



**Plan for Safe Return to In-Person
Instruction and Continuity of Services**

In compliance with federal requirements for ESSER III

Updated June 2022

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LEA Plan for Safe Return to In-Person Instruction and Continuity of Services

(a) An LEA must describe in its plan under section 2001(i)(1) of the ARP Act for the safe return to in-person instruction and continuity of services—

- (i) how it will maintain the health and safety of students, educators, and other staff and the extent to which it has adopted policies, and a description of any such policies, on each of the following safety recommendations established by the CDC:
 - (A) Universal and correct wearing of masks.
 - (B) Modifying facilities to allow for physical distancing (e.g., use of cohorts/ podding).
 - (C) Handwashing and respiratory etiquette.
 - (D) Cleaning and maintaining healthy facilities, including improving ventilation.
 - (E) Contact tracing in combination with isolation and quarantine, in collaboration with the State, local, territorial, or Tribal health departments.
 - (F) Diagnostic and screening testing.
 - (G) Efforts to provide vaccinations to school communities.
 - (H) Appropriate accommodations for children with disabilities with respect to health and safety policies.
 - (I) Coordination with State and local health officials.

- (ii) how it will ensure continuity of services, including but not limited to services to address students' academic needs and students' and staff social, emotional, mental health, and other needs, which may include student health and food services

The Alief ISD Plan for Safe Return to In-Person Instruction and Continuity of Services constitutes the district's policies relative to the plan title. The Plan addresses each of the CDC's safety recommendations (a)(i)(A)-(I) to the extent determined most beneficial by the Alief ISD Health and Safety Committee.

(b) During the period of the ARP ESSER award established in section 2001(a) of the ARP Act, an LEA must regularly, but no less frequently than every six months (taking into consideration the timing of significant changes to CDC guidance on reopening schools), review and, as appropriate, revise its plan for the safe return to in- person instruction and continuity of services. **Plan has been reviewed for changes each time that the CDC has updated its guidance, and the Plan will continue to be reviewed every semester (less than 6 months) for changes by Alief's Health & Safety Committee.**

In determining whether revisions are necessary, and in making any revisions, the LEA must seek public input and take such input into account.

Public input will be sought via a district transparency webpage, where all plans and activities associated with ESSER III will be available for review and comment. The webpage address is <https://www.aliefisd.net/esser>.

If at the time the LEA revises its plan the CDC has updated its guidance on reopening schools, the revised plan must address the extent to which the LEA has adopted policies, and describe any such policies, for each of the updated safety recommendations. **District leaders will continue to review CDC guidance and the extent of Alief**

implementation as part of the revision process.

(c) If an LEA developed a plan prior to enactment of the ARP Act that meets the statutory requirements of section 2001(i)(1) and (2) of the ARP Act but does not address all the requirements in paragraph (a), the LEA must, pursuant to paragraph (b), revise and post its plan no later than six months after receiving its ARP ESSER funds to meet the requirements in paragraph (a).

Plan will be revised and posted no later than six months after receiving funds.

(d) An LEA's plan under section 2001(i)(1) of the ARP Act for the safe return to in-person instruction and continuity of services must be—

- (i) In an understandable and uniform format;
This easy-to-read plan will be posted on the central AISD ESSER III webpage.
- (ii) To the extent practicable, written in a language that parents can understand or, if it is not practicable to provide written translations to a parent with limited English proficiency, be orally translated for such parent; and
This plan will be posted in English and Spanish, with automated translations into other languages available via Google Translate.
- (iii) Upon request by a parent who is an individual with a disability as defined by the ADA, provided in an alternative format accessible to that parent.
We will provide audible format and other accessible alternative formats as they are requested.

Health and safety

AISD's safety plan focuses on communicating clear expectations, implementing preventative measures, and responding quickly and consistently to cases. Our safety plan and protocols are in compliance with recommendations provided by the Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), the Texas Education Agency (TEA), and local health authorities.

