

RUNGE ISD
SAFE RETURN TO IN-PERSON INSTRUCTION AND
CONTINUITY OF SERVICES PLAN

As of August 7, 2023

Subject to change based on updated information or orders from local and state authorities.

PARENT AND PUBLIC NOTICE

Runge ISD's plan for safe in-person instruction and continuity of services.

Public Notice: CB (LOCAL) and Board of Trustees Resolution

The district shall provide public notice of federal grant applications through an information item at a Board meeting and by publishing information on the District's website. The District shall make available opportunities for public input as required by law or granting agency.

In light of the COVID-19 public health crisis, RISD has worked to develop a safe, efficient, and responsible plan for the 2023-2024 school year, to begin on Tuesday, August 8. It is important that we accommodate the social, emotional, and health needs of our students and their families while simultaneously providing the high-quality education our students deserve.

The following is a summary of the plan RISD will follow to educate students based on the requirements and recommendations outlined by the Texas Education Agency.

At a minimum, this plan will be reviewed and, as appropriate, revised at six-month intervals by July 31, 2021-2024 and January 31, 2022-2024.

This plan was posted to the RISD website: August 8, 2023

CONTINUITY OF SERVICES

Runge ISD will provide services necessary to address the needs of the whole child.

Attendance Guidelines

Per Texas Education Code (TEC), 25.092, students must attend 90% of the days a course is offered (with some exceptions) in order to be awarded credit for the course and/or to be promoted to the next grade. This requirement remains in force during the 2021-22 school year.

Students Receiving Traditional (On-Campus) Instruction:

1. Students receiving traditional, on-campus instruction will be coded absent in Ascender for periods/days missed and will be given a number of days equal to the number of days absent plus one additional day to complete make-up work. Student absence guidelines are outlined in the Runge ISD Student Handbook.

Quarantined Students:

1. Quarantined students are defined as students being required to stay home for COVID-19 related reasons by district or campus administrators, campus nurse, or county health officials. Any absence accrued while a student is awaiting COVID-19 test results will be corrected in Ascender when the student is coded as Q, or quarantined. *Quarantine status will be confirmed through the RISD Department of Health Services.*
2. In order to be counted present (coded R for Remote Present), quarantined students will receive make-up work and must demonstrate either daily progress, daily coursework completion, or daily progress via teacher-student interactions. **If the quarantined student does not adhere to Remote Present criteria, the student is considered absent.**

Academic Protocol

At this time, traditional, in-person instruction will be the only form of instruction available to RISD students. After careful consideration and input from teachers, administrators, and district families, the RISD Board of Trustees determined that in-person is in the best interest of the students of RISD.

Social Emotional Wellness

Students' social and emotional well-being is a top priority. Together, schools and families can support your child during this challenging time. With the endless COVID-19 coverage, it is natural for your child to experience some changes in behavior and mood. Counselors and staff will continue to work closely with families and students to ease the stress. Keeping routines predictable, sharing COVID-19 **FACTS** that are age-appropriate, make time to listen and share feelings, and reaching out to us for support are all important. We are here for you and your child(ren).

Food Services

The RISD Food Services Department will provide free reimbursable meals to all students in accordance with 2023-2024 Texas Department of Agriculture guidelines. The following precautionary measures will be in place for food service:

- Students will be required to wash/sanitize their hands prior to entering the cafeteria.
- Through sanitizing and hand washing practices will be followed in all areas of the kitchen and serving locations.
- All tables will be sanitized between mealtimes.
- Students will be discouraged from sharing food or drink.
- Cashiers will enter student numbers on keypads.

Considerations for Students with Disabilities

Students with disabilities receive instruction in a variety of settings as determined by the Admission, Review, and Dismissal (ARD) Committee. Each student with a disability must have an individualized education plan (IEP) that is properly developed, implemented, and maintained in the least restrictive environment that is appropriate to meet the student's educational needs.

The Texas Education Code Section 28.002 states that all students shall participate actively in a balanced curriculum designed to meet individual needs. The TEKS represent the core knowledge, skill, and competencies all students should learn in order to be effective and productive members of society. Students with disabilities shall be instructed in the TEKS in a manner appropriate for their needs. The student's IEP must include a statement of measurable annual goals designed to meet the child's needs that result from the child's disability to enable the child to be involved in and make progress in the general curriculum. For students taking alternate assessments aligned to alternate achievement standards, the IEP must also include a description of benchmarks or short-term objectives.

Students Protected Under Section 504

Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 states: "no qualified individual with disability shall, solely by reason of her or his disability, be denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination under any program or activity receiving federal financial assistance."

A qualified individual is any person who:

- Has a physical or mental impairment which substantially limits one or more major life activities;
- Has a record of such an impairment; or
- Is regarded as having such impairment.

A Section 504 Committee will determine appropriate accommodations to enable qualified students to receive a free and appropriate education. These accommodations may change the presentation of material, the method of student response, or the setting, timing, or scheduling of instruction. Students under Section 504 must still master the TEKS of a course. It is the classroom teacher's responsibility to ensure that the accommodations are being implemented.

