. Robert Lee School may as necessary limit assemblies and other activities that bring large groupings of students and/or teachers and staff together.

## **Transportation**

Families are encouraged to drop students off, carpool, or walk with their student to school to reduce possible virus exposure on buses.

1. Robert Lee School will offer students and staff the option to use hand sanitizer upon boarding the bus.
2. Buses will be thoroughly cleaned after each bus trip, focusing on high-touch

surfaces such as bus seats, steering wheels, knobs, and door handles. During cleaning, windows will be opened to allow for ventilation and air flow.

### **Staffing**

Employees of school systems, like employees of any organization, must continue to meet the work expectations set by their employers, subject to any applicable employment contract terms or legal requirements. However, Robert Lee School will work with teachers and other staff to ensure the safety of students, teachers, and staff. Staff will be trained specifically on the protocols outlined in this document and the practices adopted by Robert Lee ISD.

### **COVID-19 Symptoms**

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

1. Have they recently begun experiencing any of the following in a way that is not normal for them?
  - a. Feeling feverish or a measured temperature greater than or equal to 100.0 °F
  - b. Loss of taste or smell
  - c. Cough
  - d. Difficulty breathing
  - e. Shortness of breath
  - f. Fatigue
  - g. Headache
  - h. Chills
  - i. Sore throat
  - j. Congestion or Runny Nose
  - k. Shaking or exaggerated shivering
  - l. Significant muscle pain or ache
  - m. Diarrhea
  - n. Nausea or Vomiting

## **Close Contact**

This document refers to “close contact” with an individual who is test-confirmed to have COVID-19. The definition of close contact is evolving with our understanding of COVID-19, and individual 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 total of approximately 15 minutes throughout the course of a day; 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 symptomatology may affect this determination.

*Robert Lee School will follow the guidelines set forth by TEA. Given the data from 2020-21 showing very low COVID-19 transmission rates in a classroom setting and data demonstrating lower transmission rates among children than adults, Robert Lee School will not conduct COVID-19 contact tracing. If school is made aware that a student is a close contact, the school system will notify the student’s parents.*

## **Screening Questionnaire Information**

When asking individuals if they have symptoms for COVID-19, Robert Lee School will only require the individual to provide a “Yes” or “No” to the overall statement that they are symptomatic for COVID-19, as opposed to asking the individual for specific symptom confirmation. Once it is determined that individuals who responded “Yes” to questions have met the criteria for re-entry, school systems will allow individuals to reenter.

## **Students’ Academic Needs**

Robert Lee Independent School District plans to use the American Rescue Plans (ARP) Act ESSER funds to address learning loss of students, across all grade levels. Based on current academic measures, we have identified critical areas of need in reading instruction, writing, and math. To address these areas of concern, RLISD will provide accelerated instruction, tutorials, and extended day opportunities for students.

## **Students’ Social, Emotional, Mental Health Needs**

Robert Lee Independent School District will address students’ social, emotional and mental health needs through staff development for instructional staff and the use of our



K-12 counselor. RLISD will also utilize the Texas Tech Health Science Center TCHAT for students to schedule appointments through the Counselor.

***Staff's Social, Emotional, Mental Health Needs***

Robert Lee Independent School District will support faculty and staff through recognitions, meals and snacks, and other incentives. Additionally, the district will work to meet the social, emotional and mental health needs of staff by providing flexible leave policies through the pandemic.

***Periodic Review of Plan***

This plan was reviewed and adopted at a School Board meeting on August 18, 2021 where public opinion was solicited and input from the Board members was heard. The plan will be reviewed and public input will be heard to determine if revisions are needed by February 18, 2022.