Universal and correct wearing of masks

- Facial coverings will be optional for all staff and students (grades PK-12) to wear at their personal discretion and preference. Personal choice about mask wearing is always to be respected by all staff, students, parents, and visitors. Face coverings protect not only the wearer, but also significantly reduce the risk of spreading COVID-19.
- Alief ISD will continue to provide personal protective equipment (PPE) for all employees and students.
- Campus clinics will have facial coverings and other PPE items available for any employee or student upon request.
- If you are wearing a mask:
 - You can cough or sneeze into your mask. Put on a new, clean mask as soon as possible and wash your hands.
- If you are not wearing a mask:
 - Always cover your mouth and nose with a tissue when you cough or sneeze or use the inside of your elbow and do not spit.
 - Throw used tissues in the trash.
 - Immediately wash your hands with soap and water for at least 20 seconds. If soap and water are not readily available, clean your hands with hand sanitizer.

Current CDC guidance recommends the wearing of facial coverings for vaccinated and unvaccinated persons when indoors and in confined spaces. Additionally, Governor Abbott's Executive Order 38 effective as of July 29, 2021, states that no governmental entity including public school districts may

Isolation of COVID-19 Confirmed Cases

- In line with recommendations from the CDC and local health authorities, Alief ISD will continue to quarantine positive confirmed cases and direct the confirmed cases to stay home and self-isolate for:
 - At least 5 days since symptoms first appeared, **and**
 - At least 24 hours with no fever and without fever-reducing medication, **and**
 - Other symptoms of COVID-19 continue to improve. **Loss of taste and smell may persist for weeks or months after recovery and need not delay the end of isolation.

Reporting of COVID-19 Confirmed Cases

- In line with TEA guidance and in coordination with state and local health officials, Alief ISD will notify confirmed cases:
 - Alief ISD will report to Harris County Public Health on the same day that a case is discovered using the School Reporting link [here](#).
 - Cases will also be reported to the Texas Department of State Health Services on a weekly basis using the following link [here](#).

Modifying facilities to allow for physical distancing (e.g., use of cohorts/ podding)

Physical Distancing

- Schools may place student desks in rows with space between individuals. Desks may be placed facing the same direction. (may = optional)
- Schools will promote more frequent hand washing and/or sanitizing when social distancing recommendations are not possible.

Buses and Student Transportation

- In line with the executive order from Governor Abbott, beginning 6/5/21 the wearing of masks will be optional for students and staff while riding school buses.
- The Transportation Department will monitor and adjust bus seating protocols as COVID cases fluctuate in the community as needed. Students receiving special education services whose ARD indicates special education eligibility and students eligible for the McKinney-Vento program will be transported.

- All buses will be equipped with hand sanitizer for use by students and staff. All bus drivers will be required to use district sanctioned CDC approved cleaning agents when cleaning buses. Transportation will ensure all staff are trained on the appropriate use of cleaning agents prior to the start of the 2022-2023 school year. The following safety protocols will be in place to prevent any outbreak while in the bus:
 - All students will be required to follow the campus requirements and expectations while aboard buses.
 - All transportation vehicles will be sanitized to improve sanitation and germ removal if a positive person has been identified to have been transported on a bus.

Handwashing and respiratory etiquette

Regular hand washing is one of the best ways to prevent the spread of germs to others. The district will expect staff, students, and visitors to frequently and consistently practice safety protocols by washing hands as often as possible using the following handwashing protocol:

- Wash hands with soap and water for at least 20 seconds and rinse with clean water.
- Students, staff, and visitors will be encouraged to sanitize and wash hands frequently.
- Hand sanitizer stations will be available for staff and student use.
- Schools will provide signage throughout the building promoting proper handwashing techniques, and social distancing practices when possible.
- Schools will promote and encourage students and staff to use general hygiene practices such as: proper handwashing techniques, how to cover coughs and sneezes appropriately, and other prevention and mitigation strategies that are part of the district's health and safety protocol.
- Students will be encouraged to use hand sanitizer after all common contacts (eat, touch points) and will receive continuous reinforcement on hygiene ownership as part of the safe practices educational campaign. Washing and sanitizing hands often, especially before eating, after using the restroom, after blowing your nose, after coughing or sneezing, and after coming in to contact with highly touched objects such as doorknobs, handrails, etc. can help reduce the spread of illness.

