



**YELLOWSTONE**  
**INSPIRE. EMPOWER. INVEST.**

2020-2021  
COVID-19 Response  
Guide

COVID-19 Health and Safety Family and Staff Guide

Last Updated: 09/18/2020

*PLEASE NOTE: The details in this document are subject to change as directives are provided by governing authorities and/or health officials, or as environmental conditions change.*

## Introduction

As we continue to manage the ongoing COVID-19 Pandemic, Yellowstone Schools is committed to our student's safety and academic success, as well as the safety of our faculty and staff.

To meet this mounting challenge, we have worked over several months and gathered input from families, faculty and staff, our board members, and local and state health authorities. We have monitored trends in Harris County and tracked local, state, and federal guidelines and ordinances.

We will comply with all state and local government orders. If we are required to shut down, we will continue to offer personalized, remote instruction. Yellowstone has the capacity to pivot to online instruction quickly and efficiently due to our efforts at the beginning of the COVID-19 outbreak. As a response to COVID-19, we have instituted a Pod system (detailed further in this document) and new protocols to ensure the health and safety of the Yellowstone community. These protocols include requiring all employees, students, and staff members to wear masks, wash hands regularly, and practice physical distancing. Until further notice, we have closed the campus to external visitors. Staff members must complete a daily health survey/screening before entering the building, and likewise, students must complete a temperature check before entering campus. To preserve our Pod system and other health protocols, we will not be offering bus transportation for the 2020-21 school year.

A detailed description of all of our protocols, school calendar, and other related information can be found on our website at <https://yellowstoneschools.org/back2school/>. This site is updated regularly as the year progresses.

### Reopening Timeline

Our first day of school is August 24, 2020 and we will only offer home learning for the first three weeks of instruction. We will begin on campus instruction for families who choose this option on Monday, September 14, 2020. Two weeks prior to the start of each subsequent quarter, families will be offered the opportunity to select the method of instruction for their students.

## Student & Staff Safety Protocols

### Protocols for Screening and Isolation

#### General

All students and staff will be screened for COVID-19 symptoms regularly and individuals who present symptoms will be separated and sent home.

### Screening Protocols

- Staff will be required to self-screen for COVID-19 symptoms prior to reporting to work each day.
- Parents/guardians are required to screen their students for COVID-19 symptoms each day prior to sending their student to school.
- Teachers will monitor students and refer them to their school Principal if symptoms are present.

### Entry Screening Protocols

- All employees will complete a daily health screening that includes a temperature check before they enter the building. They will enter the building through their designated Pod entrance. It is expected that employees will stay home when they exhibit any COVID-19 related symptoms.
- All students' temperatures will be screened before they enter the building at their designated Pod entrance. Details about arrival and dismissal procedures are detailed later in this document.
- Until further notice, we are a closed campus and no external visitors will be admitted into the building. In the event that we do have to have visitors and/or parents in the building, they will complete the health screening survey and temperature check at a designated entrance that is not connected to a grade level pod.

### Isolation Protocols

Isolation areas have been established for students and adults who experience COVID-19 symptoms while at school. These isolation rooms will always be stocked with masks and hand sanitizer, and, in the event they are used, will be thoroughly cleaned and disinfected. Should a student or employee become ill while at Yellowstone, administrators will follow the protocols outlined below.

### Guidelines for Student or Staff Displaying COVID-19 Symptoms

- When a student has displayed symptoms of COVID-19, designated staff will determine if and when a student needs to be sent home.
- Students who are ill will be separated from their peers and should be picked up within 30 minutes and no later than 1 hour from the time the campus contacted the student's parent/guardian.
- Staff members displaying COVID-19 symptoms while at work will immediately go home, and then will follow Yellowstone protocols if they are displaying symptoms.
- Students and staff who have tested positive for COVID-19 will be required to submit a letter of good health from a physician's office prior to returning to school.

