**Salado Independent School District**

**Return to In-Person Instruction and Continuity of Service Plan**

As we continue in-person instruction and continuity of services for the 2022-2023 school year, Salado ISD remains committed to supporting student learning and safety. We will continue to work closely with State and local health officials and coordinate with State and local government and the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) in providing for the health and safety of our students, educators, and district staff.

The following procedures are subject to change should underlying public health conditions worsen, requiring stricter health protocols and social distancing regulations to be mandated by the State of Texas. These guidelines will be reviewed every six months and updated in accordance with changing regulations. The first plan review took place on December 14, 2021. All stakeholders from the original committee were asked to provide input into necessary plan updates and adjustments. The plan was again approved by the board of trustees on January 24, 2022. The third plan review was conducted in July, 2022. The public was able to comment on the plan during the August 15, 2022 board meeting. The updated plan was approved the same day. The fourth and final review took place on February 27, 2023. The public was able to comment on the plan during the board meeting. The updated plan was approved the same day.

The ESSER III Stakeholder Committee (expanded District Site-based Committee) will review the Return to Instruction and Continuity of Services Plan every six months through September 2023 to determine if revisions are needed.

**In Person Learning**

All Salado ISD classes will be conducted in person.

**Masks/Face Coverings**

On May 18, 2021, Governor Greg Abbott issued an Executive Order prohibiting governmental entities in Texas — including counties, cities, school districts, public health authorities, or government officials — from requiring or mandating mask wearing. In order to comply with this directive, masks and face coverings will be optional for all students, staff and visitors to the District. Masks are still encouraged for those who are high risk, unvaccinated, or when the local transmission rate increases.

**Physical Distancing**

Where possible, physical distancing will be encouraged. Salado ISD will continue to abide by guidance provided by the Texas DSHS (Department of State Health Services) and CDC (Centers for Disease Control).

**Handwashing and Hygiene**

Salado ISD will continue to allow time in the school day for handwashing and will continue to provide direction on covering coughs and sneezes, and hand sanitizing. Signage and reminders will be posted in school buildings. Additionally, hand sanitizer will be available at all campuses for students, staff, and visitors.

**Cleaning and maintaining healthy facilities, including improving ventilation**

The Salado ISD custodial and facilities departments will continue to ensure the cleanliness of district facilities by implementing cleaning protocols recommended by the CDC, WHO and OSHA. To the extent possible, extra measures will be taken to clean high touch and high traffic areas. We are working to improve the ventilation and air purification systems in our facilities. Nineteen HVAC units are being replaced and filter media has been upgraded to higher MERV rating for HVACs units districtwide, improving filtration by approximately 33%. Regularly scheduled service for filter replacement as well as other preventative maintenance will be performed which will increase ventilation and fresh air flow.

**Contact Tracing**

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).

**Quarantining**

Salado ISD will no longer quarantine staff and students due to in-district exposures. Staff or students who test positive for COVID-19 will be required to quarantine at home and will be allowed to return to campus after the conditions for return have been met. Parents will be notified of confirmed COVID-19 cases that could impact their student’s campus. Weekly emails to parents and staff are published by the Superintendent which include an update on the number of active COVID-19 cases by campus.

**Diagnostic and screening test**

Parents and staff are encouraged to self-screen for any illness related symptoms. Students exhibiting symptoms while at school will be monitored by the school nurse and student pick up will be arranged. Any staff member who displays COVID-like symptoms is provided the opportunity to receive a free non-invasive 15-minute rapid Binax-NOW antigen test at any of our campuses.

**Students who have tested positive for COVID-19 will be permitted to return to school when:**

* Symptoms have improved (cough, difficulty breathing, etc.); **and**
* They are one day (24 hours) fever-free without using fever-reducing medication; **and**
* Five days have passed since symptoms began

**Staff who have tested positive for COVID-19 will be permitted to return to school when:**

**●** Symptoms have improved (cough, difficulty breathing, etc.); **and**

● They are one day (24 hours) fever-free without using fever-reducing medication; **and**

● Five days have passed since symptoms began

**Efforts to provide vaccinations to educators, other staff, and students, if eligible**

During the 2020-2021 school year, Salado ISD collaborated with the Bell County Public Health District and Baylor Scott & White, to offer numerous vaccine clinics to SISD staff, students and community members.

**CDC Recommendations**

The CDC has issued recommendations for all school districts as they prepare to return to in-person learning. Those recommendations are optional for all Salado ISD staff, students and visitors and a list of those recommendations may be found at: [Operational Strategy for K-12 Schools through Phased Prevention](https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/schools-childcare/operation-strategy.html#anchor_1616080023247)

**Appropriate accommodations for children with disabilities in respect to the health and safety**

All children and adolescents with a disability are entitled to a free appropriate public education (FAPE) in the least restrictive environment (LRE). Special services are provided based on an individualized education program (IEP) or a 504 Plan. To effectively address the appropriate health and safety guidelines and the needs of the individual child, the special education department will utilize creative solutions, on a case-by-case basis. Safety measures for teachers and staff working with students with disabilities will be considered to ensure optimal safety for all. Accommodations for students with disabilities with respect to the health and safety policies will follow the most current recommendations set forth by the local, county, state, and federal organizations, and the student’s IEP or 504 team. These teams will determine individual plans to accommodate the needs of students.

