



Dear Bobcat Parents and Students,

Blum ISD is committed to the safe reopening of facilities and learning for the 2020-2021 school year. To be clear, our goal is to offer face-to-face instruction beginning on August 12, 2020. We have, however, prepared contingencies should we experience attendance fluctuations and/or a resurgence of COVID-19 during the 2020-2021 school year. Last spring, in response to the unprecedented worldwide pandemic caused by COVID-19, teachers across the state of Texas had to very quickly change the way students were taught. BISD staff provided parents with at-home remote learning resources.

There is not a "one-size-fits-all" approach to reopening schools across the state of Texas. Based on available information as of July 2, 2020, school districts in Texas are creating their own local contingency plans for reopening schools based on general guidance from the Governor's Strike Force to Reopen Texas, the Texas Education Agency, the University Interscholastic League and the Hill County Health Officials.

Blum ISD's plans are subject to change as public health guidelines are updated and feedback from stakeholders is collected. There will be situations that may require temporary suspension of face-to-face instruction due to positive COVID-19 cases in our school. Parents, staff and students should be prepared for this in the event that it occurs, while actively working to prevent it through prevention and mitigation practices.

## **Guidance from the Texas Education Agency (TEA)**

On Tuesday, June 23 Commissioner Mike Morath of the Texas Education Agency provided school districts with guidance on how funding will work for remote instruction. School funding is important because it ensures that BISD can maintain services for students and pay staff without the worry of program or staffing cuts. These are the main points from TEA:

- Campus staff will be trained in COVID-19 safety protocols.
- Disinfectants will be used for cleaning campuses.
- Students, teachers, and staff will be encouraged to sanitize and/or wash hands frequently.
- Social distancing and safety signage will be added and visible throughout school facilities.
- No outside visitors or parents will be allowed to come to school for lunch.
- Only main school entrances will be accessible after arrival times and remain that way throughout the day to help ensure effective management and safe screening of visitors.
- Blum ISD is permitted to prevent any individual who fails the health screening criteria from being admitted to the campus until they meet any of the criteria for re-entry to the campus.



## Health Pre-Screening for Staff and Students

- Students and staff are expected to take their own temperatures daily before arriving at school. Anyone with a fever of 100 or higher should not come to school or a BISD facility or function..
- Students and staff should also prescreen themselves for any of the following symptoms prior to coming to school:
  - 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
- 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.
- Campuses will have access to a touch-free forehead thermometer to check/verify temperatures throughout the day. Anyone with a 100 or higher temperature will need to leave school.
- Staff will be required to notify their immediate supervisor if they have tested positive for COVID-19 or are presenting COVID-19 symptoms.

## Arriving at School

- Students arriving at school are to practice social distancing and spread out in larger common spaces until the bell rings to report to class. Details will be discussed with various grade levels.
- Bus riders will be taught to space themselves out from others as they exit the bus and walk into the school building.
- Parents are encouraged to drop their child off at school or walk with their child to/from school to reduce possible virus exposure.
- Students will be encouraged to use hand sanitizer immediately upon entering the building.

## Protocols for Individuals with COVID-19



In the case of an individual who was diagnosed with COVID-19, the individual may return to school/work when all three of the following criteria are met:

1) at least 24 hours have passed since recovery

**(resolution of fever without the use of fever-reducing medications).**

2) the individual has improvement in symptoms (e.g. cough, shortness of breath); and

3) at least 10 calendar days have passed since symptoms first appeared

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

If the 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 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/>.

Individuals - including students, teachers, staff or others who have had close contact with someone who is lab-confirmed to have COVID-19, and is presenting with COVID-19 symptoms, should stay at home until seen by a physician or tested. TEA refers to "close contact" with an individual who is lab-confirmed to have COVID-19. Close contact is determined by an appropriate public health agency. For clarity, close contact is defined as:

- a. Being directly exposed to infectious secretions (e.g., being coughed on while not wearing a mask or face shield); or
- b. Being within 6 feet for a cumulative duration of 15 minutes, while not wearing a mask or face shield;

If either occurred at any time in the last 14 days at the same times the infected individual was infectious. Individuals are presumed infectious at least two days prior to symptom onset or, in the case of asymptomatic individuals who are lab-confirmed with COVID-19, two days prior to the confirming lab test.

## Bus Transportation Protocols

- Bus Drivers will be trained in COVID-19 safety protocols.
- Drivers will be strongly encouraged but not required to wear a face covering/mask.
- Hand sanitizer will be available on all buses.
- Seats, handles and high-touch areas will be disinfected between morning and afternoon routes.

- When possible, bus windows will be opened to allow outside air to circulate in the bus.

## Lunchroom Safety

- Blum ISD plans to utilize the school cafeteria for student meals.