Cleaning and maintaining healthy facilities

- Custodial services will conduct more frequent cleanings and provide cleaning supplies as requested by teachers to clean their classrooms during the day. Custodial services will use supplies that are EPA approved for use against SARS-CoV-2.

- Custodial staff schedules have been arranged for additional cleaning and disinfecting of common space high-touch areas such as door handles, stair handrails, tables, desks, computers, and laptops.
- Custodial staff will be trained to ensure safe and appropriate use of cleaning supplies.
- Custodial staff will use personal protective equipment (PPE) as needed.
- Custodial staff will disinfect restrooms and other common-use spaces more frequently throughout the day.
- Custodial staff will conduct routine cleaning/sanitizing at the end of every school day.
- The maintenance department will continue to maintain air filters and change out as needed to ensure better air quality. Additionally, maintenance will work to ensure fresh air supply units are working properly.
- Barrier shields have been installed at receptionist and high-traffic office areas across all campuses and support buildings.
- Water fountains will be operational.

Contact tracing, isolation, and quarantine, in collaboration with State and local health departments

Identifying and Isolating Possible COVID-19 Cases on Campus

- Schools must immediately separate any student who tests positive for COVID-19 while at school until the student can be picked up by a parent or guardian.
- Schools will close-off and clean the areas used by the individual who tests positive for COVID-19 while at school (student, teacher, or staff).
- Students who report feeling feverish will be assessed by the nurse to determine if they are symptomatic for COVID-19.

Contact Tracing and Case Reporting (response to confirmed case)

Each time a confirmed case of COVID-19 occurs on campus¹ (among students or staff), the school will do the following:

1. Direct the confirmed case to stay home and self-isolate for 10 days.
2. Notify district administrators. District administrators will notify the local health department.
3. Notify families and staff via letter for elementary and intermediate students only.
4. Begin contact tracing (for elementary and intermediate only). Contact tracing within the school will be conducted by the school's COVID Response Team. Alief ISD's expectation is that Harris County Public Health will trace contacts outside of the school.

COVID Response Team

- Each campus will have a COVID Response Team that consists of one of each of the following roles:

¹ Per [TEA](#), "on campus includes the bus and any school facilities"

- Administrator; Head Custodian; Counselor; Nurse; Attendance Clerk
- Larger campuses may assign multiple people in each role (i.e. two administrators, two counselors, etc).

Diagnostic and Screening Testing

In December 2020, with guidance from the Texas Department of Emergency Management (TDEM), Center for Disease Control (CDC), Texas Education Agency (TEA), and area public health authorities, Alief ISD launched a district-administered antigen testing program using Rapid COVID-19 tests.

Alief ISD's testing program is being implemented by Alief ISD's Health Services department and school nurses. The district has been providing voluntary antigen testing on-campus and off campus (at Alief ISD's Crump Stadium) 5 days per week. The district has administered over 25,270 tests as of May 2022. The positivity rate for these tests has been 16.8% (over 4,200 positives, including a large number of asymptomatic cases), indicating that this testing program is meeting a significant need in the community. The antigen testing program has allowed campuses to swiftly isolate positive cases and slow virus transmission. Furthermore, it has accelerated student and staff treatment, improved contact tracing, and increased family and staff comfort with in-person learning.

Participation in rapid COVID-19 testing is voluntary for both staff and students. Minors must have parent/guardian permission before testing can be performed. In all cases, if an individual tests positive, the school will follow the existing process for responding to a confirmed case, including notification, contact tracing at the elementary and intermediate level, and cleaning.