In summary, students who fall under the protection of Section 504 should be graded in such a way that their disability does not affect their ability to demonstrate their knowledge of the subject matter.

Students with Homebound Services

A student may qualify for homebound services due to a medical need or condition and will be provided such services as indicated by the Section 504 Committee or the Admission/Review/Dismissal Committee. The decision to educate a student through homebound is made with the consideration of a medical doctor or medical team. Duration, frequency and support services will be determined by the 504 Committee and the ARD committee on an individual basis. Certified teachers provide instruction as dictated by the student's individual plan.

Students with Dyslexia

A student with dyslexia may be eligible for protection under Section 504, Special Education services, or assistance through the campus Student Support Team. Accommodations will be determined by the appropriate committee for these students.

Students who are English Learners

All academic and performance exceptions apply equally to English Learners (ELs); however, it is imperative to recognize critical processes and features of second language acquisition and to provide appropriate instruction to meet these exceptions. The exceptions apply to the second language learner at his/her level of proficiency in English.

Students who have waived the services of the Bilingual/ESL Program will be graded according to Runge ISD Grading Procedures without consideration given to the student's English language proficiency level.

The instructional approaches used within the general education setting should result in academic and/or behavioral progress for the majority of the students. Struggling students are identified using data-based student progress monitoring and provided intensive instruction. The use of validated curricula and teaching methods expected in an RTI model leads to data-based school improvement.

To ensure that appropriate instruction directly addresses students' academic and behavioral difficulties in the general education setting, a multi-tiered service delivery model is used. Included are layers of increasingly intense intervention responding to student-specific needs.

- **Tier 1:** Teachers use high-quality core class instruction aligned with the Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills (TEKS) in which about 80% or more of the students are successful. This tier is the crucial foundation of the RTI instructional model.
- **Tier 2:** Students are identified for individual or small group intervention in addition to core class instruction. This level includes research-based programs, strategies, and procedures designed and employed to supplement, enhance, and support Tier 1 activities. Tier 2 addresses the needs of approximately 10-15% of the students and is

primarily provided by the general education/classroom teacher. Approved instructional programming and/or interventionists may be used to provide Tier 2 instruction.

- **Tier 3:** Students who have not responded adequately to Tiers 1 and 2 receive specific, custom-designed individual or small group instruction beyond the instruction in Tier 1. This level of intervention is aimed at those students who have identified difficulties academically or behaviorally. This intervention is generally provided by a specialist and may include alternate instructional materials/curriculum.

Students who do not achieve the desired level of progress may then be referred for a comprehensive evaluation and consideration under the Disabilities Education Improvement Act (IDEA 2004). Data collected during Tiers 1, 2, and 3 are included and used to make the eligibility decision. It should be noted that at any point in an RTI process, IDEA 2004 allows parents to request a formal evaluation to determine eligibility for special education. An RTI process cannot be used to deny or delay a formal evaluation for special education.

HEALTH AND SAFETY PROTOCOLS

Instruction will take place in-person and will be delivered by RISD educators. The following protocols for healthcare and virus mitigation will be in place:

HEALTH SERVICES

Practices to promote health among students and staff.

Health screening

- Staff:
 - Staff is encouraged to complete daily health self-screenings before coming to campus each day, including self-screening for COVID-19 symptoms.
 - Staff must report to the district any symptoms and/or a lab-confirmed case of COVID-19, and must remain off campus until they meet the Return to School criteria.
 - Staff may also opt for evaluation by a doctor or testing at a facility. Staff who receive confirmation from a medical doctor that no COVID-19 infection is present or who receive a negative test may return to school following existing school illness management policies.
 - Temperature must be checked before going into the building.
- Students:
 - Parents must ensure they do not send a child to school on-campus if the child has COVID-19 symptoms or is lab-confirmed with COVID-19, and instead should opt for their child to receive make-up work until Return to School criteria is met.
 - Students experiencing any symptoms or who have a lab-confirmed case of COVID-19 will receive make-up work until they meet the Return to School criteria.
 - Parents may also opt for their child to receive make-up work if their child has had close contact with an individual who is lab-confirmed with COVID-19 until the incubation period has passed.

- Teachers will monitor students throughout the school day and refer to the nurse if symptoms are present.
- Parents may also opt to have students evaluated by a doctor or tested at a facility. Students who receive confirmation from a medical doctor that no COVID-19 infection is present or who receive a negative test result may return to school following existing school illness management policies.
- Temperature must be checked before going into the building.

Contact Tracing Protocol

- The school will immediately separate any student who exhibits COVID-19 symptoms while at school until a parent or guardian.
- Students who report feeling feverish will receive an immediate temperature check to determine if they are symptomatic for COVID-19.
- The student and parents will be contacted by the RISD Nurse to determine any in-school close contacts.
- In coordination with the Karnes County Health Department, potential contacts will be reported.

Vaccinations

- Staff:
 - COVID-19 vaccines are not required for RISD staff
- Students:
 - COVID-19 vaccines are not required for RISD students.
 - STATE OF TEXAS VACCINE REQUIREMENTS REMAIN IN PLACE FOR ALL RISD STUDENTS. VISIT [HTTPS://WWW.DSHS.TEXAS.GOV/IMMUNIZE/SCHOOL/DEFAULT.SHTM](https://www.dshs.texas.gov/immunize/school/default.shtm) FOR MORE INFORMATION AND A LIST OF VACCINE REQUIREMENTS.