**NOTE: No parents/visitors during lunch.**

- Cafeteria staff will be trained in COVID-19 safety protocols.
- Classes will go to lunch on a staggered schedule to minimize the number of students in the cafeteria each period.
- All cafeteria staff will be wearing masks and gloves while serving students.
- Seats, tables, door handles and high-touch areas will be disinfected between lunch periods/use.
- When possible, food items will be prepackaged and boxed to minimize face-to-face contact in the cafeteria line.

## Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) & Masks

- Students in grades pre-kindergarten through 4<sup>th</sup> grade have the option to wear a mask, but are not required. Students in grades 5-12 and all staff are **REQUIRED** to wear masks in compliance with the governor's mandate.

## Handwashing & Hand Sanitizers

- Students and staff will be trained in proper hand washing protocols to prevent COVID-19 and the spread of germs.
- Elementary teachers will be encouraged to supervise student handwashing for 20 seconds at least two times each day, 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 stations have been added in each classroom and commons areas.

## Social Distancing Protocols

- Students and staff will be trained in proper social distancing.
- Social Distancing becomes a personal responsibility of each individual attending school or coming to a BISD facility. Anyone causing a disruption or unwilling to follow BISD safety protocols, putting students/staff at unnecessary risk may be asked to leave the premises immediately.
- Whenever possible throughout the day, students and staff will remain six feet apart. NOTE: It isn't realistic that staff and students can maintain six feet of social distancing at all times, especially in classrooms.





## Cleaning & Disinfectant Protocols

- Blum ISD custodial employees have been trained on COVID-19 safety protocols.
- Cleaning and disinfecting will occur daily in every classroom, commons area and on high-touch surfaces.
- Every classroom and office area will have disinfectant in a spray bottle provided for employees and students to use in high-touch areas throughout the school day.
- Common areas and high-touch surfaces will undergo extensive cleaning after each day's use.
- All campus facilities will be sprayed with disinfectant mist.

## Instructional Delivery Options

Blum ISD has surveyed parents about instructional delivery options.

Both of these options must address the required curriculum per the Texas Education Code 28.002.

Student grading policies under both fall planning models must be consistent with the grading policies used before COVID-19 for on-campus assignments. Therefore, the district will no longer be using Spring 2020 COVID-19 grading guidelines this school year, and attendance requirements and participation required by compulsory education apply.

### Face-to-Face Instruction

- Blum ISD intends to begin face-to-face Instruction on the first day of school for students, August 12, 2020.
- Instruction is traditional at-school learning.
- The safety protocols and social distancing listed above will be implemented as recommended for at school learning.
- Blum ISD will consider the Texas Education Agency (TEA), Hill County guidelines for face-to-face Instruction.

### Blum ISD Remote Learning School

- Remote instruction involves both two-way, real-time/live remote instruction. The teachers will interact with students in a remote learning environment for scheduled portions of the day. This option will be offered as a contingency plan for students that are absent due to illness, extra curricular, or if the campus is closed due to Covid 19.

## Attendance and Enrollment

- Blum ISD will be required to take DAILY attendance under both learning models. This means students will have to be present face-to-face to be counted present for credit purposes.



● Per Texas Education Code (TEC) 25.092, students must attend 90 percent of a course 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 2020-2021 school year.

● Given the public health situation, student attendance may be earned through the delivery of remote instruction. Due to the current situation, please do NOT send your child to school not feeling well with the intention to let them get counted present and then picked up early. We normally encourage students to push themselves to come to school, but we now have to operate with a focus on precaution.

● School systems are required to provide parents a notice of their public education enrollment and attendance rights and responsibilities during the COVID-19 pandemic using a document published by TEA.



## Prevention

To prevent COVID-positive individuals from entering our campuses, your student's school will have the following COVID-19 symptom screening procedures in place:

- All staff will be required to self-screen daily.
- All visitors will be required to screen upon arrival.
- Parents are asked to proactively identify when their student exhibits COVID-19 symptoms

## Criteria for Return to School

*Conditions for return to school after an individual shows symptoms or gets a positive test result:*

*Either:*

- 24 hours with no fever; and
- Symptoms improved; and
- 10 days have passed since symptoms first appeared

*Or:*

- An acute infection test at an approved testing location (<https://tdem.texas.gov/covid-19/>) that comes back negative for COVID-19

*Or:*

- A doctor's note indicating an alternate diagnosis

## Mitigation

Our district will be taking the following steps across each of our campuses to mitigate the spread of COVID-19.

- All adults in the building will wear face coverings.
- All students, ages 10 and above, will be required to wear masks, particularly when they are within six feet of one another, except when participating in activities that cannot be conducted with a mask on, such as eating, or unless it is not developmentally appropriate for the student to wear a mask.

## Response

In the event of a COVID-positive case on campus, the campus will take the following steps:

- All areas that are heavily used by the individual with the lab-confirmed case will be closed off until disinfected.
- All teachers, staff, and families of all students in that school will be notified.

- The local health department will be notified.

