



YELLOWSTONE
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Return to In-Person Instruction and Continuity of Services Plan

Last Updated: 06/23/2023

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. We have monitored trends in Harris County and tracked local, state, and federal guidelines and ordinances. Like the 2022-23 school year, we will continue to comply with all state and local government orders. We have created this document to give an overview of our ongoing response to COVID-19 on our campus.

Reopening Timeline

Our first day of school is August 15, 2023. At this time, we will not be offering remote instruction and all classes will take place in-person and on campus. We know that the best way for your child to learn is to be on campus every day and engage with their teachers and fellow classmates. We will continue our bus service and are doing everything we can to support your child's return to school. Like last year, our school day program has been designed to provide more educational support, tutoring, and intervention to help your child continue to catch up and get ahead after two years of COVID disruption. We will still offer free COVID testing for any student who has been exposed to someone with COVID or who is displaying symptoms. As you will read in this document, we have updated our protocols around our testing and quarantine process.

General Overview

Vaccination

The **best way** to stop the spread of COVID-19 and to end this crisis is for you, and anyone in your household who is eligible, to be vaccinated. Over 97% of reported COVID-19 hospital cases in our country happen to those who are unvaccinated. Vaccination will help prevent you from getting COVID, and if you still do get COVID, it will significantly reduce your symptoms and the chances of severe complications from the disease.

Face Masks

Mask wearing will be optional on campus and masks will not be provided to students or staff who decide to wear them. We will continue to monitor state and local guidance and update our policies as needed.

On-Campus Protocols

We are continuing to encourage frequent handwashing and daily sanitization on campus. We will not require temperature checks or the daily health screening before entering the building. We know that the best way to prevent the spread of this virus is for staff to monitor their health every day and for parents to monitor the health of their students on a daily basis. If a staff member or a child is exhibiting any COVID-19 like symptoms (see below), they should stay home and plan to take a COVID-19 test, as

outlined further in this document. If at any time you are unsure or have any questions about coming to school, please contact our nurse so that we can provide further guidance.

COVID-19 Symptoms

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

At any time during the school day, a staff member who is exhibiting these symptoms can request a COVID-19 test from the school nurse. Similarly, with parent permission, a student can also be administered this test if they are exhibiting these symptoms.

If there is an occurrence of possible exposure or a student/staff member begins exhibiting these symptoms after school hours, we can arrange for the nurse to be available before the school day begins to administer a test prior to the student/staff member entering the building.

Staff and Student Safety Protocols

Protocols for Testing, Isolation, and Returning to Campus

Close Contact Definition

“Close Contact” is defined by the CDC as being within six feet of an infected individual for a cumulative duration of 15 minutes or more within a 24-hour period. As indicated below, and updated by the CDC, close contact does not include a person who is fully vaccinated; a person who was previously diagnosed with COVID-19 in the last three months; or a student who was within three to six feet of an infected student in a K-12 indoor classroom setting if both the infected student and the exposed student(s) correctly and consistently wore well-fitting masks the entire time.

Close Contact Procedures for Vaccinated Staff and Students

As outlined by the Texas Education Agency on August 5, 2021, “close contact determinations are generally based on guidance outlined by the CDC, which notes that **individuals who are vaccinated are not considered close contacts** (emphasis added).” For Yellowstone, this means that if a staff member or student is vaccinated and are in close contact with an individual who has tested positive for COVID-19, they can continue to come to campus and do not need to test or be quarantined. At any point if they begin to develop symptoms, they may request a COVID test from the school nurse and then follow the protocol outlined below.

Close Contact Procedures for Unvaccinated Staff and Students

While we are not requiring a staff or student to quarantine after potential exposure, we strongly encourage the person to follow CDC guidelines, or at a minimum, continue to monitor symptoms, consider wearing a mask, and get a COVID-19 test on day five after exposure.

COVID-19 Positive Occurrences for Employees

In the event that an employee is exhibiting symptoms and tests positive for COVID-19, he/she must do the following:

- First, the employee needs to immediately notify our Director of HR, Mrs. Jasmen Denton. Mrs. Denton will then communicate this information to the employee’s direct supervisor to ensure proper coverage can be put in place for the required quarantine period. Staff must follow this policy. By not contacting Mrs. Denton first, we cannot take the necessary steps for ensuring class coverage and following the rest of our protocol.
- Second, the employee will be required to quarantine for five calendar days and may return to work on the sixth/next school day if they have been fever-free for at least 24 hours without the use of fever-reducing medication. The first day of the quarantine is the day of the positive test. It should be noted that employees may still test positive after five days. As long as they are fever free, have resolving symptoms, and five days have passed, they are still allowed and expected to return to work.
- Regardless of whether the staff member is exhibiting symptoms or is asymptomatic, once they have a positive COVID-19 test, they must remain off campus for five calendar days before returning to work. If after five days they are still exhibiting severe symptoms (as listed earlier in this document) they should contact Mrs. Denton again to discuss help with additional, medically necessary leave.
- When the staff member returns on the sixth day, to follow CDC guidelines, we request they wear a mask for the next five days.

It should also be noted (as outlined in the staff handbook) that if an employee is sick with *any* communicable disease (whether vaccinated or unvaccinated) that may pose a direct threat of infection

to staff and students, they should stay home and return to campus, only after being fever-free for 24 hours without the use of fever-reducing medication. After the employee has been absent from work for three days, they will be required to provide a doctor's note, advising when they are fit to return to duty.