According to the Texas Department of State Health Services, the Texas Education Agency Guidebook for Public Health Operations, and CDC, any of the following symptoms indicate a **possible COVID-19 infection**:

- Feeling feverish or a measured temperature greater 100.0 degrees Fahrenheit
- Loss of taste or smell
- Cough
- Difficulty breathing or 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 with Infected Person and Guidelines for Returning to Campus

When we have an on-campus employee or student who has tested positive for COVID-19, we will adhere to the following protocols. These protocols have been established by the CDC (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention) and conform to local and state health authority guidance:

- The infected employee should notify our HR Manager, Jasmen Denton, immediately. In the case of an infected student, the family member should contact their child's teacher who will, in turn, contact Mrs. Denton immediately.
- Mrs. Denton will contact the local health authorities and comply with all local/state reporting requirements. At the same time, Yellowstone will initiate the steps detailed below:

**Step One:** Yellowstone will complete a contact tracing protocol, which will include confirming the Pod that the student or employee works in and also confirming who else the infected individual has had close contact with. *Close contact is defined by the CDC as being within six feet of the infected individual for a cumulative duration of 15 minutes or more. Close contact occurs in this situation regardless of whether the individuals wear face coverings.*

**Step Two:** Yellowstone will contact any families or employees who work in that Pod and/or have had close contact with the infected individual.

**Step Three:** Yellowstone will close the Pod for 72 hours so that we can do a thorough deep cleaning of the entire area. During that 72-hour period, the grade level will switch to 100% home learning. Yellowstone will notify families and employees once that 72-hour period has ended, and based on the guidance below, students and employees who are cleared may return to campus at that time.

**Step Four:** After all impacted employees and families have been notified, Yellowstone will send a notification to the school community. This notification will adhere to all privacy requirements for the infected individual.

### **Guidelines for Returning to Campus**

Those who are in the Pod and/or were in close contact with the infected individual will only be able to return to campus based on the criteria below. In addition, siblings of the infected individual must also follow the guidance listed below.

For those who are in the Pod and/or were in close contact with the infected individual they must:

- Quarantine for 10 school days,

OR:

- At least 72 hours after the initial notification, obtain a test that comes back negative for COVID-19,

AND:

- Be fever and symptom free (without the use of fever-reducing medication)

For those who test positive for COVID-19, they must meet all three of the following conditions to return to school:

- 24 hours with no fever (without the use of fever-reducing medication); and
- Symptoms improved; and
- 10 days have passed since they received the positive COVID test.

OR:

- At least 72 hours after the initial positive test, obtain a test that is negative for COVID-19

OR:

- Obtain a doctor's note with an alternate diagnosis that clears the individual to return to school

### **Siblings**

For siblings of any student who tested positive, they must also quarantine for 10 school days and can only return to campus after that time if they are symptom and fever free (without the use of fever-reducing medication).

### **Staying Home and Self-Isolation**

Staying home allows individuals who may have been exposed to COVID-19 to monitor their symptoms during the period in which they may be infectious. These individuals should separate themselves from others outside their home, monitor their health, and follow directions from their state or local health entity.

In most cases, local health entities will notify close contacts that they should:

- Stay home until 14 days after last close contact with confirmed positive COVID-19 individual
- Check temperature twice a day and watch for symptoms of COVID-19
- If possible, stay away from people who are at higher-risk for getting very sick from COVID-19

Self-isolation is used to separate people infected with COVID-19 (including those who are sick with the virus and those with no symptoms) from people who are not infected. People who are in isolation should stay home until it's safe for them to be around others. In the home, anyone sick or infected should separate themselves from others by staying in a specific "sickroom" or area and using a separate bathroom (if available).

## Student or Staff Travel

Yellowstone will require a 14-day self-quarantine for any students or staff returning from international travel, consistent with CDC guidance. These individuals may not be on campus during this time.

## Protocols for Face Coverings

- All students and staff are always required to wear masks indoors that cover both their nose and mouth
- Students will be provided with one reusable cloth mask, and a stockpile of reusable masks will be held in reserve for students if they forget to bring their reusable mask. Teachers will wear masks inside the classrooms.
- Acceptable masks include both Yellowstone-issued and personal masks, including face shields, disposable masks, homemade masks, handkerchiefs, and scarves. Bandanas are **not** allowed. For students, face shields may not substitute for masks.
- Personal reusable masks must meet Code of Student Conduct requirements and not be inappropriate or derogatory in nature.
- Mask guidelines — including proper mask use and handling — will be communicated to parents, students, and employees, and Yellowstone will set aside instructional time to train students.
- Yellowstone leaders and staff will be tasked with monitoring mask use in the school building and premises.
- Masks will be required outdoors when social distancing is not possible. They may be required outdoors when social distancing is possible.

