

Walcott ISD is looking forward to welcoming everyone back to school in August. Guidance from TEA will be followed by Walcott ISD as we plan for and implement the reopening of school for the 2020-2021 school year. Please check our website and Facebook for updates.

The District is working to ensure a safe and productive learning environment for all. See below current information regarding plans for reopening schools. Thank you for your patience and understanding as we navigate these new circumstances.

TEA guidance was used to develop the Walcott ISD. The plan can be found at: www.walcottisd.com , <https://tea.texas.gov/sites/default/files/covid/SY-20-21-Public-Health-Guidance.pdf> ,

If you have any questions, please email your questions to: darla.bryant@region16.net . The district will respond via email.

Please note that details are subject to change based on guidelines from local, state, and federal authorities.

Key Details

Walcott ISD plans to reopen to provide face-to-face instruction beginning on August 24, 2020. Virtual learning option will also be available. **Virtual learning will not be the same type of virtual instruction provided during the Spring School Closure. The requirements for virtual learning are significantly more demanding on the student's daily participation and completion of work at home, as compared to this past spring.**

School Calendar

Learning Options

Walcott ISD families will select from two options for their children.

- **Option 1:** Full-time in-person on campuses, with heightened hygiene and disinfection protocols.
- **Option 2:** Full-time virtual learning.

Guidelines for 2020-21 School Year

Registration

All students will need to register for the 2020-21 school year online. All parents will be required to register their child for either in-person on campus or virtual via ZipSlip.

In-Person Instruction

Will be the traditional instruction with restrictions: daily temperature checks before entering the building, daily health screening, increased sanitizing and hand washing, 90% attendance rule in effect, social distancing when possible and eligible for extracurricular activities.

Virtual Learning Option:

Virtual school is a fluid option that can be assessed at any time. However, once the virtual option is chosen the student must remain with that option until the end of the grading period. Parents must inform the school of the student's return to in-person attendance. Walcott will have a two-week window in place at the beginning of the 2020-2021 school year for virtual learning to move back to in-person. Students will be required to follow the 90% attendance rule, daily attendance, daily assignments, **reliable internet is required**, and students will not be eligible for extracurricular activities.

Extracurricular Considerations:

Although UIL guidance allows students to participate in extracurricular activities in a virtual format, **through Walcott ISD Board resolution, students who choose to participate in athletics, extracurricular activities must choose the in- person option.**

Technology

The district has procured devices for staff and students. Information concerning technology use fees and distribution will be provided to parents by their child's home campus.

Instructional Efforts Underway for the New School Year

- Developing instructional models that support both in-person and virtual learning
- Providing a devices for students in need

Health/Safety Efforts Underway for the New School Year/Daily Protocols

- Monitor the potential impact of COVID 19 in Oldham/Deaf Smith County and follow guidance provided by local health organizations.
- Using preventative, antimicrobial misting systems in all facilities and on buses to thoroughly and widely disinfect daily. The District also disinfects locker rooms, weight rooms, and equipment.
- Temperature checks daily before students enter the building or buses.
- Hand sanitizer located at all facility entrances.
- Hand sanitizer and disinfectant will be available in all classrooms.
- Visitors will be temperature checked and health screened before entering the facility.
- Social distancing will be enforced when feasible.
- Hand washing and or hand sanitizing required frequently throughout the day. Proper self-care habits will be taught.
- Face covering will not be mandated at this time. District will provide face coverings for any student, staff member or visitor that asks for one.
- Students that develop symptoms of COVID-19 during the school day will be immediately separated from the student population. The student will be asked to put on a school supplied mask and wait in the nurse's observation room until picked up by a parent or guardian.
- Students who report feeling feverish will be immediately temperature checked to determine if they are symptomatic for COVID-19.
- Separate care areas have been created for sick and well populations. Well student/staff and injury care will be done in the nurse's office. Students/staff exhibiting symptoms that may indicate COVID-19 will be cared for in the observation room located in the classroom directly next to the nurse's office.