COVID-19 Positive Occurrences for Students

In the event that a student is exhibiting symptoms and tests positive for COVID-19, he/she must do the following:

- First, the parent needs to immediately notify our School Nurse at 713-741-8000 so that we can communicate this information to the student's teacher and follow the rest of our protocol.
- Second, the student will be required to quarantine for five calendar days and may return to campus on the sixth/next school day if they have been fever-free for at least 24 hours without the use of fever-reducing medication and their symptoms are resolved or significantly diminished. The first day of quarantine is the day they test positive for COVID.
- After the five days of quarantine are completed, the student can return to campus even if they still test positive for COVID. When they return to campus, to follow CDC guidelines, we strongly encourage the student to wear a mask for the next five days.
- Siblings of students who test positive are allowed to come to school but should monitor their symptoms closely and take a COVID test within the first 3-5 days or if they start showing symptoms. If at anytime they have a fever or display other symptoms (even if they still test negative for COVID) they should remain home until they have been fever-free for at least 24 hours without the use of fever-reducing medication and their symptoms are resolved/significantly diminished.

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. We know that frequent disinfection and hand sanitization will ensure the health and wellness of students and staff.

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.
- Staff will have access to disinfectant wipes to sanitize high-touch and working surfaces regularly.

Hand Washing/Sanitizing Expectations

- Alcohol-based hand sanitizer stations will be available in the gym, cafeteria and main entrance.

Extracurricular Programming

Extracurricular activities will follow the same safety practices employed on school campuses during the school day.

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. We will no longer be contact tracing or providing notification when there is a COVID-positive case or exposure on campus.

Protocols for Campus Visitors

General

We will closely monitor trends in Harris County and from time to time may be required to operate a closed campus and/or limit external visitors. We will ask visitors to sign in so that we can keep a log in the unlikely event of having to follow contact-tracing protocols.

General FAQs

- **What is the plan for the 2023-2024 school year?**

All students will begin the 2023-2024 school year on August 16 in person, on campus.

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

No. As directed by the State of Texas, all learning this year will take place on campus. There is not a home-learning option.

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

If your child is experiencing COVID-19 symptoms or there has been a possible exposure, we encourage you to contact the School Nurse at 713-741-8000 to schedule your free COVID-19 test for the next school day. Do not just drop your child off at school. We ask that you stay with them until the test results are known (the test results are available in about 15 minutes). If at that time, your child is still negative and does not have a fever or exhibiting other symptoms, you can choose to keep them in school. If their symptoms persist, if they still have a fever, or if the test is positive, you will need to take your student home and follow the protocol given to you by the School Nurse.

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

You are fine to continue this practice. Masks are optional in all of these contexts.

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

As outlined in this guide, we are continuing to encourage frequent handwashing and daily sanitization on campus. We will no longer require temperature checks or the daily health screening before entering the building. We are not contact tracing and we will not be providing notifications when there is a positive case or exposure on campus. We know that the best way to prevent the spread of this virus is for everyone to be vaccinated, for staff to monitor their health every day and for parents to monitor the health of their students on a daily basis.

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

No.

- **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 communicate our plans for any kind of remote instruction that would take place and our timeline for re-opening.

- **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. However, to continue your enrollment at Yellowstone, unless your child tests positive for COVID-19, or is exhibiting other symptoms/feeling ill with a fever, we expect them to be on campus every day.

- **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 still be provided with breakfast and lunch every day.

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

Any member of the Yellowstone community who is confirmed positive for COVID-19 will need to isolate at home for 5 calendar days (which begins on the day they test positive) and follow all other guidelines outlined in this document before returning to campus. When they return, they will be asked to follow CDC guidance and encouraged to wear a mask for the next five days.

- **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.

STAFF FAQ

Last year, I was given employer-paid leave for a COVID event. How is leave being handled this school year?

Employer-paid leave under the Coronavirus Response Act expired on December 31, 2020. We no longer provide COVID-related leave.

What if I test positive for COVID and my symptoms persist past 5 days?

Please contact the HR department for help with additional, medically necessary leave.

Can I be tested by my own doctor to verify my COVID status?

Yes, and employees also have access to free testing on campus, administered by the school nurse, when employees develop symptoms during the workday or otherwise suspect they may have COVID-19.

If I test negative for COVID but do not immediately return to work, as indicated by the policy, is there a consequence?

If you do not test positive for COVID-19 or have its symptoms, and you do not return to work as required, your absence will be subject to the attendance policy found in the employee handbook.

Is it okay to notify students or other staff about suspected or confirmed cases of COVID?

No, Yellowstone has a communication protocol for notifying staff, families, and the community of any on-campus threat of COVID.

Is wearing a mask mandatory at Yellowstone?

No. If you test positive for COVID-19 and return to campus after your five-day quarantine, we are asking that you wear a mask for the next five days to follow CDC guidelines.

Are employees required to be vaccinated against COVID?

Vaccination is a matter of personal choice, though Yellowstone strongly encourages employees to be vaccinated for your own health and safety, to mitigate the spread of the disease on campus, and to give our best effort to minimize instructional interruption, as a result of staff illness.