

# RISE ACADEMY COVID-19 MITIGATION PLAN

Based on guidance from the Texas Education Agency, Rise Academy has developed this plan to lessen the chances that a COVID-19 outbreak occurs at school. Some practices are required for all schools, while others are recommendations for schools to implement based on their local conditions and school-specific circumstances.

It is crucial that **all** parents and visitors, as well as school staff, follow Rise Academy's coronavirus mitigation rules and requirements. We should all understand by now that COVID-19 is a very serious illness, and the best way to defeat the virus is to work together by consistently following the health measures that are in place to protect not only the children but also all the rest of us whom they depend on to provide them with a first-rate education.

## Rise Academy Instructional Model for School Year 2020-21

Rise Academy will offer **only** traditional, in-person instruction for the 2020-21 school year, except in very limited situations.

At-home instruction, whether in the form of online delivery or send-home work packages, proved to be entirely ineffective for most Rise students during the final quarter of the 2019-20 school year. Resorting to such "instruction" again will no doubt prove to be another significant failure. Students have lost far too much ground already to risk another prolonged period of ineffective schooling at home. Our students simply need to be in-person with teachers to learn and advance.

Therefore, at-home instruction will occur only under these limited circumstances:

- 1) The governor imposes the closure of schools as he did last spring.
- 2) An individual student is required to remain at home under a family quarantine as a result of exposure to the COVID virus. In this case, only the particular student – and that student's siblings -- will be provided at-home lessons or assignments, either through on-line delivery or with paper work packages.
- 3) A student tests positive for COVID. In this case, that student's entire class may be required by health department code to stay at home for a 14-day period. In

this instance, all students in the exposed class will be provided at-home lessons or assignments, either through on-line delivery or with paper work packages.

- 4) The Rise Director and Operations Director determine, in consultation with the Lubbock Health Department, that conditions at the school necessitate that the entire school close for a certain period of time. In such a case, all students will be provided at-home lessons or assignments, either through on-line delivery or with send-home work packages.

### **Balancing Educational Necessity & Health Concerns**

Research from the Centers for Disease Control (CDC), and other sources, shows that although children can be infected by COVID-19, relatively few children are hospitalized or develop severe symptoms. The greater threat is children serving as transmitters of COVID to older people who are at greater risk from the disease. This *is* a real concern.

On the other hand, *it is absolutely critical that students, particularly our students, attend school in-person to receive the expected benefits of a Rise Academy education.*

A recent study published in the American Research Journal found that more than half of students lost an average of 39% of the knowledge and skills they had learned last school year by the time the at-home period (mid-March thru June 1<sup>st</sup>) came to an end. And the losses were greater for low-income students.

For this reason, Rise Academy will begin classes relatively early, and in-person.

### **PREVENTION: Practices to Prevent the Virus from Entering the School.**

1. **Teachers & Staff.** All teachers and staff **must self-screen** for COVID symptoms each morning before they come to school. This will include them taking their temperatures. If any teachers or staff have COVID symptoms, they must stay home until they meet the criteria to return to school.
2. **Students.** **PARENTS MUST NOT SEND A CHILD TO SCHOOL IF SHE/HE HAS COVID-19 SYMPTOMS OR HAS TESTED POSITIVE FOR THE VIRUS!** This is Crucial! (See List of Symptoms below.) **Also,** a child should Not be sent to school if she/he has had **close contact with a person** who has tested positive for COVID.

- **List of COVID-19 Symptoms:**

- + Feverish, with a temperature of 100.00 degrees or higher
- + Loss of taste or smell
- + Difficulty breathing and/or shortness of breath
- + Headache
- + Chills
- + Sore throat
- + Coughing
- + Shivering
- + Muscle pains or aches
- + Diarrhea

- **Parents, What You Must Do If Your Child Has Symptoms:**

- + Do Not send the child to school & Notify the school immediately
- + Get your child Tested ASAP
- + Keep your child at home while waiting for test results
- + Continue to keep your child at home until the criteria for returning to school is met.

