
Return to In-Person Instruction and Continuity of Services (RIPICS) Plan



Start and Stay Strong

Lorenzo ISD
lorenzoisd.net

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RIPICS Plan
Review action by Board: 8-21-23

TEA Requirement: Providing Notice

Lorenzo ISD is committed to providing rigorous, TEKS-based instruction to all students in a healthy and safe environment. LISD has been working diligently to plan on how we will maintain the health and safety of students, staff, and visitors in all of our buildings. We are excited for the new 2023-2024 school year and happy about serving our community. We look forward to welcoming our students back on Thursday, August 10, 2023. **The 2023-24 calendar can be found on our website at www.lorenzoisd.net.**

The purpose of this Return to In-Person Instruction and Continuity of Services plan is to share information on how Lorenzo ISD will work tirelessly to continue our safe operation of schools while addressing the impacts of COVID-19 on student's academic, social, emotional, and mental health needs. Many schools across Texas and the nation are receiving financial support from the American Rescue Plan Act Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief (ESSER) federal grant to assist school districts to reopen and sustain safe operation of schools while focusing on accelerating learning that was lost due to the pandemic.

While it is not possible to eliminate all risk of further spread of COVID-19, this guidance document contains information on practices that minimize the likelihood of viral spread. These protocols and guidelines will be modified based on public health and governmental directives and advancing scientific knowledge on the transmissibility of COVID-19. We also believe that educating our students about proper hygiene techniques and necessary safety measures to prevent the spread will not only keep them safe, but also their families.

Per ESSER requirements, all Texas public schools are required to make this plan available to the public for comment. LISD has posted this document to the LISD district website and will comply with the requirements. In addition, this document must be revised and updated every six (6) months. Please address your comments and/or concerns to Kayla Morrison, LISD Superintendent, at kmorrison@lorenzoisd.net

Lorenzo ISD reserves the right to update these guidelines based on future guidance from the TEA, CDC, Governor's orders, and State and Local Officials.

COVID-19 Response Team – Lorenzo ISD has developed a COVID-19 Response Team to respond to concerns and communicate district decisions. Members of the team and email addresses are noted below:

Cheryl Norton District Nurse

cheryl.norton@lorenzoisd.net

Tanner Bales Secondary Principal/Safety Coordinator

tbales@lorenzoisd.net

Amanda Haire Elem Principal

amanda.haire@lorenzoisd.net

Kristopher Lamm EPEC SSA Director

kristopher.lamm@lorenzoisd.net

Jessica Crabb Asst. Superintendent/CFO

jcrabb@lorenzoisd.net

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TEA Requirement: Prevent and Mitigate

Coronavirus disease 2019 commonly referred to as COVID-19 is a disease requiring exclusion from school under 25 Tex. Admin. Code § 97.7.

A school administrator shall exclude from attendance any child having or suspected of having COVID-19. Exclusion shall continue until the readmission criteria for the conditions are met. The readmission criteria for COVID-19 is as follows:

If symptomatic, exclude until at least 5 days have passed since symptom onset, and fever free*, and other symptoms have improved. Children who test positive for COVID-19 but do not have any symptoms must stay home until at least 5 days after the day they were tested.

*Fever free for 24 hours without the use of fever suppressing medications. Fever is a temperature of 100° Fahrenheit (37.8° Celsius) or higher.

Lorenzo ISD must identify and implement practices to prevent the virus from entering the school and mitigate or reduce the likely spread inside the school; therefore, district practices and guidelines have been established for various areas noted below:

Maintenance of Health and Safety Guidance:

- **Social and Emotional Well-Being** – Students’ social and emotional well-being are a top priority. Together, schools and families can support your child during this challenging time. With the endless COVID coverage, it is natural for your child to experience some changes in behavior and mood. Counselors and staff will continue to work closely with families and students to ease the stress. Keeping routines predictable, sharing COVID facts that are age-appropriate, making time to listen and share feelings, and reaching out to us for support are all important. We are here for you and your child(ren).
 - **Training for staff** - Teachers will be trained during in-service training days on strategies to promote students’ mental health and emotional well-being in the classroom.
- **Masks** – Per Governor Abbott’s Executive Order, GA-38, school systems cannot require students or staff to wear a mask. GA-38 addresses government-mandated face covering in response to COVID-19 pandemic. School systems must allow individuals to wear a mask if they choose to do so.

While LISD no longer requires face coverings, we encourage all students, staff, and visitors who are not vaccinated to continue to wear face coverings, especially those individuals who are at higher risk of complications and serious illness from COVID-19 as determined by CDC guidance

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and/or medical professionals. Signs will be posted at entrances of our campuses and facilities to remind everyone of this. Masks are available upon request for students or staff.