General Questions

Frequently Asked Questions

1. What precautions will be in place on campus?

VISD will comply with all health and safety mandates established by the health department and TEA. We will promote disease mitigation strategies, increase cleaning and sanitation practices, as well as frequent reminders of hand hygiene and social distancing.

2. Will students be required to wear masks?

Oldham County is currently exempt from Governor Abbott's order (Executive Order GA 29). If Oldham County has more than 20 active then VISD will have to follow the Governor's order. The District will provide face coverings for any individual that wants one.

3. Will CDC social distancing guidelines be observed?

All areas of the campus will be monitored frequently to encourage social distancing. Social distancing will be observed as much as possible, but at times students will be closer than the recommended 6 feet apart.

4. What happens if a student or a teacher test positive for COVID-19? Will the entire classroom have to quarantine and enroll in virtual school? What if multiple classrooms and students/staff are impacted?

When notification of a possible exposure occurs, VISD, in coordination with local health authorities, will begin contact tracing and complete a thorough risk assessment. Based on this assessment, a determination as to whether an entire classroom or multiple classrooms are required to quarantine will be made. Students will have the opportunity to access virtual content during the quarantine period.

5. Will visitors be allowed on campus? Visitors will be allowed on campus on a very limited basis using the guidelines below.

- All visitors must have a scheduled appointment.**
- All visitors must utilize hand sanitizing stations upon entry.**
- Parents will be required to drop off students at designated drop off locations.**

- **Students may bring lunches.**
- **No visitors will be allowed to eat with students.**
- **Until further notice, classroom parties will not be allowed.**

6. What is considered Close Contact?

This document refers to “close contact” with an individual who is lab-confirmed to have COVID-19. For clarity, close contact is defined as: a. being directly exposed to infectious secretions (being coughed on while not wearing a mask or face shield; or b. being within 6 feet for a cumulative duration of 15 minutes, while not wearing a mask or face shield; if either occurred at any time in the last 14 days at the same time the infected individual was infectious. Individuals are presumed infectious at least two days prior to symptom onset or in the case of asymptomatic individuals who are lab confirmed with COVID-19, two days prior to the confirming lab test.

Parent/Student Related

1. **What if most families choose the in-person option? Would there have to be changes to accommodate social distancing or will there be a limit of how many students can select the in-person option?**

We will continue to work closely with TEA and local health authorities to ensure the safety of our students. We believe we will be able to provide instruction to students in whichever format their families choose. Keep in mind, Walcott ISD will comply with all mandates regarding social/physical distancing as well as health and hygiene protocols.

2. **How will you address social, emotional, or mental health concerns?**

Our counselor is available to support students academically, socially, and emotionally and can provide mental health support or resources for families who may be struggling emotionally.

3. **Will we still have open house, assemblies or programs?**

At this time, large events will occur in a virtual setting or in small in-person gatherings that comply with CDC guidelines.

4. Will buses run?

Yes, transportation will continue for eligible regular bus route students.

5. Will social distancing be observed on buses, and how will seating arrangements be determined?

We cannot guarantee 6-foot social distancing on our district transportation. Students will be instructed with specific safety protocols. Students will be temp checked before entering the bus. The bus driver and students will use hand sanitizer that will be provided. School buses will be cleaned and disinfected daily.

6. Will students have recess or the ability to play and socialize with other students?

We are awaiting guidance from TEA on recess activities. However, we anticipate elementary students will have recess time with restrictions.

7. Will students remain enrolled at their school if they choose virtual school?

Yes, students will remain enrolled at their Walcott ISD and will be held accountable for attendance and assignments.

9. Will meals be provided for students who select virtual school?

Options are being explored for providing meals to qualified students who select virtual school. We are awaiting guidance from TEA and USDA.

10. Are immunizations required for virtual school?

Yes, at this time the Texas Department of State Health Services has not waived requirements for students.

