

Open for Learning Plan Updates - 11.11.20

Transitioning from Remote Off-Campus Learning to On-Campus Learning and Vice Versa

Austin ISD is proud to offer a choice between remote off-campus learning and on-campus instruction for the 2020-21 school year. See below for the timelines regarding switching from one instructional model to another.

- Transitioning from on-campus learning to remote off-campus learning will occur when a student/parent or guardian chooses to do so.
- Transitioning from remote off-campus learning to on-campus learning:
 - The first request will occur as soon as possible, but not to exceed five school days.
 - The second request will occur at the beginning of the next grading period.

On-Campus Learning After the Phase-In Process

For all levels, BLEND will remain the common platform and access point for students who are continuing with remote instruction and will also be used by those who attend school on campus at all levels in conjunction with face-to-face learning.

At the middle and high school level, students who engage in on-campus learning will meet physically in a classroom for a set time for whole-group lessons, small-group lessons, guided practice, and independent practice. Students will transition class-to-class and will receive live instruction from a teacher in the classroom. Keep in mind that in some instances students may receive instruction from a teacher who is working remotely. Based on the number of students who return for on-campus learning, the number of students in a classroom may vary.

A hybrid learning model may be implemented for some **high schools**. A hybrid model means that students will attend school on-campus and remotely off-campus following an A/B schedule. Students receiving specialized services will have the opportunity to attend school on campus daily if they so choose.

At the elementary school level, safety protocols and the number of students who return for on-campus learning will inform the level of interactivity between students and between teacher and students on campus. Rest assured that on-campus learners will complete their full daily schedule of all core content classes, as well as their special area classes.

On-campus learning will consist of a child-centered blended learning experience for students who return for in-person schooling. Blended learning is defined as an instructional delivery

model in which students learn via electronic and online media as well as the more traditional face-to-face teaching. The use of electronic and online media is carefully planned and well connected to the instructional focus in the classroom. Blended learning is recognized for its personalized approach to learning and the resulting increased engagement it promotes. In some instances, a teacher will facilitate both virtual and in-person learning for students. While our goal is to keep students with their current classroom teacher, this will depend on the number of students that return for on-campus learning, the ability to implement social distancing and the number of teachers reporting to campus.

At all levels students will be served breakfast and lunch in the most appropriate setting available. In some instances, this may be in the classroom. Teachers are encouraged to use outdoor spaces for both learning and brain breaks throughout the day. All students will have access to restrooms at school.

We will continue to monitor updates from the Texas Education Agency (TEA) and local health authorities to inform our decisions to keep students, families, and staff safe. Please know that the plans shared in this letter may change in the coming weeks. For the most updated information, please refer to our [Open for Learning](#) webpage.

Technology Systems Status Page

Austin ISD has created a [systems status page](#) on our website. This page provides minute-by-minute updates regarding the status of each technology information system, such as BLEND, Zoom, and the parent cloud. Information regarding outages and when a system is expected to be up and running again will be available on this page.

Volunteers on Campus

Volunteers will be allowed on campus on a very limited basis and only when a campus determines that they are needed for the safe continuation of operational and/or instructional business. Most volunteers are not allowed to visit campuses at this time, including mentors, guest speakers, parents/guardians, and others.

Screening of Elementary School Students

Elementary students that need to be screened on-site will be screened by having their temperatures taken only with a no-touch thermometer reading on the forehead if they arrive at school unaccompanied by a parent/guardian. Elementary school students who arrive at school with a parent/guardian, whether on foot or in a vehicle, will be asked the screening questions in addition to the temperature check while the parent/guardian is with the student.

Screening Questions for Elementary Students Accompanied by a Parent or Guardian

- Is your temperature at or above 100.0 degrees Fahrenheit?
- In the past 24 hours, have you had or have you felt like you have had any of the following symptoms that are NOT related to any underlying medical condition:
 - Fever at or above 100.0 degrees Fahrenheit?
 - Sore throat?
 - **New** uncontrolled cough that causes difficulty breathing (for students with chronic allergic/asthmatic cough, a change in their cough from baseline)
 - Diarrhea, vomiting, or abdominal pain
 - **New** onset of severe headache, especially with a fever
- In the last 2 weeks (14 days), has anyone in your household tested positive for COVID-19?
- In the last 2 weeks (14 days), have you been in close contact (within 6 feet for over 15 minutes) or around anyone else that has tested positive for COVID-19 (with or without a mask)?
- Have you recently gotten tested for COVID-19, due to having close contact to a confirmed positive or showing symptoms, and are waiting to receive your test results?

