



Riviera ISD Health & Safety Protocols (updated 01-07-2022)

Your health and safety matters to us!

The District recognizes that COVID-19 and its variants requires District Officials to make decisions quickly to ensure the safety of District students and employees; in order to provide in-person school instruction in a safe and effective manner. Effective January, 1st of 2022, we have elevated our practices and will continue to update our Health and Safety Protocols as needed.

As per The Texas Department of Health Services:

Any child having or suspected of having COVID-19 shall exclude from attendance. 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 10 days have passed since symptom onset, and fever*, and other symptoms have improved. Children who test positive for COVID-19 but do not have any symptoms must stay home until at least 10 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.**

Together with local public health officials, our school administrators have considered multiple factors when making decisions about implementing layered prevention strategies against COVID-19. Since our District serves our surrounding communities, decisions have been based on the school population, families and students served, as well as their communities.

Primary factors considered include:

1. Promoting Vaccination

COVID-19 vaccination among all eligible students as well as teachers, staff, and household members is one of the most critical strategies to help schools safely resume full operations.



However, preliminary evidence suggests that fully vaccinated people who are infected with the Delta variant can be infectious and can spread the virus to others. To reduce the risk of becoming infected with the Delta variant and spreading it to others, students, teachers, and school staff should continue to use layered prevention strategies.

2. Consistent and Correct Mask Use

When teachers, staff, and students consistently and correctly wear a mask, they could protect others as well as themselves. Consistent and correct mask use is especially important indoors and in crowded settings, when physical distancing cannot be maintained.

- **Indoors:** Masks will be highly encouraged for all individuals age 2 years and older, including students, teachers, staff, and visitors, regardless of vaccination status.
- **Outdoors:** In general, people do not need to wear masks when outdoors.
- **During school transportation:** Passengers and drivers must wear a mask on school buses, regardless of vaccination status,
- District will provide masks to those students who need them (including on buses), such as students who forgot to bring their mask or whose families are unable to afford them. No disciplinary action should be taken against a student who does not have a mask as described in the U.S. Department of Education COVID-19 Handbook.

3. Physical Distancing

Because of the importance of in-person learning, our schools will implement physical distancing to the extent possible within our structures but should not exclude students from in-person learning to keep a minimum distance requirement.

Based on studies from 2020-2021 school year, recommendation for schools when it is not possible to maintain a physical distance of at least 3 feet, it is especially important to layer multiple other prevention strategies, such as COVID testing, cohorting, improved ventilation, handwashing and covering coughs and sneezes, staying home when sick with symptoms of infectious illness including COVID-19, and regular cleaning to help reduce transmission risk.

Cohorting: means keeping people together in a small group and having each group stay together throughout an entire day. Cohorting can be used to limit the number of students, teachers, and staff who come in contact with each other, especially when it is challenging to maintain physical distancing, such as among young children, and particularly in areas of moderate-to-high transmission levels. The use of cohorting can limit the spread of COVID-19 between cohorts but should not replace other prevention measures within each group.

4. COVID Testing

Our District provides Screening testing that could help identify those who might be infected, so that immediate measures can be taken to prevent further transmission. Screening testing is done in a way that ensures the ability to maintain confidentiality of results and protect student, teacher, and staff privacy. Consistent with state legal requirements and Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA), Riviera ISD will only test if we have obtained parental consent for minor students and assent/consent for students themselves.

Screening testing can be used to help evaluate and adjust prevention strategies and provide added protection for our district when we are not able to provide optimal physical distance between students.

To facilitate safe participation in sports, extracurricular activities, and other activities with elevated risk, Riviera ISD will be implementing screening testing for participants who have parental consent. Riviera ISD will routinely test student athletes, participants, coaches, and trainers, and other people who come into close contact with others during these activities.

5. Ventilation

Improving ventilation is an important COVID-19 prevention strategy that can reduce the number of virus particles in the air. Riviera ISD will provide fresh outdoor air into our buildings, as well quality air filtration systems. Furthermore, during transportation, our District will keep windows open a few inches to improve air circulation.

6. Handwashing and Respiratory Etiquette

RISD staff and students will enforce the practice of handwashing and respiratory etiquette (covering coughs and sneezes) to keep from getting and spreading infectious illnesses including COVID-19. Riviera ISD will monitor and reinforce these behaviors and by continuing to do the following;

- Teach and reinforce handwashing with soap and water for at least 20 seconds.
- Remind everyone in classrooms to wash hands frequently and assist young children with handwashing.
- If handwashing is not possible, use hand sanitizer containing at least 60% alcohol (for teachers, staff, and older students who can safely use hand sanitizer). Hand sanitizers will be stored up, away, and out of sight of our young children and will only be used with adult supervision for children under 6 years of age.