11. How will virtual school be different from at-home learning during the closure last spring?

Students who select virtual school will be required to attend and participate in class daily, and instruction will be led by a teacher. In the spring, student assignments were limited. Virtual school this year will be a full course load of instruction and assignments that is equivalent to what students who are attending school in-person will be required to complete. It will be the responsibility of the parent and student to ensure virtual learning meets the same expectations as in person learning which includes completion of all assignments, daily communication with the teacher and daily time commitment. Teachers delivering virtual assignments will receive additional training and support in digital teaching strategies and using online curriculum. Both in-person and virtual learning will utilize the same grading system. Students being served through a special program; virtual instruction will affect accommodations and services provided.

12. Who will be required to take State assessments?

As of today, all students enrolled in-person or virtual will still participate in state assessments.

13. Can a student be counted absent from virtual learning?

Yes, a student enrolled in virtual learning is measured daily, and attendance is assigned based on the student's completion of that day's assignments. Students who do not complete the daily measurement of engagement are to be counted absent for that day, and that absence cannot be changed to present if the student completes the engagement measure on a later date.

14. Under the virtual learning instructional method, if a student decides to complete the entire weeks' worth of work on Monday, can the student's attendance be coded to show perfect attendance for the week?

No, in the virtual learning instructional method, student engagement is measured daily, and attendance is assigned based on the student's completion of that day's engagement measure. Students who do not complete the daily measure of engagement are to be counted absent for that day and that absence cannot be changed to present if that student completes the engagement measure on a later date. In the example above, the student would be counted absent Tuesday-Friday.

15. Will the 90% minimum student attendance for class credit rule be in effect for the 2020-2021 school year?

Yes, the minimum attendance for a class credit rule of TEC 25.092 will be in effect for the 2020-2021 school year and TEA will not be issuing waivers for the school districts to exempt themselves from the rule. Students are required to attend at least 90% of their classes to receive credit and be promoted. The virtual instructional method will count in the same manner as in-person attendance in satisfying this requirement.

16. Will truancy laws be in effect during the 2020-2021 school year for students receiving virtual instruction due to COVID-19 related closure or health concerns? Yes, truancy laws will apply to students who fail to attend school either in-person or virtually.

17. What should I do if my child has a cough, fever or other symptoms of possible illness?

Parents must ensure they do not send a child to school on campus if the child has COVID-19 symptoms or is lab-confirmed with COVID-19. Students that have recently begun experiencing any of the following symptoms in a way that is new or not normal for them, will need to follow TEA guidance for COVID-19 symptoms:

COVID-19 Symptoms

- 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 muscles aches or pains
- Diarrhea

Students experiencing fever, or any of the above symptoms in a way that is not normal for them, will need to remain off campus until they meet the criteria for school re-entry. During the time of illness, and while awaiting re-entry, the student will temporarily attend school virtually and will be able to meet attendance requirements in that manner. Parents will need to contact the campus principal, secretary or school nurse for further guidance and instructions. TEA has set specific re-entry criteria that must be followed at school districts for the safety of all. (Re-entry criteria is listed below in the next section)

18. When can my child return to school if he/she develops possible symptoms of COVID (as listed above)?

Parents MUST ensure they do not send a child to school on campus if the child has COVID-19 symptoms (listed above) or is lab-confirmed with COVID-19. Students will instead receive virtual instruction until the below conditions for re-entry are met. Any individuals who themselves either are (a) lab-confirmed to have COVID-19; or (b) experiences the symptoms of COVID-19 (as previously listed) must stay at home throughout the infection period, and cannot return to campus until the following criteria have been met (per TEA guidelines):

For those individuals diagnosed with COVID-19, he/she may return to school when ALL THREE OF THE FOLLOWING ARE MET:

○ At least 10 days have passed since symptoms first appeared AND

○ The individual has improvement in symptoms (such as cough, shortness of breath) AND

○ At least 3 days (72 hours) have passed since the last episode of fever and the student is not taking fever reducing medication (such as Advil, Tylenol, Aleve, Ibuprofen, Acetaminophen or any medications that contain them).

- For an individual who has symptoms of possible COVID-19 and who has not been evaluated by a medical professional or tested for COVID-19, he/she is assumed to potentially have COVID-19 and must follow the same 3 step criteria listed above.

