

**BENJAMIN ISD**

**RETURN TO  
SCHOOL PLAN**

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## **Introduction and District Priorities**

As a school district, Benjamin ISD looks forward to welcoming students back to school on August 17, 2020. Despite the challenges of COVID-19, our district will continue to provide an excellent education to our students. As the public health crisis continues, we plan to open the 2020-2021 school year with a focus on the health, safety, and well-being of our students, staff, and community.

Benjamin ISD is planning for two different instructional environments: 1) in-person and 2) remote learning. Our plan follows regulations and recommendations for school opening and operation provided by the Center for Disease Control (CDC), the Texas Education Agency (TEA), and state and local health officials.

Benjamin ISD will be providing an Instructional Plan that provides a description of, and procedures associated with, the remote learning option available to students.

The situation with COVID-19 is continuously changing, as are the protocols and measures needed to keep students and staff safe. Plans will remain flexible to accommodate potential changes in guidelines and regulations. As adjustments may be necessary throughout the school year, it will be the district's priority to keep the school community informed of those changes. The district website will provide you with the most up-to-date information.

It is important to remember that the virus that causes COVID-19 can be spread by infected persons who have little or no symptoms but are still contagious. The person they infect may become seriously or fatally ill. Especially vulnerable are persons 65 years of age or older with pre-existing health conditions and those individuals with compromised immune systems. Because of this threat's hidden nature, Benjamin ISD expects all employees, students, and families to follow these practices rigorously.

## **Communication**

The designated communication team regarding all COVID-19 related issues will consist of the following personnel. If you have questions or concerns, please direct those to one of our team members.

Interim Superintendent	Gordon Thomas
Safety Coordinator	Shannon Waters
Special Education	Melissa Everson
Administrative Assistant	Stacia Propps

## Preparation for Opening of School

The CDC provides guidance, recommendations, and resources to assist with plans and protocols for health and safety. Before school opens, Benjamin ISD will implement health and safety procedures that include:

- Ensuring adequate supply inventory (e.g., PPE, cleaning supplies, hand sanitizer).
- Ensuring compliance with CDC, Health and Human Services, TEA, and other jurisdictional policies.
- Providing communication of procedures and expectations upon entering facilities.

## Guidelines for Screening and Quarantine

### Screening Requirements

- Staff will be required to complete a self-screening process before entering any Benjamin ISD facility. The district may require further screening of employees, at any time, based on current state and federal guidelines.
- Parents/Guardians will be required to screen their children for COVID-19 symptoms each day before sending them to school. Additional screening may be conducted during the school day.
- Parents must not send children to school if they have COVID-19 symptoms (as listed in the glossary of this document).
- Parents must not send children to school if they are lab-confirmed with COVID-19. Parents can opt for the child to receive remote instruction during this time.
- Staff and/or students should not enter a campus building if any of the following apply. The individual:
  - Is sick or has been ill in the past 14 days. Symptoms to watch for (and that are not normal for the individual) include:
    - fever 100 degrees Fahrenheit or higher)
    - cough
    - shortness of breath/difficulty breathing
    - chills
    - muscle pain
    - headache
    - sore throat
    - new loss of taste or smell
  - Has a confirmed case of COVID-19 or has been in close contact with a person who has a confirmed case. These individuals must follow all isolation and quarantine procedures from the local health authority or their physician.
  - Has a household member awaiting COVID-19 test results or is awaiting his/her own test results.

## Quarantine Requirements

- For students displaying symptoms of COVID-19 or are feeling feverish, the campus office personnel will provide an assessment to determine if a student needs to be sent home.
- Students who are ill will be separated from their peers and will be picked up within 30 minutes and no later than an hour from the time the campus has contacted the parent/guardian.
- Staff members displaying COVID-19 symptoms will follow district protocols, including isolation from students and other staff members.
- If an individual who has been in school is lab-confirmed to have COVID-19, the school must notify county health authorities, employees, and parents in accordance with applicable federal, state, and local laws and regulations.
- The school will close off areas heavily used by the individual with the lab-confirmed case until the non-porous surfaces in those areas can be thoroughly cleaned and disinfected.
- Students and staff who have tested positive for COVID-19 will be permitted to return to school when:
  - ❖ They are 3 days (72 hours) fever-free without using fever-reducing medication.
  - ❖ Their symptoms have improved (cough, difficulty breathing, etc.)
  - ❖ Ten days have passed since symptoms began.
  - ❖ They have been released to return by a physician.

