Mason Independent School District

“Expecting Excellence”

Updated August 10, 2020

2020-21 Back to School Plan

Mason ISD is committed to the health and safety of every student and staff member as well as our community. We will follow the requirements and consider the recommendations of the Center for Disease Control (CDC), Texas Department of State Health Services (TDSHS), Mason County Health Department, Texas Education Agency (TEA), and state and local governance.

Beyond the physical social distancing guidelines, personal protective equipment (PPE) recommendations and enhanced sanitization measures, Mason ISD pledges to keep children FIRST in all decisions and measures taken to protect them and their learning environment.

The following document will serve as a guide for Mason ISD’s preparedness in responding to the COVID-19 pandemic. In no way is this document comprehensive. It will serve as a starting place for Mason ISD’s response. This document is ‘living’, in that the District may have to add or terminate existing/new protocols as the need arises. Experts agree that the COVID-19 crisis changes daily. This document will be able to respond, as changing circumstances dictate.

General Health & Safety Protocols

- Campus staff will be trained in COVID-19 safety protocols.
- Mason ISD custodial staff will use a team cleaning process and use recommended disinfectants that are proven to kill viruses like COVID-19, as well as others, are certified as safe for schools and public places.
- Custodial staff will frequently wipe high traffic surfaces including hand rails, door handles, counter tops and other horizontal surfaces over the course of the day.
- Custodial staff will increase the frequency of cleaning and disinfecting restrooms and common areas throughout the day.
- Additional hand sanitizer dispensers have been placed throughout campuses in easily accessible and high traffic areas and will be maintained throughout the day.
- Students, teachers, staff, and essential campus visitors/volunteers will be encouraged to sanitize and wash hands frequently.
- Visitors will be significantly restricted, at least during the fall semester. NOTE: essential volunteers scheduled for work at a campus will be pre-screened for temperature/symptoms before admittance on campus.
“Close Contact” with an individual who is lab-confirmed to have COVID-19 is defined by CDC and TEA Public Health Guidance as:

a) Being directly exposed to infectious secretions (e.g., being coughed on while not wearing a mask or face covering); 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.

Health Screening for Staff & Students

- Students and staff are required to take their own temperatures daily before arriving at school. Anyone with a fever of 100 or higher should not come to school or any Mason ISD facility. (TEA required)
- Students and staff are required to self-screen before coming to school by asking the following question (TEA required):

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

- Feeling feverish or a measured temperature greater than or equal to 100 degrees Fahrenheit
- Loss of taste or smell
- Cough
- Difficulty breathing
- Shortness of breath
- Headache
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- Chills
- Sore throat
- Shaking or exaggerated shivering
- Significant muscle pain or ache
- Diarrhea

- Students and staff may be subject to periodic temperature checks for verification, especially if they are feeling ill or suspected of having a fever during the school day.
- Teachers, staff, and students (parent/guardian) must report to campus/district administration if they have COVID-19 symptoms or are lab-confirmed with COVID-19.
- Mason ISD will be pre-screening all contracted workers and essential volunteers before they are allowed entrance to campus.

Protocols for Individuals Confirmed, Suspected, or Exposed to COVID-19

Any individual, including teachers, staff, and students or other campus visitors/volunteers, who either a) are lab-confirmed to have COVID-19 or b) experience symptoms of COVID-19 (as described in this document) must stay home throughout the infection period, and cannot return to the campus until the school screens the individual to determine if the below conditions for campus re-entry have been met.

Confirmed COVID-19

If an individual who has been in a school is lab-confirmed to have COVID-19, the District must notify the Mason 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 Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA).

In the case of an individual who is diagnosed with COVID-19, the individual may return to school when a medical professional certifies all three of the following criteria are met:

1) At least one day (24 hours) has passed since recovery (resolution of fever without the use of fever-reducing medications);
2) The individual has improved in symptoms (e.g., cough, shortness of breath); and
3) At least ten days have passed since symptoms first appeared.
Protocols for Confirmed COVID-19

- The District will 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 three days have already passed since that person was on campus.
- 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 on any ‘On Campus’ activities.

Suspected COVID-19

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, the individual is assumed to have COVID-19. The individual may not return to the campus until the individual has completed the same three-step set of criteria listed above.

