

Howe ISD – Safe Return to School Plan

Please note: The conditions surrounding the COVID-19 pandemic are continually evolving, and Howe ISD's *Safe Return to School Plan* will be constantly evaluated to adapt to the current trends of the COVID-19 virus in Howe and Grayson County.

In developing our plan to return to school for the 2020-21 school year, Howe ISD is committed to ensuring that all students, staff, and community members remain healthy and safe by adhering to best practices in the following areas:

- Virus Prevention Strategies
- Virus Response Protocols
- Virus Mitigation Tactics

Virus Prevention Strategies

Employee Procedures:

- Howe ISD will require all employees to self-screen for COVID-19 symptoms before coming to school each day.
- All employees will take their own temperature each morning and will self-assess if they have recently begun experiencing any of the following symptoms 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
- Any employee who possesses COVID-19 symptoms or is lab-confirmed with COVID-19, must remain off campus until he/she meets the criteria for re-entry listed at the conclusion of this section.
- Any employee who has had close contact with an individual who is lab-confirmed with COVID-19 must remain off campus until the 14-day incubation period has passed.
- Close contact is defined as:
 - o Being directly exposed to infectious secretions, or
 - o Being within 6 feet for a cumulative duration of 15 minutes, while not wearing a face covering
- Any employee who has had close contact with an individual who is lab-confirmed with COVID-19, or possesses COVID-19 must report this information to the school system. Each employee will report to his/her Campus Administrator or supervisor, who will then report the information to the Assistant Superintendent of Administration.

Student Procedures:

- Howe ISD is asking parents to partner with our schools to perform a daily COVID-19 screening of their student.
- All parents should take the temperature of their student each morning and determine if the student is experiencing any of the following symptoms 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
- Any student who has had close contact with an individual who is lab-confirmed with COVID-19 must remain off campus until the 14-day incubation period has passed.
 - Parents must ensure that they do not send a child to school on campus if:
 - the child has COVID-19 symptoms (as listed above) or is lab-confirmed with COVID-19.
 - the child has had close contact with an individual who is lab-confirmed with COVID-19.
 - In both cases, parents should opt to have their student to receive remote instruction until the criteria for re-entry which are listed at the conclusion of this section are met.

Visitor Procedures:

- Only essential visitors will be allowed onto Howe ISD campuses.
- Essential visitors will be determined by Campus Administrators.
- All visitors will be screened for COVID-19 symptoms listed above.
- Any visitor possessing a COVID-19 symptom must remain off-campus until he meets the criteria for re-entry listed at the conclusion of this section.
- All visitors will be screened to determine if they have had close contact with an individual who is lab-confirmed with COVID-19.
- Any visitor who has had close contact must remain off campus until the 14-day incubation period has passed.

Employees, Students, or Visitors Confirmed or Suspected with COVID-19 – Exclusion and Re-Entry

- Any individual who is lab-confirmed to have COVID-19, or who experiences COVID-19 symptoms must stay home throughout the infection period, and cannot return to campus until the school system screens the individual to determine any of the conditions for campus re-entry have been met:
 - In the case of an individual who was diagnosed with COVID-19, the individual may return to school when all three of the following criteria are met:
 1. at least three days (72 hours) have passed since recovery (resolution of fever without the use of fever-reducing medications);
 2. the individual has improvement in symptoms (e.g., cough, shortness of breath); and
 3. at least ten days have passed since symptoms first appeared.
 - In the case of an individual who has symptoms that could be COVID-19 but is not evaluated by a medical professional or tested for COVID-19, such individual is assumed to have COVID-19, and the individual may not return to the campus until the individual has completed the same three-step set of criteria listed above.
 - If the individual has symptoms that could be COVID-19 and wants to return to school before completing the above stay at home period, the individual must either
 - (a) obtain a medical professional's note clearing the individual for return based on an alternative diagnosis, or
 - (b) receive two separate confirmations at least 24 hours apart that they are free of COVID via acute infection tests at an approved COVID-19 testing location found at <https://tdem.texas.gov/covid-19/>.

Virus Response Protocols

Upon identifying a possible COVID-19 case on campus, Howe ISD will:

- Immediately separate the individual who shows COVID-19 symptoms while at school until the individual can leave campus.
- Clean the areas used by the individual who shows COVID-19 symptoms as soon as is possible.
- Perform an immediate temperature check of the individual to determine if he is symptomatic for COVID-19.