A student suspected of having a communicable illness (such as flu, COVID-19, Pertussis, etc.) will be offered a disposable mask until they are picked up by a parent/guardian or person listed on the emergency contact..

- **Handwashing/Respiratory Etiquette**—Teachers will teach and review with students the proper protocols and expectations for handwashing and covering coughs and sneezes. Buildings and classrooms will have visual reminders (e.g posters) of proper protocols for hand washing and covering respiratory droplets.

In addition to hand washing, the use of hand sanitizer is also recommended. Alcohol-based hand sanitizer will be at the entrance of the buildings, in each classroom, in the hallways, and in the cafeteria. Students and staff are encouraged to sanitize their hands frequently, especially when entering the classroom, before and after handling manipulatives, and eating. Teachers will provide frequent reminders to students about the importance of using hand sanitizer.

- **Daily Campus Cleaning** – Frequent cleaning and disinfecting will promote a healthy learning and work environment for students and staff.
 - Each classroom and restroom will be disinfected daily.
 - All high touch areas will be disinfected daily.
 - Cleaning cloths will be changed for each classroom and common area to maximize room to room cleanliness.
 - Custodians will wear masks (optional) and gloves during work hours.
 - Custodial staff and teachers will use EPA registered disinfectants, approved for use against COVID-19.
 - Fogger/sprayer will be used only at the end of the school day or when an area is used by an individual who became sick during the day and was sent home due to experiencing symptoms of COVID-19.
 - The cafeteria will be disinfected between lunch periods.
 - Staff will have access to disinfectant 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.
 - Custodial staff will defog and disinfect classrooms, restrooms, the weight room and all additional areas in the entire building.

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- **Temperature Checks/Screening** – Per Center for Disease Control (CDC) guidelines, initial monitoring of symptoms begins at home. Parents/guardians are expected to screen their students for COVID-19 symptoms prior to sending their student to school.

In evaluating whether an individual has symptoms consistent with COVID-19, consider the following questions:

- Have they recently begun experiencing any of the following in a way that is not normal for them?
 - Feeling feverish, or a measured temperature greater than or equal to 100.0 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

IF THERE IS A COVID OUTBREAK AND LORENZO ISD MUST TAKE PRECAUTION FOR STUDENT SAFETY:

Teachers and staff are required to self-monitor. The self-screening should include teachers and staff taking their own temperature. Teachers and staff must report to the school system if they themselves have COVID-19 symptoms or are lab-confirmed with COVID-19, and, if so, they must remain off campus until they meet the criteria for re-entry as noted below.

- **Student or Staff Displaying COVID-19 Symptoms**
As per DSHS, school systems must exclude students from attending school in person who are actively sick with COVID-19. Parents must ensure they do not send a child to school on campus if the child has COVID-19 symptoms or is test-confirmed with COVID-19, until the conditions for re-entry are met.

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- When a student has displayed symptoms of COVID-19, the school nurse will provide a clinical assessment to 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.
- Any individuals who themselves either: (a) are lab-confirmed to have COVID-19; or (b) experience the symptoms of COVID-19 (listed below) must stay at home throughout the infection period.
- Any person who is lab confirmed positive for COVID-19 must remain off campus until they meet all of the criteria for re-entry. If diagnosed with COVID-19 either by a positive test or assumed positive based on symptoms, the following criteria must be met to return to a LISD facility:
 - At least 24 hours have passed since recovery (resolution of fever without the use of fever-reducing medications); and
 - The individual has improvement in symptoms (e.g., cough, shortness of breath); and
 - At least 5 days have passed since symptoms first appeared.
 - If the individual has symptoms that could be related to COVID-19 and wants to return to work or school before completing the above self-isolation period, the individual must either:
 - Obtain a medical professional's note clearing the individual for return based on an alternative diagnosis, or
 - Return a lab test negative for COVID-19.
 - If the individual has tested positive for COVID-19 and believes the test was a false positive and wants to return to school before completing the above stay-at-home period, the individual must either:
 - Obtain a medical professional's note clearing the individual for return based on an alternative diagnosis, though for health privacy reasons the note does not need to indicate what the alternative diagnosis is, or
 - Obtain a PCR acute infection tests (at a physician's office, approved testing location, or other site) that come back negative for COVID-19.

▪ **Close Contact**

As a reference, close contact determinations are generally made based on guidance outlined by the CDC, which notes that **individuals who are vaccinated are not considered close contacts**. Given the data from 2020-21 showing very low COVID-19 transmission rates in a classroom setting and data demonstrating lower transmission rates among children than adults, school systems are not required to conduct COVID-19 contact tracing.

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Parents of students who are determined to be close contacts of an individual with COVID-19 may opt to keep their students at home during the recommended stay-at-home period.