If an 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) receive two separate confirmations at least 24 hours apart that they are free of COVID-19 via acute infection tests at an approved COVID-19 testing location found at https://tdem.texas.gov/covid-19/.

Exposed to COVID-19

Individuals, including students, teachers, staff or other campus visitors, and volunteers, who have had close contact (as defined in this document), or strong first-degree exposure (as determined by health care professional), with an individual who is lab-confirmed with COVID-19, must remain off campus until the 14-day incubation period has passed.
Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) & Masks

- For this document, masks include non-medical grade disposable face masks, cloth face coverings (over the nose and mouth)
- **Effective August 11, 2020 masks or face coverings will be required for all teachers, staff or other campus visitors/volunteers while on campus. Masks or face coverings will also be required for all students in grades 5-12 who attend school On-Campus.**
- Mason ISD will continue to monitor the situation and re-evaluate this requirement every 6 weeks.
- Staff will be provided with PPE including cloth masks and clear face shields.
- Some masks will be available for students, as needed. Parents who wish for their student to wear a mask are encouraged to obtain personalized masks that fit comfortably and are convenient for them to put on and off frequently.
- The Texas Education Agency (TEA) has purchased and will be providing PPE to each school district as needed.

From the state, Mason ISD will receive:
- Student size disposable masks
- Adult size disposable masks
- Student size reusable masks
- Adult size reusable masks
- Gloves
- Thermometers
- Hand sanitizer
- Adult face shields

School Nurse Procedures

- Our school nurse and substitute nurses will be trained in COVID-19 safety protocols.
- Minor health needs may be handled in the school office area to reserve the nurse’s office for students experiencing symptoms of fever.
- Regardless of age, students who come to the school nurse showing symptoms will be required to wear a mask until their parent arrives to take them home.
- The school nurse’s office will be cleaned and disinfected regularly throughout the day.
Bus Transportation Protocols

For students riding Mason ISD busses, compliance to the following guidelines is required to maintain bus riding privileges:

- All bus riders will use hand sanitizer as they enter the bus.
- All bus riders will sit in their assigned seats.
- All bus riders will be **required to wear a mask or face covering** at all times; a disposable mask will be provided if a student does not have one.

- Families are encouraged to drop students off, carpool, or walk with their students to school to reduce possible virus exposure on buses.
- Bus drivers will be trained in COVID-19 safety protocols.
- Bus drivers will wear masks and gloves.
- Seats, handles, and high-touch areas will be cleaned and disinfected before and after each route.

Cafeteria Safety

- Mason ISD plans to utilize the school cafeteria as much as possible for breakfast and lunches.
- Parents/visitors will not be able to eat breakfast or lunch with their children, until further notice, but meals may be delivered by the parent/guardian to the school office.
- Modifications to breakfast and lunch procedures will be based on specific situations that arise and on what is feasible for each campus and grade.
- Cafeteria staff will be trained in COVID-19 safety protocols.
- All cafeteria staff will be wearing masks and gloves while serving students.
- Seats, tables, door handles, and high-touch areas will be disinfected regularly.
- Meals will be available for curbside pickup only at designated times for remote learning students. The cafeteria crew will provide more details to that process in the coming weeks.

Handwashing & Hand Sanitizers

- Students and staff will be trained in proper handwashing protocols to prevent COVID-19 and the spread of germs.
- MISD teachers will encourage student handwashing for at least 20 seconds. In addition, all students will be encouraged to wash hands after using the restroom and before eating.
- Handwashing stations are available in restrooms and some classrooms.
• Hand sanitizer is available in each classroom and throughout the campuses in common areas.

Cleaning & Disinfectant Protocols
• Cleaning and disinfecting protocols will occur daily in every classroom, commons area, and on high-touch surfaces.
• Every classroom and office area will have a disinfectant spray bottle with cleaning cloths provided for employees to use in high-touch areas throughout the school day.
• In addition to cleanings throughout each day, restrooms, the cafeteria, and computer labs will undergo extensive cleaning after each day’s use.