## Work and Learning Environment

### Classroom Configurations and Procedures

- To ensure the safety of our students and staff and reduce cross-contamination, each grade level will be separated into its own “Pod.” This Pod has its own entrance/exit from the building, its own restroom, and a designated area outside for recess and outdoor instruction. This concept has been tested in day care centers across the country since the virus began, and the results have been very favorable. You can read more about this concept [here](#).
- Within each pod, students will be assigned to a classroom where they will spend the day. There will be no more than 12 students per room. The desks will be adequately spaced and each desk will have a transparent safety shield. Students will eat lunch in their classroom, and the teachers will only rotate among the rooms in their pod to further limit exposure and movement in the building.
- Physical distancing will be required while at school, with all students and staff required to remain 6 feet apart. This applies to all areas, including classrooms, offices, restrooms, hallways, commons, copy rooms, breakrooms, meetings, dismissal lines, lockers, recess, etc.

- In addition, we have put these additional measures in place:
  - Office spaces will be reconfigured to ensure 6 feet of space between desks.
  - Physical distancing signage and floor markers are placed throughout the school as a reminder.
  - Student movement throughout the campus will be minimized as much as possible to reduce contacts.
  - Breakrooms and copy rooms also are limited to three people and employees are prohibited from loitering in these areas.
  - All meetings should be held virtually unless a face-to-face meeting is absolutely required. In such cases, the meetings must be held in the hallway or in the designated pod with all social distancing requirements being observed.

### Class Transitions

- Students will stay in the same classroom all day, there will not be passing periods. The only transition in the hallways as a group will occur when classrooms are transitioning to and from their time outdoors. For this transition, they will use their designated Pod entrance and maintain social distancing at all times.

### Restrooms

- All students will have hand washing and bathroom breaks throughout the day. To minimize the amount of people each student comes into contact with, the bathrooms will be separated by pod and only accessible to the students and staff in that Pod.

### Collaborative Work and Projects

- When possible, technology should be utilized when students are involved in collaborative work.
- Group or pair work can be implemented while maintaining physical distancing.
- Students will be provided the opportunity to opt-out of physical face-to-face group or pair work.
- Each student will be provided with a Chromebook. Students will not share any devices or learning material.

### Centralized Classrooms/Special Education Considerations

- Students with disabilities will follow the same guidelines and protocols with special consideration given to meet their individual needs.
- Students who are entitled to instructional and related services through an ARD (Admission, Review and Dismissal)/IEP, §504 Plan, etc. and who choose to go forward with Yellowstone's virtual learning program will be required to convene an appropriate meeting to revise their supports and services to ensure the school meets their individual needs.
- Special education instructional and related services will be provided in accordance with the ARD/IEP either virtually or face-to-face.

- In an effort to minimize potential exposure to our most vulnerable students, Yellowstone will:
  - Focus on social distancing, handwashing with warm water or hand sanitizer for 20 seconds every hour, and wearing masks.
  - Require masks when social distancing is not possible.
  - Post visual supports throughout building to remind and support understanding of expectations.
  - Keep each student's belongings separated using student designated containers or areas.
  - Eliminate sharing of high-touch materials (e.g., There will be a one-to-one relationship with all school materials: students will not share laptops, books, etc. with other students.)
  - Sanitize all used materials daily.
  - Utilize protective barriers as appropriate.
  - Utilize grouping and scheduling strategies to reduce exposure.

### School Arrivals/Dismissals

- Yellowstone has established staggered, no-contact pick-up and drop-off times, requiring students to get in and out of cars independently and preventing parents from walking students into the building. Students will enter and exit the building through their designated Pod.
- Families will be encouraged to assign one person who is not high risk to consistently pick-up and drop-off their student each day.
- Additional details regarding arrival and dismissal will be shared with families and updated throughout the year.

#### *Late arrival or early dismissal*

- When families arrive during the school day, they will pull up to the front, remain in their vehicle and wait for assistance from a staff member.
- Tardy students will be temperature and symptom checked and directed to the appropriate pod entrance for drop off. Staff will contact the grade level using the radio for an adult to assist the student with their pod entrance.
- For early pick-up, families will drive to the front entrance and follow directions for contacting the front office. At no time, should they exit their vehicle. The family will be directed to drive to the pod entrance, and staff will escort the student to the pod entrance for pick up.