- If the individual has symptoms that could indicate possible COVID-19 (listed above) and he/she wants to return to school before completing the above 3 step protocol, the individual must:

- Provide the school, upon return, with a medical professional's note clearing the individual for return based upon an alternative diagnosis (Example: return with doctor note stating the student has a non-COVID-related illness with a date of safe return listed. Note: student must be fever free for 24 hours without the use of fever reducing medication, not actively vomiting or experiencing diarrhea, must feel well enough to participate in classes, and meet all other standard school illness guidelines). OR

- 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/>.

19. Can I send my child to school if they had a fever yesterday, but none this morning?

No. Parents must not send a child to school with a possible symptom of COVID- 19 (fever). Parents and students will need to follow the above protocol explained in detail. Please notify the school and contact your child's health care provider for their recommendation.

20. What safety precautions are being taken in the nurse's health office?

Procedures have been developed to help promote safe student care and also the separation of ill and well student populations. All students will be temperature screened and use hand sanitizer before entry into the office. Students showing symptoms of COVID-19 will be given a mask to put on and then escorted to the separate observation room. The observation room will be utilized specifically for ill students with COVID-19 symptoms - for their assessment, care and rest until parent pick up. Care areas within the room will be socially distanced at least 6 feet apart. Parents are asked to be prepared to pick up their child in a timely manner (1 hour or less) in the event their child becomes ill at school.

Student care areas used will be cleaned after student use. Well student care and injury care will be done in a separate area as usual, with social distancing measures taken as much as feasible and extra cleaning processes in place. The school nurse will also wear PPE appropriate for the setting to help ensure student safety. Masks will be available for student use as requested.

21. Will the school be able to give my child a breathing treatment via nebulizer this school year?

Walcott ISD staff will not be able to give nebulizer breathing treatments this school year, except in absolute emergencies. Nebulizers generate aerosol droplets that can persist in the air for hours. This is considered a high risk procedure and could potentially spread COVID. CDC guidance recommends for parents to contact their child's health care provider to request an inhaler with spacer to use at school instead. In general, if your child is experiencing persistent cough and other symptoms of asthma that are not relieved by a single dose of inhaler/nebulizer at home, then he/she does not need to be at school. Symptoms of asthma and COVID-19 may overlap, including cough and shortness of breath. Students with persistent symptoms should be evaluated by a health care provider and not attend school until cleared or re-entry criteria met. Children seen by their health care provider may return once their symptoms improve and with a Dr.'s note stating they have a non-COVID-related illness. Asthma symptoms that ARE relieved by the use of an inhaler or nebulizer and are not accompanied by fever or other persistent symptoms, will not require the student to go home or stay home from school. Parents are highly encouraged to continue daily preventative asthma medications as prescribed by their child's health care provider.

Staff Related

1. Will teachers get to choose if they want virtual or in-person?

Principals will develop work assignments. If a teacher has a safety concern about returning to work, they should contact their campus principal. At this time, all staff will report to their applicable VISD facility to promote instruction for all students.

2. What will staff do if they have to quarantine due to COVID-19? Will the district provide extra sick or personal days for staff?

Requirements to quarantine are determined by the health department. In addition to existing leave balances, Walcott ISD will follow all provisions of the Families First Coronavirus Response Act (FFCRA) which is in effect through December 31, 2020.

4. Will teachers need to self-screen before coming to campus each day?

Yes. TEA requires teachers and staff to self-screen for COVID-19 symptoms before coming onto campus each day. The self-screening should include taking their own temperature. Staff must also 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. Additionally, they must report to the school system if they have had close contact with an individual who is lab-confirmed with COVID-19, and, if so, must remain off campus until the 14 day incubation period has passed. Close contact is defined as being directly exposed to infectious secretions (being coughed on while not wearing a mask or face shield); or being within 6 feet for a cumulative duration of 15 minutes, while not wearing a mask or face shield.

In evaluating whether an individual has symptoms consistent with COVID-19, consider the following question: Have you recently begun experiencing any of the following in a way that is not normal for you?

COVID-19 Symptoms

- 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 muscles aches or pains
- Diarrhea