Instructional Delivery Methods
Mason ISD will hold ‘On Campus’ in-person instruction with additional safety measures in place for the 2020-21 school year. This is our preferred method of instruction. We are committed to providing rigorous, TEKS-based instruction to all of our students in a safe environment. We recognize the importance of schools and the positive impact that extra-curricular activities have in the lives of our students. It is the District’s plan to reopen schools on Tuesday, August 18, 2020 as planned, unless otherwise determined by the Governor of Texas.

NOTE: Students who wish to participate in extra and co-curricular activities and events MUST attend school ‘On Campus’ in-person. Students will not be allowed to switch back and forth from one instructional method to the other until the end of the six-weeks grading period.

Elementary Campus (Grade PK-4)
Mason ISD will offer ‘On Campus’ instruction for all elementary school students. This is the only option for parents of students in grades Pre-K through 4th grade. However, should a student need to be off campus for 10-14 days due to COVID-19 restrictions, Mason ISD will offer ‘Remote Asynchronous’ instruction during that particular time period. Remote Asynchronous instruction is defined by TEA as instruction that does not require having the teacher 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 pre-assigned work and formative assessments made available to students on paper. In this type
of instruction, students must show daily progress via teacher-student interactions or completion/turn-in of assignments from student to teacher. Remote Asynchronous instruction involves far more self-guided student instruction and parental support. Parents should expect for their child to have a minimum of 3 hours of instruction/assignments to complete on a daily basis.

Secondary Campuses (Grades 5-12)

Option 1: On Campus (In-Person)

Option 2: Remote Synchronous (Online)

Mason ISD will offer an option of either ‘On Campus’ or ‘Remote Synchronous’ as an instructional model for junior high and high school students. Remote Synchronous instruction is defined by TEA as two-way, real-time/live, virtual instruction between teachers and students when students are not on campus. In this method, students must attend class virtually, at the scheduled time (same time as students who are ‘On Campus’). Synchronous instruction is provided through a computer or other electronic device or over the phone. Mason ISD will check out Chromebooks for all secondary students who chose Remote Synchronous as their instructional method.

Each student in grades 5-12 will be required to complete a Commitment Form by Tuesday, August 11, 2020. This Commitment Form will be available on our website at www.masonisd.net. This form will ask you to commit to one of the following two methods of instructional delivery options. Once this commitment is made, the student will not be able to change to the other instructional method until the end of the six-week grading period.

Student Expectations:

- Students are still required to be “in attendance” for at least 90% of the school year in each class to get credit for the course.
- Follow any designated schedules communicated by the school.
- Complete DAILY online activities and assignments.
- Use proper ETIQUETTE during online learning.
- Dress appropriately for online (ZOOM or Google Meet) sessions and be visible to your teacher.
• Take responsibility for asking for help, asking questions, and taking advantage of tutorial sessions. It is the perfect opportunity for you to become more responsible and independent. Take ownership of your own learning!

• Turn in schoolwork DAILY and/or at the direction of the teacher

Parent Expectations:

• Monitor and ask for evidence that your child is on track with assignments and coursework.
• Contact teacher to gain access to your student’s online learning platform.
• Provide your child with assistance on their day to day activities with the exception of designated independent work.
• Assist in supporting your student’s needs by establishing and managing the daily schedule communicated by the teacher and the campus.
• Create a designated learning space for your child at home to learn comfortably.
• Maintain communications with your student’s teacher by phone, email, and/or online meetings to create a learning partnership.
• Allow your child to struggle; it is allowed and encouraged. Don’t help too much. The teachers need to assess whether or not they are progressing on pace. Becoming independent takes a lot of practice.
• Reach out to the teacher if you see anything that might need to be brought to their attention.

Points of Interest:

• Students selecting ‘Remote Synchronous’ method of instructional delivery will forfeit their privilege to participate in any extra or co-curricular activities during the entire grading period (approximately 6 weeks).
• Students will have opportunities to transition between instructional methods at the end of each six-weeks grading period. Change request guidelines will be communicated at each campus. The deadline to request a change to your child’s instructional method will be two weeks prior to the end of each six-weeks grading period.
• You are accountable for all the knowledge, skills and assignments that On Campus students are expected to grasp, demonstrate, and complete.
• There should be no expectation that you will receive the same level of support as you would if you were receiving On Campus instruction.