## Personal Protective Equipment

- Counties which have had 20 or more active COVID-19 cases must adhere to the Governor's Executive Order regarding the wearing of face coverings during school hours.
- Knox County has had 20 or more active cases. Therefore, the following requirements will be in place regarding the wearing of face masks.

Benjamin ISD plans to adhere to the following requirements regarding the wearing of face masks if Knox County's active COVID-19 case count has been 20 or more.

- ❖ Masks, including non-medical grade disposable face masks, cloth face coverings (over the nose and mouth), or full-face shields to protect eyes, nose, and mouth.
- ❖ Students 10 or older will wear face coverings on buses, and in hallways, common areas, and upon arrival to and dismissal from school.
- ❖ Students will not be required to wear face coverings while eating or drinking.
- ❖ Students and staff will be provided a standard TEA issued reusable face covering. Families are requested to supply a student face covering should the one provided by the school become unusable or lost.
- ❖ Face masks will not have inappropriate pictures, emblems, or writing that is offensive, vulgar, or obscene.
- ❖ Masks may not advertise or depict tobacco products, alcoholic beverages, drugs, or any other substance prohibited under school policy.
- ❖ It may be impractical for students to wear masks or face shields while participating in some extracurricular and co-curricular activities.
- ❖ Individual needs regarding face coverings will be addressed on a case-by-case basis. Requests for accommodations should be submitted to the campus office.

## **District Cleaning and Disinfecting**

Frequent cleaning and disinfecting will support a healthy learning and work environment for students and staff.

### **Daily Campus Cleaning**

- Each classroom and restroom will be cleaned and disinfected.
- All high-touch areas will be disinfected throughout the day.
- The cafeteria will be disinfected between lunch periods.

### **Restrooms**

- Staff should supervise and limit the number of students that enter the restroom at one time to comply with TEA recommendations and social distancing.
- Increased disinfecting will occur throughout the school day. Staff and students must wash hands with soap and water prior to exiting the restroom. Proper handwashing techniques will be taught to all students and consistently reinforced.

### **Standard Classroom Procedures**

- Classroom protocols and procedures will include expectations regarding social distancing applicable to classroom square footage.
- Whenever possible, students and staff will maintain consistent groupings of people to minimize the spread of the virus.
- Teachers and staff will make every attempt possible to make sure that high-touch areas in classrooms are disinfected between classes. Each classroom will have the following available:
  - Refillable alcohol-based hand sanitizer stations
  - Disinfectant to sanitize working surfaces
- The use of outdoor space for learning will be considered when possible.

### **Hand Sanitizing and Washing**

Hand washing guidelines indicate that students should use soap and wash hands for at least 20 seconds.

- Supervised handwashing will be enforced for our youngest of students, with every opportunity to encourage proper techniques to all students.
- Multiple hand sanitizing opportunities will be available for Benjamin ISD employees and students throughout the campus in locations such as the office, classrooms, cafeteria, etc.

# School Arrival and Dismissal

## Arrival to School

- The school doors will open at 7:30 a.m. Please do not drop your child off prior to this time.
- Students should be dropped off near the front door of the school, with the exception of Pre-K students, if they are not bus riders.
- Upon arrival, students should go to the designated areas as assigned.
- Parents will not be allowed to walk students to classrooms, with the exception of Pre-K students.

## Dismissal from School

- The school may designate staggered dismissal groups. Students will be instructed to maintain social distancing guidelines as they exit the building, whether loading on buses or walking to vehicles or home.
- Benjamin ISD employees will monitor exits as students leave the building.