### Off-Campus Student Activities

- Students will not have any school sponsored off-campus activities at this time.

### On-Campus Activities

- Any school wide events that are approved to be held on campus need to adhere to social distancing requirements outlined by Yellowstone.
- School wide events will be live streamed and/or occur virtually when possible.

- To limit larger gatherings, campus meetings will be held virtually when possible. If meeting in person is required, groups should utilize larger meeting spaces or multiple meeting opportunities will be provided.

## Extracurricular Programming

Extracurricular activities will follow the same safety practices employed on school campuses during the school day. School-based extracurricular activities will resume at an appointed time in the future. Face coverings will be made available to and worn by students and teachers during all extracurricular activities.

## Communications

A schoolwide newsletter will be sent out regularly to communicate with Yellowstone families. In addition, families will receive weekly direct communication from their child's teacher.

## Protocols for Campus Visitors

### General

Until further notice, the Yellowstone campus will be closed to outside visitors, volunteers, and parents. Only required faculty and staff, students, and pre-approved vendors will be allowed on the premises.

- Yellowstone will utilize virtual meeting options to limit campus visitors as much as possible.
- Any exceptions require advance approval by the Executive Director/Superintendent or his designee.

## Protocols for Disinfecting and Hand Sanitizing

### General

- Frequent disinfection and hand sanitization will ensure health and wellness of students and staff.

### Hand Washing/Sanitizing Expectations

- Alcohol-based hand sanitizer stations will be available at each Pod entrance, in classrooms, and in the hallway areas throughout our campus.
- Hand sanitizer will be provided upon entry to building, in classrooms and periodic teacher reminders during instructional day.

### Disinfecting Expectations

- Staff will have access to disinfectant wipes to sanitize high-touch and working surfaces regularly.
- As much as reasonably possible, students will not share learning materials.

## Protocols for Campus Cleaning and Disinfecting

### General

We will follow the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention guidelines regarding the cleaning, sanitation, and disinfection of our facility. We will provide enough hand soap, paper towels, tissues, hand sanitizer and disinfectant to accommodate frequent cleaning of high-touch areas.

### Daily Campus Cleaning

- Each classroom and restroom will be disinfected daily.
- All high-touch areas — such as restrooms, main offices, and staff sign-in/sign-out areas — will be cleaned and sanitized as needed.
- Custodians will wear masks and gloves during work hours.
- Staff will have access to disinfectant wipes to sanitize working surfaces and shared objects after each use and during breaks in instruction.

### Additional Cleaning Measure for Covid-19 Positive Cases on Campus

- If a classroom or facility is closed due to COVID-19 spread, quaternary disinfectant, which is recommended for use on the virus that causes COVID-19, will be used to defog and disinfect.

## Home Learning

After the first three weeks of home learning, families will have the choice to continue home learning or have their students return to on-campus instruction. Separate communication will be provided to families who are choosing home learning for their family. Within two weeks before the end of each quarter, families will have the opportunity to complete a survey and choose their learning method for the upcoming quarter. Roles, responsibilities, and expectations for home learning will be communicated in a separate document.

## FAQs

- **What is the plan for the 2020-2021 school year?**

All students will begin the 2020-2021 school year virtually on August 24, 2020. Virtual instruction for all students will continue for three weeks through Friday, September 11, 2020. On Monday, September 14, 2020, campus instruction for all students will begin for any family who so chooses.

- **What if I don't feel comfortable sending my child to school? Can I keep them at home and use online learning with YELLOWSTONE?**

Yes. Yellowstone is following state rules and, for the Academy, a board-approved directive, that allow us to offer online learning to all students for at least the first semester. We will re-evaluate at the end of second quarter and determine our plan for the spring semester based on state and local health guidance.

- **What do I do if my child becomes ill sick or has been exposed to COVID-19?**

If your child is experiencing COVID-19 symptoms, call your healthcare provider immediately. Do not send your child to school. Contact your child's teacher and keep them informed of your child's condition each day. In the event that your child tests positive for COVID-19, contact your teacher immediately so that we can fully follow our response procedures.