Close contact is defined as:

- Being directly exposed to infectious secretions (e.g., being coughed on while not wearing a mask or face shield); or
- Being within six feet of an infected person for a cumulative duration of 15 minutes. Exception: in the K-12 indoor classroom setting, we can exclude students who were within 3-6 feet of an infected student if both the infected student and the exposed student correctly and consistently wore well-fitting masks the entire time. This exception does not apply to teachers, staff, or other adults in the indoor setting.

Cafeteria - LISD will open up the cafeteria to all grade levels and students to eat breakfast and lunch. Visitors must check in and out before entering the cafeteria with students.

Staff Who Have COVID-19

Similar to students, school systems must exclude staff from attending school in person who are actively sick with COVID-19, who are suspected of being actively sick with COVID-19, or who have received a positive test result for COVID-19. Staff may return when the re-entry conditions have been met, as listed earlier in this handbook.

Campuses and Classrooms: Protocol for Continuity of Services

- **Drop-off, and Pick-up**
 - **Elementary-Arrival**
 - Separate entrances will be utilized for car riders, bus riders, and walkers.
 - Sanitizer stations will remain at each entrance and students can sanitize hands upon entry.
 - Parents will not be allowed to walk students to classrooms.
 - There will be bus procedures, based on campus specific needs.
 - **Elementary-Dismissal**
 - Sibling connections will be done outside the building. .
 - There will be bus procedures, based on campus specific needs.
 - **Secondary-Arrival**
 - Students will go directly to zero hour or designated location upon arrival.
 - Parents may not accompany students into the building.

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- **Secondary-Dismissal**
 - Students should leave campus and not congregate after school.
- **Classroom Configurations**
 - Students will have access to their own technology (a school assigned laptop/ tablet) to minimize sharing of electronic devices.
 - Student materials and supplies will be placed in close proximity to students to reduce movement in the classroom.
 - Teachers will develop, teach and implement procedures that:
 - Limit student movement within the classroom such as turning in assignments, materials being passed out, etc.
 - Establish student responsibilities to clean personal areas and materials/supplies with hand sanitizer, disinfectant wipes and other self-cleaning products.
 - Recommended procedures will be applied to all classroom settings, including special education programs when possible and appropriate. Students' individual needs will be addressed on a case-by-case basis..
- **Restrooms and Water Fountains** – Students' physical needs are extremely important. Hand washing will remain the priorities during restroom breaks.
 - A system will be implemented to identify the number of occupants utilizing each restroom to mitigate the chance of exceeding maximum occupants per social distancing.
 - Each building has a water fountain that has equipment installed to fill up water bottles. Students may bring a water bottle and refill in these fountains.
- **Materials and Supplies** – Students will be expected to use their own materials and supplies which will be kept in individually-assigned boxes.
 - Signage will be posted in all classrooms regarding protocols and prevention.
- **Common Areas** – Common areas include spaces that are used for meetings and collaboration. This includes computer labs, flexible spaces, campus libraries, conference rooms and other meeting rooms. In order to provide the safest environment possible in our common/collaborative spaces, while promoting disease prevention and mitigation, the following guidelines will be implemented:
 - When needed, students will bring personal supplies from the classroom. All students and staff should use hand sanitizer when entering and exiting common areas.
- **Transitions.**
 - When transitioning between classes, students will travel corridors as far to the right as possible.
- **Elevators**
 - Only students and staff with a physical impairment or the need to move large/heavy equipment will be able to use the elevator.
 - No more than 4 people will ride in the elevator at the same time..

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- **Additional Instructors in Classrooms** – In certain instances, additional staff members may be assigned to classrooms to instruct specific students.
- **On Campus Activities**
 - Any school wide events that are approved to be held on campus need to adhere to requirements outlined by TEA and UIL.

CONTINUITY OF EDUCATIONAL SERVICES:

LISD has taken and will continue to take actions to ensure continuity of services, including but not limited to services to address students’ academic needs due to unfinished learning and their social, emotional, and mental health needs. We affirm our commitment to provide quality instructional opportunities to prepare our students for the future.

Early data indicates that school closures and disruptions during the pandemic have resulted in unfinished learning for many students. ESSER III & II funds will be used in several ways to address student and staff needs. The goal of these funds is to close learning gaps and improve student outcomes in an inclusive and supportive school community. LISD will support teachers through coaching and professional development and provide additional support staff to support students identified as EL, Special Education, and At-Risk. A significant area of focus is on recovering the learning loss through the use of our acceleration plan. High dosage tutoring and extending instructional time strategies to help students make academic gains will be implemented. Student and staff social and emotional needs are an important component of instruction. The district counselors will be available to help provide mental health support. Additional instructional priorities include technology enhancements.