## Transportation

Although the district is implementing safety protocols and disinfecting, families are encouraged to drop students off or carpool to reduce possible exposure on buses.

- Students will have their temperature checked as they board the bus each morning. Parents/Guardians are asked to remain in the school bus parking area until the bus has departed the area.
- Students will be required to use hand sanitizer upon boarding the bus.
- The CDC warns that buses may be a location where COVID-19 could be spread. Therefore, the CDC suggests that students be seated by family or socially distanced as much as possible on bus routes.
- The district encourages families to drop off and pick up their children at school or carpool with close contact families if possible, to reduce potential virus exposure on buses. If this is not possible, please know that if your normal mode of transportation is the bus, it is always available.
- Buses will be thoroughly cleaned after each trip, focusing on high-touch surfaces such as seats, steering wheels, knobs, and door handles.
- All students 10 and over will be required to wear face masks while on the bus during bus routes.



## **Visitors on Campus**

Visitors will be screened with questions regarding symptoms and be denied access if any symptoms of COVID-19 are reported or witnessed.

- Only essential visits will be allowed.
- Parents are discouraged from entering the campus and will not be allowed access beyond the front office area, except as noted below.
- Parents of prekindergarten students will be allowed to escort their child through the west door by the Pre-K classroom and walk their child to the classroom door in the mornings.
- Virtual tools might be utilized to conduct meetings such as PTO meetings, ARD meetings, LPAC meetings, etc.
- UIL and school-sponsored activities will be considered essential, and all government required social distancing measures will be strictly enforced. UIL guidelines will be enforced and can change at any given time.
- If activities can be staggered, every effort will be made to decrease crowd sizes.

## **Food Service**

- Based on social distancing guidelines, the district will determine areas suitable for serving breakfast and lunch.
- Benjamin ISD staff will monitor the cafeteria and hallways to promote social distancing practices.
- Lunches are not allowed to be brought in for students at lunch time. If a student wishes to bring his/her lunch, it must be brought in with the student at the beginning of the day.
- Parents/Guardians are not allowed to eat in the cafeteria with their child(ren).
- Microwaves will not be provided in the cafeteria due to the opportunity for cross-contamination with a high-touch device.
- Hand sanitizer will be available in the cafeteria.

## **Water Fountains**

Water fountains will be turned off. Water will be available to students during the school day if needed .

- Students will be expected to bring their own reusable water bottle for use throughout the day and are expected to take water bottles home to be cleaned daily.
- Parents are asked to secure a reusable water bottle for their child to bring to school daily.
- Parents are asked to assist with cleaning their child's water bottle daily.

# **District Health and Safety Training**

## **Staff**

- Teachers and staff members will be trained on appropriate hygiene practices adopted by the school district.
- Teachers will develop classroom procedures consistent with district, state, and federal guidelines.
- All staff will be trained on COVID-19 screening procedures.
- All staff will be trained in identifying symptoms of COVID-19, preventing the spread of the virus, and in sanitation of work areas.

## **Students**

- All students will participate in training specific to district health and safety protocols.
- All students will be trained on information related to COVID-19 screening, identification of symptoms, prevention of the spread of the virus, and in sanitation of work areas.
- If a student is experiencing any symptoms related to COVID-19, he/she needs to notify a staff member immediately.
- All students will be expected to follow district health and safety protocols.

## **Glossary/Description of Terms**

CDC -- Center for Disease Control

COVID-19 -- Coronavirus Disease 2019

PPE -- Personal Protective Equipment

TEA -- Texas Education Agency

### **COVID-19 Symptoms**

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

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

- ❖ 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
- ❖ Chills
- ❖ Sore throat
- ❖ Shaking or exaggerated shivering
- ❖ Significant muscle pain or ache
- ❖ Diarrhea

### **Close Contact**

In general, 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; 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.

Either of the above mentioned 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.