



Palmer
INDEPENDENT SCHOOL DISTRICT

Palmer ISD Back to School Plan 2021-2022

Revised August 11, 2021

Community health data continues to change in our Palmer ISD community, and we are continuously monitoring this information and adjusting our plans accordingly.

Palmer ISD Back to School Plan Fall 2021

All Palmer ISD employees and students will continue with in-person instruction in the Fall of 2021. All Palmer ISD school operations will return to normal (prior to COVID-19) with the following exceptions.

Accelerated Learning

In order to help students make up for learning loss due to COVID-19, Palmer ISD will be implementing the requirements of House Bill 4545 that was recently passed in the 87th Regular Legislative Session . The new statute is effective, as of June, 2021, with acceleration instruction practices required during the 2021-2022 school year for all students, based on results from Spring 2021.

HB 4545 establishes new requirements for accelerated instruction for students who do not pass the State of Texas Assessments of Academic Readiness (STAAR®). At a high level, the legislation includes:

- Elimination of grade retention and retesting requirements in grades 5 and 8
- For any student who does not pass the STAAR test in grade 3, 5, or 8 in math or reading, a new LEA requirement to establish an accelerated learning committee to develop an individual educational plan for the student and monitor progress

Learning Acceleration

- For any student who does not pass the STAAR test in grades 3–8 or STAAR (EOC) end-of-course assessments, accelerated instruction requirements specify that it must include either:
 - Being assigned a classroom teacher who is a certified master, exemplary, or recognized teacher or
 - Receiving supplemental instruction (tutoring) before or after school, and/or embedded in the school day

Palmer ISD has chosen the second option of providing supplemental instruction (tutoring) after school, and/or embedded in the school day. This instruction can also take place during the summer and/or on Saturdays.

Health & Safety Expectations for Students and Employees

Evolving Student Health Protocols

The district is following [TEA public health guidance for schools](#).

- All families (returning students or students newly enrolled) will complete an annual statement affirming, prior to the start of the school year, that they will adhere to all health and safety expectations developed by Palmer ISD.
- All students will be required to sign a statement at the beginning of the year that COVID-19 screenings will occur at home daily and that they will abide by COVID-19 health and safety protocols. Reminders will be posted.
- Families will NOT send students to school if they have a lab-confirmed COVID-19 diagnosis or any of the following COVID-19 symptoms: feeling feverish or fever 100.0 or greater, 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. Families must immediately notify the school if a child has COVID-19 symptoms (described above) or if the student has tested positive for COVID-19.
- Students will follow campus-specific guidelines to support social distancing to the fullest extent possible.
- Reminder posters outlining proper protocols will be prominently displayed for all employees and students to follow.

Evolving Employee Health Protocols

The district is following [TEA Guidelines](#).

- Employees will self-screen for COVID-19 symptoms before coming onto a Palmer ISD campus/facility each day. The self-screening should include teachers and staff taking their own temperature. Employees must immediately report to their supervisor if the employee has COVID-19 symptoms (described below) or if the employee has tested positive for COVID-19.
- Per [TEA Guidelines](#), any individuals who themselves either: (a) are lab-confirmed to have COVID-19; or (b) experience the symptoms of COVID-19 (listed above) must stay at home throughout the infection period, and cannot return to campus until the school system screens the individual to determine any of the below conditions for campus re-entry have been met:

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

Positive UIL Students:

- Must quarantine 10 days from the first day of symptoms or a lab confirmed positive test.
- Cannot return to school, practice or competition without a doctor's release (UIL Rules).
- A negative test before 10 days is up cannot bring them back early from quarantine.

Positive Student Non-UIL:

- Must quarantine 10 days from the first day of symptoms or a lab confirmed positive test.
- No doctor's release required to return to school.
- A negative test before 10 days is up cannot bring them back early from quarantine.

Positive Staff Member:

- Must quarantine 10 days from the first day of symptoms or a lab confirmed positive test.
- No doctor's release required to return to school.
- A negative test before 10 days is up cannot bring them back early from quarantine.