- **Criteria for a Child Returning to School:**

+ If the child has tested positive for COVID, then these **3 criteria** Must All be met before the child can return –

- At least **3 full days (72 hours)** have passed since recovery. This means **no more fever without the use of medications.**
- Definite **improvement in symptoms** – much less cough, sore throat is much better, breathing is much easier, etc.
- At least **10 days** have passed since symptoms first appeared.

+ If the child **does** have COVID symptoms, but for some reason **Does Not** get tested for COVID --

- then it is **assumed that he or she DOES have COVID, and the same 3 criteria** above Must All be met before the child can return to school. No exceptions!

- Still **Notify the school immediately** that the child is sick and expect us to strongly urge you to get your child tested.
- **There is One Exception** allowing for an earlier return to school – the child has a valid doctor’s note stating that the child has been seen and **diagnosed with some other sickness** (like the flu), AND the child can return to school sooner than the end of the COVID quarantine period.

\*\*\* Again, **All 3 criteria must be met before the child can return** to school. Parents, you must not send children back to school if they still have any significant symptoms listed above. Things are very different now. In the past, **we sometimes let students return** with significant symptoms to lessen the number of days missed. But now we have to be much more strict. Children who are sick must stay home!

\*\*\* **All Children should get a Flu Shot.** Think about it, Parents. If the flu shot works at all, then if your child has any of these symptoms listed above, they are less likely to be due to the flu and more likely to be COVID related. Therefore, if you take your child to get COVID tested, you already know it is less likely that it’s just the flu. Also, every year, we have a **high number of absences due to the flu. We can reduce these non-COVID absences by getting kids a flu shot.** Flu shots DO NOT cause kids to get sick! And the shots are free or nearly free. Any parent who has to pay for a flu shot, but can’t afford it, can notify the school and **we will pay for** your child to get a flu shot.

### **3. Parents & Adults Dropping Off/Picking Up Students.**

- **ALL** parents or other persons dropping off or picking up students **MUST wear a mask! NO EXCEPTIONS! Even though you are outside, Do Not Come On the Campus without a mask on** that is covering your mouth and nose. This is not just the Rise rule, but the Governor’s order.
- **Until further notice, parents or any other persons dropping off or picking up students CANNOT enter the classrooms.** They may go as close to the buildings as the outside doorway, but they cannot enter student classrooms. The only exceptions would be in cases where the parent has arranged ahead of time with the office to enter a classroom. In such a case, the parent must first be screened in the office for COVID according to the Visitors policy described below.

- **During drop-offs and pick-ups, parents and other adults are urged to maintain as much distance as possible from one another** outside on the cement walkways. A distance of 6 feet will not always be possible, but as much spacing as possible should be the goal.
4. **Visitors.** All visitors to the school must go directly to the office and be screened for COVID-19 symptoms. This screening involves the visitor's response to a list of symptoms and a temperature check. Also, office staff must ask if the visitor has had close contact with any person who is confirmed to have COVID. If the visitor indicates any COVID symptom, has a fever, or has been in close contact with a COVID-infected person, that visitor must leave the school and not return for 14 days.

### **RESPONSE: When a Student or Staff Member Has a Confirmed Case of COVID**

1. Rise must **notify the Lubbock Health Department** that there has been a lab-confirmed case among its students or staff.
2. Rise must **notify all staff and the families of all students** that there has been a lab-confirmed case of COVID-19 among its students or staff. The identity of the infected person is subject legal confidentiality requirements.
3. Rise must **close off areas of the campus** that the infected person spent significant time in and **disinfect all non-porous surfaces** in those areas.
4. As determined by the Lubbock Health Department, it may be necessary to require that **students who had significant close contact with** the infected person remain home for a period of **14 days**.