Testing is provided on-campus and off campus. Students and staff who are **off campus** when they a) become symptomatic, or b) are identified as a close contact will **not** come inside campus for an antigen test. Campus staff may arrange for testing outside of the campus with a school nurse. As of June 2022, off campus testing will be offered by appointment at the Alief Support Facility (ASF).

Efforts to Provide Vaccinations to School Communities

In partnership with Memorial Hermann Hospital, Alief hosted vaccination clinics for eligible students and community members throughout the school year. The district plans to host additional clinics (in partnership with a healthcare partner) throughout the school year. Additionally, AISD submitted a proposal to the City of Houston in April seeking - and was awarded the grant - resources/partnerships to increase access to vaccination in Alief's highest need neighborhoods. Finally, AISD has communicated regularly with the community regarding vaccination opportunities through website notifications, automated calls, emails, and Twitter.

Appropriate accommodations for children with disabilities with respect to health and safety policies

- Students with disabilities in Pre-K through grade 8 that are at high risk due to health and safety concerns may benefit from homebound instruction to meet their long-term needs. This change of placement decision will be made by the student's 504/ARD committee following district protocol.
- Students with disabilities will also have equal access to learning loss assessments and all remediation intervention activities and supports in addition to their provision of FAPE. The student's ARD committee will make an individualized determination as to whether additional compensatory services are needed.

Coordination with state and local health officials

- If a significant number of confirmed cases occurs at a school, Alief ISD will contact HCPH for advice on modified operations or the potential need for a temporary closure of the school.
- Alief's Health Safety Committee met with local health officials multiple times while creating the district's safety plan.
- Superintendent Chambers communicates with state and local officials regularly (including Harris County Public Health and local hospital leaders) in order to remain informed on health trends and to ensure that Alief's policies/procedures are in line with best practices across the region.

Notifying authorities of confirmed cases

When cases of COVID-19 occur among students or staff, Alief ISD will notify the appropriate authorities.

- AISD will report to Harris County Public Health on the same day that a case is discovered
 - Cases will be reported using the School Reporting Form linked [here](#).
- Cases will also be reported to Texas Department of State Health Services (per TEA) using the form linked [here](#), on a weekly basis.

Continuity of Services

22-23 Academic Overview

Given the range of student experiences over the past year, recovery cannot be one-size-fits-all. Every student will need a unique set of supports and opportunities. The pandemic has inhibited teachers' ability to impact students; therefore, we must address associated learning losses in a thoughtful, equitable way.

In the Fall of 2021, Alief ISD returned all students to in person learning with the exception of a small group of students authorized by SB15 to participate in the virtual school pilot.

In the event that health officials and the State of Texas determine that virtual learning is needed, all Alief students will have access to the internet and a learning device. District-provided devices and hotspots will be available for a year-long loan to families who do not already have connectivity. This will ensure that all students have equitable access to learning opportunities.

Moreover, all Alief students have been assessed for learning loss. All teachers will be measuring students' starting point for the school year. We know that the extended and unexpected time away from the school building, combined with the stress of the pandemic, impacted academic progress.

In addition to the social-emotional and mental health supports detailed below, families will continue to be able to access supports to ensure student health and continuity of learning, including family workshops and family engagement and a technology helpline.

Student Social-Emotional Support

As we all attempt to do what is best for our students, we do so with safety as a paramount consideration. Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs reminds us that at the foundation of any hope of progress, best practices dictate safety be addressed and established if at all possible. With this pandemic not yet in our rear view, we know the importance of social-emotional and mental health considerations. The Counseling Department, with collaboration with our P.A.S.S. and LSSPs, are available to support each campus as we help incorporate social-emotional learning and mental health support for Alief students.