7. Staying Home When Sick and Getting Tested

Students, teachers, and staff who have symptoms of infectious illness, such as influenza (flu) or COVID-19, will be expected to stay home and will be referred to their healthcare provider for testing and care, regardless of vaccination status. Staying home when sick with COVID-19 is essential to keep COVID-19 infections out of our schools and prevent spread to others. Riviera ISD will continue to provide excused absences for students who are sick and have a medical note from their Doctor.

8. Contact Tracing in Combination with Isolation and Quarantine

Riviera ISD will continue to collaborate with state and local health departments, to the extent allowable by privacy laws and other applicable laws, to confidentially provide information about people diagnosed with or exposed to COVID-19. This allows identifying which students, teachers, and staff with positive COVID-19 test results should isolate, and which close contacts should quarantine.

Riviera ISD will report, to the extent allowable by applicable privacy laws, new diagnoses of COVID-19 to their state or local health department as soon as they are informed. **School officials will notify, to the extent allowable by applicable privacy laws, teachers, staff, and families of students who were close contacts as soon as possible (within the same day if possible) after they are notified that someone in the school has tested positive.**

9. Cleaning and Disinfection

Riviera ISD will work diligently to reduce any risk of spreading infection by thorough cleaning and disinfecting once a day. All classrooms, offices and busses will be sanitized by 6pm, Monday – Friday.

10. Nonessential visitors, volunteers, and activities involving external groups or organizations, particularly in areas where there is moderate-to-high COVID-19 community transmission.

- Riviera ISD will limit nonessential visitors, and volunteers.
- Riviera ISD will not limit access for direct service providers, but can ensure compliance with school visitor policies.
- Riviera ISD will continue to emphasize the importance of staying home when sick. Anyone, including visitors, who have symptoms of infectious illness, such as flu or COVID-19, should stay home and seek testing and care, regardless of vaccination status.

11. Food Service and School Meals

- Staff will wear masks at all times during meal preparation and service, and during breaks except when eating or drinking.
- Students wearing masks is strongly recommended when moving through the food service line.
- Maximize physical distance as much as possible when moving through the food service line and while eating (especially indoors). Riviera ISD is using additional spaces outside of the cafeteria for mealtime seating, including the gymnasium.
- Given very low risk of transmission from surfaces and shared objects, Riviera ISD will not need to limit food service approaches to single use items and packaged meals.
- Riviera ISD cleans frequently touched surfaces. Surfaces that come in contact with food will be washed, rinsed, and sanitized before and after meals.

12. Recess and Physical Education

In general, people do not need to wear masks when outdoors (e.g., participating in outdoor play, recess, and physical education activities). Universal masking is recommended during indoor physical education or recess.

13. Sports and Other Extracurricular Activities

School-sponsored sports and extracurricular activities provide students with enrichment opportunities that can help them learn and achieve, and support their social, emotional, and mental health. Due to increased exhalation that occurs during physical activity, some sports can put players, coaches, trainers, and others at increased risk for getting and spreading COVID-19. Close contact sports and indoor sports are particularly risky. Similar risks might exist for other extracurricular activities, such as band, theater, and school clubs that meet indoors.

Prevention strategies in these activities will remain important and will comply with school day policies and procedures. Riviera ISD will facilitate safe participation to reduce risk of transmission – and avoid jeopardizing in-person education due to outbreaks.

RISD Athletic Director and Coaches share their considered specific sport-related risks:

- **Setting of the sporting event or activity.** In general, the risk of COVID-19 transmission is lower when playing outdoors than in indoor settings. RISD will consider the ability to keep physical distancing in various settings at the sporting event (i.e., fields, benches/team areas, locker rooms, spectator viewing areas, spectator facilities/restrooms, etc.).
- **Physical closeness.** Spread of COVID-19 is more likely to occur in sports that require sustained close contact (such as football).
- **Number of people.** Risk of spread of COVID-19 increases with increasing numbers of athletes, spectators, teachers, and staff.

- **Level of intensity of activity.** The risk of COVID-19 spread increases with the intensity of the sport.
- **Duration of time.** The risk of COVID-19 spread increases the more time athletes, coaches, teachers, staff and spectators spend in close proximity or in indoor group settings. This includes time spent traveling to/from sporting events, meetings, meals, and other settings related to the event.

14. Emergency Operations Plans

RISD has an Emergency Operations Plan (EOP) in place to protect students, teachers, staff, and families from the spread of COVID-19 and other emergencies. The EOP includes:

- COVID-19 prevention strategies to be implemented.
- Steps to take when a student, teacher, or staff member has been exposed to someone with COVID-19, has symptoms of COVID-19, or tests positive for COVID-19.