Use of Face Masks

All elementary and secondary (middle and high school) students are required to wear a face mask that fully covers the nose and mouth at all times, including during recess, outdoor activities, and in locker rooms.

Campuses will identify a special location for students for whom it becomes necessary to temporarily remove their mask when they are engaged in physical activities.

Physical Environment - Safety Protocols

Plans have been made to order and install Plexiglas barriers in some elementary classrooms and cafeterias to provide a layering of protection based on capacity, number of students in each classroom, and number of staff on accommodations and leave. The required masking with Plexiglas along with the American Academy of Pediatrics recommendation that student desks be 3 to 6 ft apart will allow for continued health and safety in our schools.

Criteria for Returning to School or Work After a Confirmed or Suspected Case of COVID-19

Any individual who is either lab-confirmed to have COVID-19 or experiencing the symptoms that could be COVID-19 (listed above) must stay home (isolate) throughout the infection period (whether symptomatic or asymptomatic). An individual may return to school from the isolation period by meeting the symptom- or testing-based criteria. If students are positive, they will need to provide required documentation and be cleared by the campus health room staff (registered nurse and/or clinical assistant) before returning, and staff will need to provide documentation to leave office at leaveoffice@austinisd.org and be cleared by leave office before returning to work.

Lab-Confirmed Case Symptomatic Return Criteria

Student: 10 days have passed since symptoms started, and improvement in overall symptoms, and 24 hours have passed without fever and use of fever-reducing medication.

Staff: 10 days have passed since symptoms started, and improvement in overall symptoms, and 24 hours have passed without fever and use of fever-reducing medication, and a doctor's note provided to the Leave Office at leaveoffice@austinisd.org to ensure proper documentation regarding COVID leave.

Presumed Positive/ Symptomatic (Tested Negative) Return Criteria

Students: Provide negative test results to campus health rooms staff and there is improvement in overall symptoms, and 24 hours have passed without fever and use of fever-reducing medication; **OR** Provide doctor's note to campus health room staff clearing a student to return to school.

Staff: Provide negative test results to to the Leave Office at leaveoffice@austinisd.org, and there is improvement in overall symptoms, and 24 hours have passed without fever and use of fever-reducing medication; **OR** Provide a doctor's note to the Leave office at leaveoffice@austinisd.org clearing employee to return to work.

Presumed Positive/Symptomatic (No Testing) Return Criteria

Student: 10 days have passed since symptoms started, and improvement in overall symptoms, and 24 hours have passed without fever and use of fever-reducing medication; **OR** Provide doctor's note to campus health room staff stating that symptoms are not COVID-19-related and student can return to school.

Staff: 10 days have passed since symptoms started, and improvement in overall symptoms, and 24 hours have passed without fever and use of fever-reducing medication; **OR** Provide doctor's note to the Leave Office at leaveoffice@austinisd.org stating that symptoms are not COVID-19-related and employee can return to work.

Lab-Confirmed Case Asymptomatic Return Criteria

Additionally, any individual who is lab-confirmed to have COVID-19, but is asymptomatic (has not experienced any symptoms), may return to school or work when the following criteria are met:

Student: 10 days after receiving COVID-19 positive test result.

Staff: 10 days after receiving a positive test result and provide a doctor's note to the Leave Office at leaveoffice@austinisd.org clearing employee to return and ensuring proper documentation of COVID-19 leave.

Any individual wanting to access COVID-19 testing sites can find them on the [approved COVID-19 testing locations](#).