Closing student learning gaps also requires steps beyond development and refinement of the district's curriculum. Campuses will engage in data driven meetings focused on core content instruction that analyzes student data through progress monitoring with the goal of meeting grade level standards as measured by various measures (i.e. STAAR, CCMR). The district has refined and reinforced a plan to assist teachers and track student growth.

Social/Emotional Needs

Lorenzo ISD employs three school counselors, one full-time and two are part-time. The counselors are well trained to provide support and resources to address the trauma that students, families, and staff have experienced due to the pandemic.

The school counselors promote academic, career and social/emotional success for all students as part of a strong Tier 1 counseling program and provide assistance regarding situational concerns related to the pandemic such as anxiety, depression, grief and loss, or difficulty transitioning back to

in person learning. The counselors provide referrals to school and community resources that treat mental health issues (suicidal ideation, violence, abuse and depression) with the intent of removing barriers to learning and helping the student return to the classroom.

Periodic Review and Revision Plan

During the period of the American Rescue Plan Act of 2021 Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief Fund (ARP ESSER III) (until September 2023), Lorenzo ISD will periodically review and, as needed, revise its plan for the safe return to in-person instruction and continuity of services. The plan will be reviewed at least every six months, and LISD will seek and take into account public feedback during the review process. Any revisions made to this plan will include updated public health guidance from federal, state, and local health authorities.

Making The Plan Available to the Public

Lorenzo ISD has taken the following steps to make this plan available to the public:

- The Return to In-Person Instruction and Continuity of Services plan is posted on the LISD Webpage www.lorenzoisd.net under the ESSER tab on the COVID page.
- The plan is available in English and Spanish.
- For any questions on the plan, please contact the Superintendent at 806-634-5591.

Continuity of Services: Meals and Transportation

- **Meals** – Lorenzo ISD must comply with child nutrition guidelines. Depending on the number of students in the school, students may have meals in both the cafeteria and in classrooms.
 - Cafeteria staff may wear face coverings, will wear gloves and will follow all health and safety protocols..
 - Students will be encouraged not to share food and drink.
 - Cafeteria capacity will be based on current guidelines. Physical distance will be provided around each occupiable seat, as feasible. .

- **Transportation**

A student should not board the bus or attend school if they have a measured temperature greater than or equal to 100.0 degrees Fahrenheit and guidelines must be followed before he/she is allowed to return to school.

Continuity of Services: Electives: P.E., CTE Courses, Other Electives, Cheer, Athletics, etc.

- **Physical Education Classroom Protocols**

- Physical Education classes will resume normal activity with precautions being taken for appropriate distancing and encouragement of respiratory etiquette.

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- **CTE Courses** – CTE courses include hands-on experiences. Social distancing and sanitation requirements will be further defined and communicated prior to the beginning of school.
- **Other Electives** – Each course will be reviewed individually to ensure that social distancing and sanitation requirements are established and communicated prior to the beginning of school.
- **Elementary Recess**
 - Campuses will consider limiting the number of students per recess group. Staggered schedules can be utilized when needed.
- **Cheer** – Practices and performances will be conducted following safety protocols provided by guidance from UIL and TEA. This will include COVID screening, group sizes, sharing and sanitizing of equipment, locker room usage, etc.
- **Athletics**– Practices and performances will be conducted following safety protocols provided by guidance from UIL and TEA. This will include COVID screening, group sizes, sharing and sanitizing of equipment, locker room usage, etc.
 - Athletic practices and contests will be conducted following safety protocol provided by guidance from UIL and TEA.
 - Locker room use will be determined by TEA/UIL.
 - Bus travel will follow transportation guidelines provided by TEA.
 - Spectator attendance at games and contests may be limited based on TEA and UIL guidelines..
 - Event procedures will be in place to minimize face-to-face interactions.
 - Separate entrances and exits may be utilized and event doors may be propped open to minimize physical contact with handles.

Continuity of Services for Special Programs

- **Program Participation and Services** – Students currently participating in special program services, e.g., special education, 504, Bilingual/ESL, etc., will continue to receive services whether through face-to-face learning. Parent meetings may be held using virtual meeting platforms in extenuating circumstances.
- **Evaluations and Testing** – District protocols have been established to evaluate students who have been referred for special programs. Social distancing and/or personal protective equipment (PPE) will be used, as appropriate.

Extracurricular and After-School Program

Extracurricular Programs – Each program will be evaluated on a case-by-case basis to determine implementation guidelines. Program sponsors will provide information to students and parents/families as information is available.

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Parent Communication

Providing families with clear and concise communication through the following outbound channels:

- Email/text messages (will be collected and registration)
- Social media
- Website
- Newsletters
- School Messenger system

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