- **What do I do if my child usually carools or uses public transit to go to and from school?**

You are fine to continue this practice. In the event that your child tests positive for COVID-19, this transportation information will be vital for our contact tracing efforts. We recommend that you wear a mask at all times during your ride to and from school if you are carpooling or using public transit.

- **What measures is YELLOWSTONE taking to protect students and faculty members?**

As a response to COVID-19, we have instituted a Pod system and new protocols to ensure the health and safety of the Yellowstone community. These protocols include requiring all employees, students, and staff members to wear masks, wash hands regularly, and practice physical distancing. Until further notice, we have closed the campus to external visitors. Staff members must complete a daily health survey/screening before entering the building, and likewise, students must complete a temperature check before entering campus. To preserve our Pod system and other health protocols, we will not be offering bus transportation for the 2020-21 school year.

- **How is YELLOWSTONE handling visitors to the school?**

Visitors are not permitted on campus including family members, community members, and outside speakers. Any exceptions require advance approval by the Executive Director/Superintendent, or his designee.

- **Are students and faculty required to wear masks and/or face coverings at school?**

All available evidence suggests that wearing a face covering, or a surgical or industrial mask that covers your nose and mouth, significantly reduces the spread of the virus that causes COVID-19. All members of the Yellowstone community should carry a cloth face covering or any other appropriate face covering while on campus. This recommendation is consistent with Houston's orders on cloth face coverings and also applies to approved visitors.

Face coverings are required in buildings, including in common areas, hallways, stairwells, and elevators, with the exception of in one's private office. They are also required outdoors when physical distancing is not possible or is likely to be difficult.

All members of the community will receive one washable face coverings before the beginning of classes and we will have disposable ones on hand. Students, faculty, and staff can also bring their own face coverings to campus. These masks must meet CDC recommended guidelines.

Students for whom wearing a mask or facial covering is detrimental to their health due to a personal medical issue should contact their Principal to discuss accommodations. Staff should contact the HR Manager with any questions.

- **If my child is unable to come to school and can safely attend school from home, are they allowed to have remote instruction?**

Yes. Yellowstone has the ability to transition to remote learning immediately, so your child will not miss a day of instruction.

- **What happens if Texas state or local government order requires the school to close?**

We will comply with all state and local government orders. If we are required to shut down, we will continue to offer remote instruction through our home learning program.

- **What happens if I don't feel safe sending my child to school because of COVID-19?**

We understand the challenging environment we are in, and we are sensitive to potential COVID-19 impact. If you do not feel safe sending your child to school because of COVID-19, our home learning option is available for you.

- **What will classrooms look like to ensure physical distancing measures are in place?**

Within each pod, students will be assigned to a classroom where they will spend the day. There will be no more than 12 students per room. The desks will be adequately spaced and each desk will have a transparent safety shield. Students will eat lunch in their classroom, and the teachers will only rotate among the rooms in their pod to further limit exposure and movement in the building.

- **How often will the school be sanitized?**

We will follow the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention guidelines regarding the cleaning, sanitation, and disinfection of our facility. We will provide enough hand soap, paper towels, tissues, hand sanitizer and disinfectant to accommodate frequent cleaning of high-touch areas.

- **Will students be provided meals at school?**

Yes, students will be provided with individually wrapped lunches.

- **How will mask-wearing and social distancing be enforced on campus?**

Students will be monitored by faculty to ensure that masks are worn at all times and there is an appropriate amount of distance between students. Signs will be placed around campus to remind students of these rules, and safe social distancing markings will be placed around campus grounds.

- **What happens if my child's teacher tests positive for COVID-19?**

In the event that a student or an on-campus employee is confirmed positive for COVID-19, all students, parents, faculty and staff will be notified. Any member of the YELLOWSTONE community who is confirmed positive for COVID-19 will need to isolate at home for 10 school days and follow all other guidelines outlined in this document before returning to campus.

- **What if we do not have Wi-Fi at home for virtual learning?**

Yellowstone is committed to working with families regarding technology needs and Wi-Fi connectivity. If you need help with this please contact our Director of Campus Services, Mr. Damon Gunn at [dgunn@yellowstoneschools.org](mailto:dgunn@yellowstoneschools.org).

- **Whom do I call with questions or concerns?**

Please contact our front office with your questions and we will direct you to the appropriate contact to answer your question. You can reach our front office during normal business hours at 713-741-8000.