Abbott Rapid Antigen COVID-19 Testing

Austin ISD remains committed to providing a healthy and safe environment for our students, staff and community. We also know that on-campus is most effective, and in order to ensure a safer transition, we are pleased to announce that Austin ISD will be rolling out FREE rapid testing to its on-campus students and staff starting Wednesday, Nov. 11. This will be a three-phased rollout that starts by testing those who are symptomatic on site, but will expand to more individuals as the plan progresses. Students under the age of 18 will need parental consent prior to receiving a COVID-19 test. Consent to obtain a rapid COVID-19 test is required for all students and staff before having a test administered. The test will be administered by campus health room staff, via a nose swab, just inside the nostril, and will be less intrusive than other COVID-19 tests. Students in grades seven and up and adults can also self-administer the cotton swab with a test administrator present. Results will be delivered in as little time as 15-30 minutes and will be communicated in person, by email, or by phone, as indicated on consent form.

Who will get tests?

Testing will be available for on-campus students and staff. Testing will start with on-campus students and staff showing COVID-19 symptoms or those who fail an on-site health screening. Testing will expand to symptomatic individuals that fail the pre-health screening before arriving at a campus and asymptomatic students and staff as we progress through the three phases of

our plan. Throughout the three phases, the tests will be prioritized for on-campus students and staff.

We encourage students and staff that are learning/working remotely off campus that need a COVID-19 test to contact their physician or utilize free COVID-19 testing through Austin Public Health. Find more information here: <https://www.austintexas.gov/covid-testinfo>

What are the three phases to the plan?

- Phase I (Starts Wed., Nov. 11).
 - Week 1 (Starts Wed., Nov 11): Tests administered to individuals that are learning/working on campus, who become symptomatic while on site.
 - Week 2 (Starts Mon., Nov 19): Tests administered to individuals that have been learning/working on campus, who become symptomatic, while on site, and those who fail a health screening while off site.
- Phase II - Date TBD.
 - Testing will now include asymptomatic (not showing symptoms) individuals who have been learning/working on campus and have had close contact with a confirmed positive case or have recently traveled.
- Phase III - Date TBD.
 - Asymptomatic campus staff testing scheduled on a monthly rotating basis.

We hope to have all three phases of the plan rolled out by Jan. 1, 2021, but any aspect of the testing phase-in plan could be modified based on data, new recommendations, and what we learn.

Who do I talk to if I feel I need to get tested?

- On-campus students or campus staff members on a campus showing symptoms: Talk to your campus health room staff for evaluation and to receive a COVID-19 test. (Starting Wed., Nov. 11)
- On-campus students or campus staff who are having symptoms that start while off-campus: Contact your campus to schedule a drive-thru testing time with health room staff. (Starting Mon., Nov. 19)
- On-campus students or campus staff who have had close contact with someone with a confirmed positive: Contact your campus to schedule a drive-thru testing time with health room staff. (Starting date TBD)

Where will I get the test?

Testing will happen at the designated campus for the student or staff member. Drive-thru testing at rotating campuses will be available for on-campus students and staff. On-campus

students and staff who become symptomatic offsite will need to contact their campus to schedule drive-thru testing with their health room staff.

How will I know when to get tested?

- If an on-campus student or staff member becomes symptomatic while on-campus, the campus will be able to administer a free, rapid COVID-19 test on the student or staff member and connect them to their primary care physician.
- If an on-campus student or staff member becomes symptomatic and fails their pre-health screening, they will need to contact their physician, and they are able to schedule a free, rapid COVID-19 test at their campus.
- New health guidelines recommend that testing after close contact should occur 7-8 days after symptoms begin. If an on-campus student or staff member comes into contact with someone with a confirmed positive case, they must quarantine for 14 days, and they may schedule a test at a campus for the seventh or eighth day after exposure.
- If an on-campus student or staff member comes into contact with someone with a confirmed positive case on AISD grounds, they will receive a letter stating when to take the test from the district.

Can I return from quarantine or self-isolation early with a negative COVID-19 test?

- Because the incubation period for COVID-19 is between 2-14 days, those who have come into contact with a confirmed positive COVID-19 case must quarantine for the entire 14-day period, regardless of a negative test result.
- Those who displayed COVID-19 symptoms but did not come into contact with a presumed or confirmed positive may return to school or work with a negative test, as long as symptoms have improved and they are fever-free without using fever-reducing medications for at least 24 hours.