**Ensuring Continuity of Services**

Salado ISD intends to continue to use both local and federal funds to purchase instructional materials to address the academic needs of all students, to close learning gaps, provide teacher training in best practices, provide additional paraprofessional support to assist students, and implement strategies to address social and emotional needs of students. Salado ISD intends to add additional district and campus staff to provide and maintain educational services to students and provide learning recovery. Salado ISD intends to purchase additional resources such as instructional materials, software, and equipment to address the unique needs of students. Mental health counseling contract services to provide specific support to students to increase mental and social health and wellness will be utilized. Our District Mental Health Counselor will also provide support for students and staff with an emphasis on social, emotional, and mental health.

**Public Comment and Community Collaboration**

Salado ISD worked closely with the local health authority, TEA (Texas Education Agency), CDC, district nurses, parents and students to gather input into the final development and revision to the Safe Return to School plan. Salado ISD developed an online survey to garner community input into the development of the plan. The survey was sent out through multiple modalities and announced in the local newspaper. After data from the survey was studied, Salado ISD worked with the district’s site-based committee to further formulate the plan, which was then presented for public comment during an open forum at a School Board meeting in June of 2021. The original committee had the opportunity to review and revise the plan again in December 2021 before it was presented to the board. The third version of the plan was made available for public comment during the August 15, 2022 school board meeting.

The current Safe Return to In-person Instruction and Continuity of Services Plan posted on the District website is available in Spanish. Each campus can also provide an oral translation or reading at the request of a parent with a disability. In addition, information on accessing the plan has been shared with the local newspaper and distributed through local social media.

**Salado ISD Back to School COVID Protocols 2022-2023**

**Is the school district required to report test confirmed cases of COVID-19 to any local or state agencies?**

Per TEA Public Health Guidance dated August 5, 2022:

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.

**Will the district offer a remote option for my student?**

No. Governor Abbott’s disaster declaration has expired. As a result, Salado ISD’s remote learning option will no longer be available for the 2022-2023 school year.

**Will schools notify parents if individuals with test-confirmed cases of COVID-19 have been in school?**

No. TEA no longer requires this type of notification.

**Will there continue to be contact tracing and quarantine requirements?**

Students and staff who test positive for COVID-19 will be required to quarantine. Students who are a close contact of a positive person will not be required to quarantine, but will have the option, based on parental discretion. Salado ISD will no longer perform contact tracing of positive cases.

**What should I do if my child is sick or tests positive for COVID-19?**

Students who are actively sick with COVID-19 and/or have received a positive test result must be excluded from school. Parents must ensure they do not send a child to school if the child has COVID-19 symptoms or is test-confirmed with COVID-19, until the conditions for re-entry are met.

**Will my child’s absence be excused?**

As with any illness, parents must provide the school with documentation of a positive test or a note from their medical provider in order for the absence to be excused as a medically related absence.

**What should I do if my child is a close contact to a positive case?**

Parents of students who are determined to be close contacts of an individual with COVID-19 should consider what is best for their family. Parents may opt to keep their students at home during the recommended stay-at-home period. Based on CDC guidelines, individuals who are vaccinated are not considered close contacts.

**Will face masks be optional or required for the 2022-2023 school year?**

Face masks are optional for any student or staff member. Per Executive Order GA-38, school systems cannot require students or staff to wear a mask.

**Will social distancing be required?**

No. Social distancing is encouraged, where applicable, but not required.

**Will hand sanitizing and cleaning protocols still be in place this year?**

Yes. We will continue to allow time in the school day for handwashing and will continue to provide direction on appropriate respiratory etiquette and hand sanitizing. Campuses will post hygiene signage and reminders for students and staff. Additionally, hand sanitizer will be available at all campuses for students, staff and visitors.

**Will visitors be allowed on campus this year?**

There are many opportunities to visit our campuses including parties, ceremonies, and special events. We also have volunteer opportunities through PTO and Watch D.O.G.S. Please contact your child’s campus for specific details. Parent conferences and meetings with administrators should be scheduled in advance. Each campus can arrange meetings as needed.

**Does my student need to bring a water bottle to school?**

Yes. Students are encouraged to use the hydration stations to fill personal water bottles.

**How will the campus monitor students for COVID-19 symptoms?**

As with any illness, we encourage our parents to monitor their students for any illness related symptoms. We encourage all of our parents to receive medical attention as needed. Should students exhibit symptoms while at school, they will be monitored by the school nurse. As with any illness, the school will require parents to pick students up if they are exhibiting the following symptoms: fever, nausea, diarrhea, vomiting.

**Will my students or I be required to wear a mask or face covering at campus sporting events or activities?**

No. Face coverings are optional for participants and spectators at all UIL events and activities.

**If I have further questions, who should I contact?**

Please contact your campus principal with any further questions.

As the health and safety for all students and staff remains a priority, Salado ISD will continue to monitor the local health situation and communicate any updates or modifications as necessary.