### **MITIGATION: Practices to Lessen the Likelihood of COVID Spread Inside School.**

1. **Mitigation at School by Wearing Masks.**
  - **All teachers and staff, and All students age 10 and older must wear masks.** This is by state order; we have no choice, at least until the Governor lifts his mask order.

- **Masks must be worn properly.** Students cannot wear masks as we often see persons in the general public wearing them – covering the mouth only; covering neither the mouth nor the nose and instead worn like a chinstrap or neck gaiter. Students unwilling to wear masks properly will face **disciplinary consequences including suspensions.**
- Students are to **bring their own masks from home.** Rise will also **provide a few masks** to each student at the beginning of the year as back-ups. Keep these extras at home. If a child forgets his/her mask from home, we will supply one – **but not a new one over and over** on a frequent basis.
- For masks that are washable, **wash them frequently.** Please do this consistently. Also, put the **child's name on the mask** so that it can be identified if left somewhere.
- **Students under the age of 10 will be allowed to wear masks,** but they are not required. HOWEVER, if a parent wants a younger student to wear a mask, UNDERSTAND that teachers and assistants **will not spend all day telling that student to put his/her mask back on** when he or she keeps taking it off.
- Some teachers, especially **in the lower grades, will wear face shields** rather than masks. The Texas Education Agency has determined that face shields provide the same protection as cloth masks. It is important for younger students to be able to see teachers' mouths during reading, phonics and language lessons.
- Each classroom will have **extra hand sanitizer near the entrance way** of each classroom. We already have hand sanitizer dispensers mounted in classrooms near the restrooms.

## **2. Mitigation by Students.**

- **Handwashing/Hand Sanitizing for students will take place 3 times each day,** not including individual use of restrooms.

- **Upon Arrival in Morning.** As soon as students arrive at school in the morning, they will wash their hands/sanitizes their hands before eating breakfast or doing much of anything else.
- **Before Lunch.** Before students eat lunch, they will wash their hands/sanitizes their hands first.
- **After Recess or Gym.** Students will wash their hands/sanitizes their hands after recess or after gym class.
- **Distancing While Changing Classrooms.** When students change from one classroom to another, which is more frequent with older students, they will be instructed to space out while walking and not cluster too close together while waiting near the door to enter the classroom.

### 3. **Mitigation by Teachers.**

- **There are several routine practices that teachers will utilize to lessen the likelihood of COVID spread in classrooms.**
  - **Grades Pre-k – 2<sup>nd</sup>.** In classrooms where students do not change rooms frequently, **teachers and assistants will wipe off desk or table tops several times** per day. When this extra cleaning takes place will depend on the specific schedules of each rooms and grade levels. Typical times will be while students are **at recess, in the morning at the end of breakfast, and after lunch.** Also, as often as possible, teachers or assistants will wipe down high-touch surfaces, such as door handles, light switches, and sink faucets.
  - **Grades 3<sup>rd</sup> – 8<sup>th</sup>.** Teachers will wipe off desktops while students are **moving from room to room in between classes.** The goal is to have desks wiped off before a teacher's next group of students sits down. These teachers will also wipe down high-touch surfaces, such as door handles, light switches, and sink faucets.
  - **Open Windows.** To the extent possible, classroom windows will be opened or partially opened to increase air flow.

- **Spacing of Desks or Tables.** Like classrooms in many other schools, Rise rooms are not large enough to accommodate 6 feet of social distancing between student desks in most classrooms. Desks and tables will be separated as far apart as practicable, given the number of students in each room.