Upon learning that a lab-confirmed case has been in a school, Howe ISD will:

- Notify the Grayson County health department, in accordance with applicable federal, state and local laws and regulations, including confidentiality requirements of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA).
- Close off areas that are heavily used by the individual with the lab-confirmed case (student, teacher, or staff) until the non-porous surfaces in those areas can be disinfected, unless more than 3 days have already passed since that person was on campus.
- Notify parents of all students in a school if a lab-confirmed COVID-19 case is identified among students, teachers or staff who participate in any on campus activities.

Virus Mitigation Tactics

Health and Hygiene Practices - General

- Howe ISD will have hand sanitizer stations at the entrance of each campus and in every classroom.
- Employees and students will be required to wash and/or sanitize hands frequently.
- Teachers will instruct students regarding proper handwashing techniques and other mitigation practices on the first day of enrollment. Students will wash hands for at least 20 seconds before eating and after using the restroom.
- Students will be taught to cover coughs and sneezes. Used tissues will be thrown in the trash, and hands will be washed immediately, or hand sanitizer will be used.
- Students at the Intermediate, Middle and High Schools will wipe down their desks before and/or after a class change.
- Howe ISD cleaning staff will be responsible for more frequent cleaning practices to disinfect high-touch surfaces throughout the day.

Health and Hygiene Practice – Face Coverings

- In compliance with the [Governor Abbott's Executive Order GA-29](#), all students in Grades 3 through 12 will be required to wear a face covering —unless there is an existing condition that would meet one of the allowable exceptions. Those instances will be handled on an individual basis.
- If/when the executive order is lifted, students may still be required to wear face coverings in common areas, when working in small groups in close proximity, or in classrooms upon the request of a teacher.
- Students in Pre-Kindergarten through Grade 2 may be required to wear a face covering in common areas. Parents may elect to have their student(s) to wear a face covering in classrooms if desired.
- Face coverings can include cloth masks, gaiters, face shields or anything else that provides covering over the nose and mouth.
- The district will provide ONE reusable face covering to each student, but a student may wear his/her own school-appropriate face coverings.
- In the event that the student does not have a face covering, the district will provide a disposable mask.

Social Distancing Practices

- Howe ISD will encourage individuals to practice social distancing.
- To the greatest extent possible, desks will be arranged to allow for social distancing.
- In classrooms where students are regularly within six feet of one another, teachers will plan for more frequent hand sanitizing and may require face coverings.
- Whenever feasible, physical education and other classes may gather outside to reduce the risk of virus spread.

Entry, Exit, Transition, Breakfast, and Lunch Procedures

- To account for individual differences in school configuration and age of attending students, each campus will be charged with developing entry, exit, transition, breakfast, and lunch procedures. At this time, we plan to utilize the cafeterias for breakfast and lunch, but extra lunch periods will be added and seating will be designated to provide reasonable social distancing. Passing periods may be modified to decrease the number of students in the hallways at any given time. Those procedures will be communicated to parents prior to the opening of school and will be posted on each campus website.

Transportation Procedures

- Howe ISD is asking parents to partner with us to reduce the number of students utilizing school bus transportation. If you are able to drop off/pick up your child or have them walk or ride a bike to and from school, that would be very beneficial.
- For those using bus transportation, students and staff will be required to use hand sanitizer upon boarding the bus.
- Students who use bus transportation will be required to wear a face covering—regardless of age or grade level.
- Whenever possible, the driver will open bus windows to allow for greater air circulation.
- Buses will be thoroughly cleaned after each bus trip. Attention will be given to cleaning high-touch surfaces such as seats, steering wheels, knobs, and door handles.

2020-21 Instructional Delivery Models

For the 2020-21 school year, Howe ISD will provide two instructional delivery models:

- On-Campus Learning (Traditional Face-to-Face Classroom Experience with Safety Protocols)
- Remote Learning (Virtual Learning Experience)

Regardless of the selected instructional delivery model, per Texas Education Code (TEC), Section 25.092, students must attend 90% of the days a course is offered to be awarded credit for the course and/or to be promoted to the next grade level.