All employees shall know and follow the established protocols to protect themselves and others from COVID-19 to stay safe.

- Employees will practice approved environment cleaning/disinfection, hand hygiene, and respiratory etiquette.
- Reminder posters outlining proper protocols will be prominently displayed for all employees and students to follow.

Campus Procedures

- Palmer ISD will continue to educate our students, staff, and community members about the importance of frequent hand washing; covering a cough or sneeze; not touching one's eyes, nose, and mouth; staying home when sick, and other measures to help prevent the spread of communicable diseases.
- Campus administration will provide procedures to best protect employee and student safety in regards to student movement, personal space, physical distancing in community areas, organization of resources, and classroom supplies.

Campus Cleaning & Disinfecting

- The district will continue to have universal signage for all facilities including, but not limited to, social distancing and hand-washing/sanitizing
- Proper cleaning and disinfecting of school workspaces, and high-traffic areas (e.g., bathrooms, cafeterias, libraries, faculty lounge rooms) will be conducted routinely throughout the day.
- All classrooms will be provided with wipes, cleaner, and hand sanitizer for students to clean their learning surfaces.
- Hand sanitation stations will be available at designated entrances and other areas throughout the building. Everyone will be encouraged to perform hand hygiene frequently.

Student Attendance

- The health and well-being of all students and employees is a priority. If you are sick, stay home, and come back to school when you are healthy enough to do so.
- As always, contact your campus to report an absence, so we know how to best support your student while they are out sick.

Meals

- All child nutrition staff will be trained to practice health and hygiene regulations.
- Cafeteria, serving, and eating areas will be cleaned between uses.

Nurses/Clinic

- In collaboration with Health Services and [guidance from TEA](#), campuses will implement protocols for students who require additional support from clinic staff, i.e., diabetes, medications, and regular care due to illness or injury, etc.
- Campuses will utilize the school nurse to provide professional learning for students and employees regarding best practices for health and hygiene.

Transportation

- Hand sanitizer will be provided as students enter and exit the bus.

School/Extracurricular Activities

- Extracurricular activities will follow [TEA guidelines](#), UIL, community health organizations, and other agencies/organizations.

Mental Health

- Palmer ISD counselors have been trained in social-emotional support and trauma informed care.
- Counselors will develop strategies and support for students, families and staff members.

What will Palmer Remote look like if we have to close classrooms, campuses or the district?

- Palmer ISD parents/caregivers are expected to be engaged with their children's education but are not expected to serve as their children's primary teacher of the academic curriculum.
- Students will have digital access through Google Classroom to all their courses
- Google Meet and Zoom will be used for virtual classroom meetings
- Students will engage daily in remote learning with Palmer ISD certified teachers facilitating students' learning and coursework.
- Students may have periods of daily, live instruction (synchronous) with certified teachers, as well as periods of self-paced, independent learning (asynchronous).
- A designated daily schedule for remote instruction will be provided to all Palmer Remote students that they will be expected to follow. Student attendance will be taken and student engagement will be monitored for all students every school day.
- Grading guidelines will be the same for Palmer On-Campus and Palmer Remote.
- Students who require additional support and interventions will receive those via video/phone conferencing based on the expectations and assessment of Palmer ISD certified educators.
- Students who receive services or accommodations through special education, gifted and talented, 504, or multilingual services will continue to receive the support and services. Please see the Special Programs for more detailed information.

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

What will the daily sanitization protocols be?

All classrooms, restrooms and commons spaces will be cleaned and sanitization misting machines will be utilized daily. Buses and school vehicles will be sanitized twice daily. All staff will have access to cleaning materials to utilize each day throughout the day.

Will students and staff be required to wear face coverings?

No

Can students and staff wear face coverings even when they are not required?

Yes, face coverings shall be appropriate to the educational environment not causing any disruptions. It should have appropriate logos, graphics, or designs. Bandanas will not be allowed. We recommend students face coverings that are a solid color, have a school or school club/organization logo or image, have a favorite college or trade school logo, or favorite sports team logo.