#### **4. Mitigation by Other Means.**

- **Change in After-School Sibling Routine.** During this COVID-19 period, younger students waiting for their older siblings to be dismissed at 4:00 simply cannot be held in a single room. Instead, each teacher will have to remain with these students in their own classrooms. This includes students who are just late being picked up. This puts an extra burden on teachers in the lower grades, but we have no choice. This burden can be lessened, however, by parents making sure that students who are NOT waiting for an older sibling are picked up ON TIME!
- **No After-School Activities (Basketball, Cheerleading) Until Further Notice.** Unfortunately, we need to lessen the number of settings in which COVID could be spread.
- **No School Assemblies or Meetings.** An example would be the cancelation of the Parent Orientation group meeting together in the gym.
- **Reduction or Elimination of Field Trips.** We want to keep classrooms of students as separate as possible. Several classrooms mixed together on a bus negates that goal.
- **Changes to Recess Routines.** The south-end playground used by the younger students will be divided in half with extra fencing to keep classrooms physically separate from each other when they go outside at the same time.
- **Changes to Gym Class Routine.** The upper grades will go to gym in smaller groups. Grades 5<sup>th</sup> & 6<sup>th</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup> & 8<sup>th</sup> will not be combined for gym class, as is usually the case. Students will only have gym every other day to achieve this separation. Also, the activities of gym class will include very few group or team sports. Instead, students will be spaced apart and more personal fitness exercises will be done instead. Again, we have no choice but to make these changes.



# IMPORTANT!! PARENTS

## WHAT YOU MUST DO YOUR CHILD IS SICK

Some students are beginning to have absences. NONE have been for COVID, but parents need to follow the requirements listed in the COVID Guide:

**PARENTS MUST NOT SEND A CHILD TO SCHOOL IF SHE/HE HAS COVID-19 SYMPTOMS OR HAS TESTED POSITIVE FOR THE VIRUS! This is Crucial! (See List of Symptoms below.)** Also, a child should Not be sent to school if she/he has had close contact with a person who has tested positive for COVID.

- **List of COVID-19 Symptoms:**

- + Feverish, with a temperature of 100 degrees or higher
- + Loss of taste or smell
- + Difficulty breathing and/or shortness of breath
- + Headache
- + Chills
- + Sore throat
- + Coughing
- + Shivering
- + Muscle pains or aches
- + Diarrhea

- **Parents, What You Must Do If Your Child Has Symptoms:**

- + Do Not send the child to school But Do Notify the school immediately
- + Get your child Tested ASAP (See “Instant Test” Below!)
- + Keep your child at home while waiting for test results (See Below!)
- + Continue to keep your child at home until the criteria for returning to school is met.

- **Criteria for a Child Returning to School:**

+ If the child has tested positive for COVID, then these 3 criteria Must All be met before the child can return –

- 3 full days (72 hours) have passed since recovery. This means no more fever without the use of medications.

- **Definite improvement in symptoms – much less coughing, sore throat is much better, breathing is much easier, etc.**
- **At least 10 days have passed since symptoms first appeared.**

**+ If the child does have COVID symptoms, but for some reason Does Not get tested for COVID – (See “Instant Test” Below!!)**

- **then it is assumed that he or she DOES have COVID, and the same 3 criteria above Must All be met before the child can return to school. No exceptions!**
- **Still Notify the school immediately that the child is sick and expect us to strongly urge you to get your child tested.**
- ***There is One* Exception allowing for an earlier return to school – the child has a valid doctor’s note stating that the child has been seen and diagnosed with some other sickness (like the flu), AND the child can return to school on a certain date determined by the doctor.**

**Again, All 3 criteria must be met before the child can return to school. Parents, you must not send children back to school if they still have any significant symptoms listed above.**

**“INSTANT TEST” – You can get a Free COVID test and know the results 20 minutes later. Go to the Community Health Center 1610 5<sup>th</sup> St. near Ave. Q off the Marsha Sharp access drive. Weekdays, 8:00 am –11:00 am & 1:00 pm – 3:00 pm. 765-2611.**

**FINALLY:**

**All Children should get a Flu Shot.** If a person gets a flu shot (even if it doesn’t completely stop the flu), then it will be easier to narrow down what the sickness is -- these symptoms are more likely to be COVID related. Also, every year we have a high number of absences due to the flu. We can reduce these non-COVID absences by getting kids a flu shot. Flu shots DO NOT cause kids to get sick! And the shots are free or nearly free in most cases.