PREVENTION AND MITIGATION

Practices to mitigate the likelihood of COVID-19 spread inside the school.

Face Masks

Please follow the practices listed below when wearing a face mask:

- Wash your hands or use hand sanitizer before putting on your mask.
- Put the mask over your nose and mouth and secure it under your chin.
- Fit the mask snugly against the sides of your face, slipping the loops over your ears or tying the strings behind your head.
- If you have to continually adjust your mask, it doesn't fit properly, and you might need to find a different mask type or brand.
- Make sure you can breathe easily.

Enhanced Sanitization

- Hand sanitizer and/or hand washing stations will be available in each classroom, at all entrances, and throughout common spaces.
- Students, staff, and visitors will be encouraged to sanitize and/or wash hands frequently.

- Students will be encouraged to clean their own spaces before and after use, in ways that are safe and developmentally appropriate.
- Custodial staff will engage in enhanced cleaning procedures of buildings including but not limited to all classrooms, offices, restrooms, and other common areas.
- Custodial staff will engage in enhanced cleaning procedures of commonly touched surfaces between student groups, if the same room/surfaces are used by multiple student groups.
- Custodial staff will use a cleaning process with CDC recommended disinfectants that are proven to kill the COVID-19 virus as well as others and are certified safe for schools.
- Custodial staff will frequently wipe high traffic surfaces, including handrails, door handles, counter tops, restroom surfaces, and cafeteria surfaces continually throughout the day.
- Custodial staff will increase the frequency of cleaning and disinfecting of restrooms and common areas throughout the day.
- Custodial staff will continually monitor hand washing and sanitizing stations throughout each building to ensure necessary personal disinfectant products are filled and available.
- Custodial staff 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.

Campus Protocols

- Multiple doors/routes will be used for student entry and dismissal to promote physical distancing between students.
- Campuses will review options to reduce large group gatherings at the start and end of the day.
- Classroom doors will be propped open during transitions to reduce the volume of contact necessary to enter/exit the room.
- When possible, school staff will work to improve air flow by allowing outside air to circulate in the building.
- Students are encouraged to bring their own water bottles from home. Water fountains and bottle-fillers will be cleaned and sanitized multiple times per day and may only be used to refill bottles.
- Lockers will not be assigned – students will carry needed materials,
- 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. Used tissues should be thrown in the trash, hands should be washed immediately with soap and water for at least 20 seconds, or hand sanitizer should be used.

Classroom Protocols

- Desks and tables will be arranged to maximize space between students.
- Teachers should plan for limited use of shared equipment and supplies in schools and classrooms.
- Staff will have access to disinfectant wipes to sanitize high-touch surfaces, working surfaces, and shared objects regularly.
- Students will be taught effective hand washing techniques and hygiene awareness.

- Students will be taught correct protocol for coughing and sneezing.
- Staff and students will be required to wash/sanitize their hands before eating, after recess, and after bathroom breaks.

Transportation

- All buses will have hand sanitizer dispensers placed in the stairwells for use when loading/unloading. All students will use hand sanitizer when boarding/exiting the bus.
- 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 the cleaning, windows will be opened to allow for additional ventilation and air flow.

REFERENCES

COVID-19 Symptoms

In evaluating whether an individual has symptoms consistent with COVID-19, consider the following question: 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 100.0 degrees Fahrenheit
- Loss of taste or smell
- Cough
- Difficulty breathing
- Shortness of breath
- Fatigue
- Headache
- Chills
- Sore throat
- Congestion or runny nose
- Shaking or exaggerated shivering
- Significant muscle pain or ache
- Diarrhea
- Nausea or vomiting

Close Contact

(CDC COVID-19 School Guidance)

This document refers to “close contact” with an individual who is test-confirmed to have COVID-19. Per CDC guidelines, close contact is defined as someone who was within 6 feet for a total of 15 minutes or more within two days prior to illness onset, regardless of whether the contact was wearing a mask.

Return to School Criteria

(CDC COVID-19 School Guidance)

- Any individuals who are lab-confirmed to have COVID-19 must stay at home throughout the infection period, and cannot return to campus until the school system screens the individual to determine the below conditions for campus re-entry have been met:

- o 5 days out from the start of symptoms; AND
- o Fever free for 24 hours without fever reducing medication; AND
- o Symptoms have improved.

School Clinic Protocols

(CDC COVID-19 School Guidance)

- Students or staff who present with symptoms of COVID-19 will be evaluated and assessed by the district nurse.
- If COVID-19 symptoms are present: staff member will be sent home, and student will be isolated from other students and asked to put on a face covering until parent/guardian arrives.
 - o Nurse will notify campus administrator so disinfection protocol can be initiated.
- Student will be escorted to vehicle upon parent arrival.
- Nurse will provide parent/staff with Return to School Criteria.

District Contacts for Safe Return to In-Person Instruction and Continuity of Services Related Questions and Concerns

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