On-Campus Learning

- This delivery method is available for students in Prekindergarten through Grade 12.
- Students will attend school on a regular instructional schedule and will engage in face-to face learning on campus.
- Expectations for coursework and guidelines for grading for On-Campus Learning and Remote Learning will be the same.
- Accommodations and support services will be provided according to the student's Individual Education Plan (IEP) or 504 Plan.

- All safety measures and protocols outlined in the first section of this document will be utilized to minimize exposure and mitigate the spread of COVID-19.
- In the event that a student participating in On-Campus Learning should possess COVID-19 symptoms, contract COVID-19, or experience close contact with a lab-confirmed COVID-19 case, the student must switch to Remote Learning. For re-entry to in-person learning, refer to the aforementioned Exclusion and Re-entry section of this document.
- In the event that a campus or the district is required to close due to a state mandate or local decision, all students will transition to Remote Learning

Remote Learning

- This delivery method is available for students in Prekindergarten through Grade 12.
- **Parents of students who select Remote learning are required to attend an HISD Remote Learning Orientation.** This orientation will be provided virtually and will be available on the Howe ISD website on or before July 30.
- Students will remain at home and will engage in learning activities that are primarily delivered through Canvas - an online learning management system.
- Expectations for coursework and guidelines for grading for On-Campus Learning and Remote Learning will be the same.
- Instruction will include teacher-led and independent learning activities.
- **Daily attendance will be taken.**
- **Daily student participation in the learning activities in every class will be required.**
- A caregiver will need to be available to support younger students in navigating remote learning.
- A reliable Internet connection will be required for Remote learning. If needed, Howe ISD will provide a hot spot and district technology device to the family.
- Students should check their school email and Canvas announcements daily for important communication from teachers.
- Some elective courses may not be available to remote students.
- **Students who select Remote Learning will not be eligible for participation in extra-curricular activities**

Online Learning Management Systems

- The district has identified Canvas as our Learning Management Systems to support delivery of remote learning.
- Resources will be available for parents to learn how to support students in navigating learning through this digital tool.

Process for Selecting Instructional Delivery Model:

- Based on the information provided in this plan, parents will need to complete a survey to inform Howe ISD of their intent to utilize On-Campus or Remote Learning for their student(s) for the 2020-21 school year.
- We request that parents complete the survey as soon as possible so that the district can determine staffing patterns. At the latest, the survey should be completed by July 29.
- Parents electing Remote Learning will also need to complete an application so that we can collect additional information. This application will be posted on the Howe ISD website (www.howeisd.net) on or before July 29. Paper applications will also be available in the office of each Howe ISD campus.
- Parents of students who select remote learning are required to attend an HISD Remote Learning Orientation. This orientation will be provided virtually and will be available on the Howe ISD website on or before July 30. This orientation must be completed prior to submission of the Remote Learning application.
- The application for Remote Learning should be completed by August 7.
- The district will assume that parents who do NOT complete an application intend to pursue On-Campus Learning for their student(s).

- The first two weeks of school will be considered a grace period for evaluating the chosen model of instruction for parents. If you determine that the selected model is not appropriate for your child, you may request a change up until Sept. 4.
- After the initial grace period, students may not change instructional delivery models during a 6-week grading period. If a student wishes to change models, you must notify the campus principal at least one week prior to the start of the new 6-week grading period. An application for Remote Learning must also be completed if moving from the On-Campus to Remote model. Exception - as noted above, a student may move from On-Campus Instruction to Remote Instruction should COVID-19 symptoms or exposure dictate a change in the instructional delivery method during a grading period.

Timelines for changing instructional models

Six weeks period	Dates:
1 st Six Weeks	August 19 – September 25
2 nd Six Weeks	September 28 – November 6
3 rd Six Weeks	November 9 – December 18
4 th Six Weeks	January 5 – February 12
5 th Six Weeks	February 16 – April 9
6 th Six Weeks	April 12 – May 28

Social Emotional and Mental Health Support Systems

Howe ISD will address the mental health and social-emotional development of all students, staff and community by following best practices in the areas of:

- School-based mental health services
- Behavioral support systems
- Family engagement and support practices
- Staff supports

Parent Communication

Communication throughout the COVID-19 Pandemic will be extremely important. Howe ISD will use the following channels for parent communication:

- District Website
- Social Media – District and Campus Facebook Pages
- Mass Communications – phone calls, texts, emails