Counseling Training:

Via robust and research-based professional development, all Alief ISD Professional School Counselors are required to participate in training to address the possible SEL (Social-Emotional Learning)/Mental Health impacts of this pandemic and how they may affect children. This will include topics concerning:

- Anxiety
- ACES (Adverse Childhood Experiences)
- Trauma (Individualized and Shared)
- Grief Loss/Survivors' Guilt
- Compassion Fatigue
- Trust Issues
- Empathy
- Resiliency

Counseling Staff have been trained in the ASERT Crisis Re-entry Model. The ASERT Model highlights 4 consistent components:

A: Acknowledge- We are all experiencing this pandemic and its effects together. It serves no one to pretend that this is not the case. On the contrary, not acknowledging this life changing experience can risk diminishing the reality that many may need to process in order to progress in a healthy manner.

S: Support- It is not merely enough to acknowledge trauma and significant change but to also provide relevant and specialized support when available and appropriate.

E: Engage/Evaluate with Empathy- Adults know how they feel. Students know how they feel. The work is to engage in dialogue in a safe manner to validate feelings and refer for additional support if needed/appropriate. Staff can reflect on their trauma-informed training via the KOGNITO platform and evaluate for understanding and effectiveness. This school year, staff will be trained on the TEA-created Project Restore Trauma informed strategies. The evaluation component is ongoing and cyclical and empathy is at the foundation of these efforts.

RT: Resiliency Training- To minimize any trauma and significant change, individuals and groups must be taught the power of resiliency, what it is, and how to recognize and practice it within themselves. Resiliency training goes hand-in-hand with SEL and character training and is significant to providing students with an emotionally safe environment in which they can learn and co-exist positively with others.

Campus Implementation

Each campus, prior to students returning, will have the opportunity to support their staff as they prepare to engage with students and families. This can be facilitated by campus counselors or other appropriate principals' designee(s). This can include some prescriptive "talking points" that all campuses can share with students to help ensure consistency, accuracy, transparency, and overall effectiveness.

Student Daily Support in the Classroom (In-Person):

This school year, all campuses will have daily practices that tie to the Character Strong Curriculum. Teachers must be intentional about building relationships immediately and consistently as they engage with their students. Daily practices such as using students' names and posting their names in their classrooms, doing a quick five-minute SEL lesson or check in, and creating a "Brain Break" area in the classroom for students when they need to take a moment to regroup will all work to help build a sense of belonging and decrease anxiety. SEL lessons can be readily available in the "Brain Break" areas for students to access. Teachers will focus on building resilience in students with restorative practices and integrating SEL within the daily classroom environment. Alief professional school counselors are available to support these efforts and other SEL implementation.

Regular Emotional/Mental Health Check-In

Campus counselors, our Mental Health Facilitator, our Mental Health Liaison, and other related campus-level support personnel (CIS, Campus Nurse, etc.) are intentional in checking on the mental health and emotional status of students via individual and group support and resources.

Counseling Support Integration

All Alief ISD Counseling staff have been trained using the ASERT Model and will collaborate with our Alief LSSP's, P.A.S.S. team members, Health Services, and Counseling Partners (CIS, CYS) to ensure wraparound services as we support campuses with social-emotional learning and mental health. Additional partners/resources include: Mental Health America of Greater Houston, The Harris Center for Mental health and IDD, Mental Health First Aid, Texas Counseling Association, Center for School Behavioral Health, TCHAT, Kognito, Depelchin, TEA, and Region 4.

Staff Social-Emotional Support

Alief ISD values and appreciates its dedicated staff. We realize that as we focus on social-emotional support for our district, we must include the adults that help lead and educate our students every day. We have created a Virtual Alief ISD Mindfulness Room that staff may access for social-emotional resources, support, and overall researched-based mindfulness care. All schools are also able to create a staff mindfulness space on their campus. Via our Risk Management Department, we also have a dynamic Employee Assistance Program (EAP) available at no cost for employees and their dependents. This program provides confidential counseling and referral services and unlimited telephonic support.