

Return to School Plan
UTPB STEM Academy
2021-2022

UTPB STEM Academy will provide in-person learning five days per week for all students during the 2021-2022 school year. To ensure safe in-person experiences, UTPB STEM Academy is working closely with health and university officials and maintaining key health and safety protocols. The purpose of this plan is to provide students, families, employees, and community stakeholders with the information necessary for a safe return to in-person learning. The plan outlines both instructional and operational protocols for all. Because of changing conditions, UTPB STEM Academy will continually monitor health conditions and review procedures and protocols, making adjustments as needed.

Masks

Masks are optional and encouraged at this time in all UTPB STEM Academy buildings

Self-Monitoring

Students, staff, and visitors are asked to monitor their health and stay home when sick.

COVID-19 Guidelines

The district has outlined guidance and protocols for confirmed, presumed, and exposed individuals. For more information, see UTPB STEM Academy's Procedural Guidelines for COVID-19 Exposure, Presumed, or Confirmed Positive Individuals.

COVID-19 Testing

UTPB STEM Academy encourages all students and staff to participate in regular COVID-19 screen testing, which allows preventative measures to be taken to avoid further transmission of COVID-19. Rapid Testing will be available at the school with a parents signed consent.

Hygiene

Students, staff, and visitors are encouraged to wash/ sanitize their hands regularly. Sanitization stations will be maintained at all buildings.

Sanitization & Disinfection

All district buildings will continue to be cleaned and disinfected daily. Hand sanitizer and other cleaning and disinfecting supplies will be provided in all buildings.

Physical Distancing

While no longer required, physical distancing of at least three feet is encouraged indoors as space allows. Assigned seating will be required in classrooms.

UTPB STEM Academy Visitors

UTPB STEM Academy will be limited to pre-scheduled visitors, including after-school program staff and parents and community volunteers who have appointments and have been pre-approved. All visitors are required to screen themselves prior to entry and are encouraged to wear a mask.

Student Uniforms & Dress Code

Student uniform policies will remain in effect for the 2021-2022 school year.

Attendance & Grades

Perfect attendance will not be recognized this year as an award category, and there are no plans for grade exemptions. All grades will count toward a student passing a course/grade. For more information about grades, see the student handbook.

Extracurricular Activities

Competitions and practices, as well as extracurricular activities and performances, will take place. Spectator capacity may be limited.

Field Trips

All field trips will be determined 1 month prior to the field trip.

In-Person Gatherings

In-person gatherings, meetings, and events are permitted at UTPB STEM Academy, masks and social distancing will be encouraged. Outdoor gathering are optimal.

Closure Plan

We do not anticipate school closures. Should deteriorating COVID-19 conditions warrant the closure of a campus, classroom, or portion of a classroom, that determination will be made on a case-by-case basis by UTPB STEM Academy in consultation with the university and local health officials.

Temporary Online Learning

Students who are unable to attend school because of a temporary medical condition are eligible for a maximum of 20 days of Temporary Online Learning during the 2021-2022 school year. To qualify, one of the following conditions must be met:

- Student's temporary medical condition is documented by a licensed U.S. physician. Documentation must include a physician's statement directing the student to remain at home or in a hospital.
- Student has a positive COVID-19 test result or is displaying symptoms of a recognized communicable disease.

- Student has been identified as having been in close contact with an individual with a confirmed or presumed positive case of COVID-19.

Instructional Delivery

Temporary online learning will be delivered synchronously by a certified teacher for up to four hours per day. Students will be assigned a temporary teacher for online learning to help navigate through the assigned curriculum in the core classes.

Safe In-Person Learning and Working

Masks

Masks are optional in all UTPB STEM Academy buildings. Per Centers for Disease Control and Prevention recommendations for K-12 schools, masks are recommended indoors — regardless of vaccination status. Masks should cover both the nose and the mouth. Masks will be provided by the school if needed.

Self-Monitoring

Students, parents, employees, and visitors are required to self-monitor and should not enter any district school, building or bus when sick or experiencing symptoms of a recognized communicable disease.

COVID-19 GUIDELINES

- **STUDENTS**

If a student is showing COVID symptoms they will be sent to the Student Health Isolation Pod (SHIP). This is a designated area where students can isolate. Isolation must be separate from others. Students exhibiting symptoms of a recognized communicable disease must be placed in this isolation area, away from others, until picked up by a parent/guardian. The school nurse will initiate and complete the necessary documentation to determine next steps. If a student becomes infected with COVID-19, the parent must notify their campus, stay home and quarantine for 10 days from the onset of symptoms, and attend temporary online learning. Students will not be counted absent as long as they attend four hours of temporary online learning each day. If a presumed or confirmed COVID-19 case is detected in a classroom, impacted students will be identified through the contact tracing process. Parents/caregivers of impacted students will be notified and provided with next steps related to quarantine and any other measures that should be taken. If quarantine is required, the student must stay home.

- **STAFF**

All staff and faculty will be required to required to quarantine if any of these conditions are met:

- Lab-confirmed COVID-19 case
- Exhibiting symptoms of a recognized communicable disease
- Exposed to either a confirmed or presumed positive COVID-19 case, this may change if the exposed individual is vaccinated.

* UTPB STEM will follow the most updated CDC guidelines in regards to quarantining.

If staff are at work when meeting any of the above three conditions, they must leave immediately. Otherwise, they are instructed to remain at home and notify their immediate supervisor. In the interest of all UTPB STEM Academy stakeholders, staff meeting any of the three conditions are strongly encouraged to seek medical attention and get tested for COVID-19. Additionally, staff may get tested or vaccinated during work hours without using personal time with approval from their supervisor.

Learning Loss

UTPB STEM Academy is focused this year on making sure all students impacted by the pandemic are back on track academically, socially, and behaviorally. To do this, UTPB STEM Academy is utilizing over \$700,000 in Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief federal grants provided through the American Rescue Plan Act to address pandemic-related learning loss.

The grant funds will focus on 5 key areas:

- Supports for reading and math, as well as college, career and military readiness
- Tutoring and interventions
- Social and Emotional Learning
- Technology and digital resources
- Human capital and compensation

Frequently Asked Questions

What does it mean to be exposed?

Being exposed means that someone has been in close contact with someone who has tested positive for COVID-19. Close contact is defined as someone who was within 6 feet of an infected person for a cumulative total of 15 minutes or more over a 24-hour period starting from 2 days before illness onset (or asymptomatic patients, 2 days prior to patient being tested) until the time the patient is isolated.

What does it mean to quarantine?

Those who have been in close contact with someone positive for COVID-19 should remain at home away from others for a period of 10 days from last date of exposure. During this 10-day period the exposed should be monitored for COVID like symptoms. If COVID like symptoms develop, please contact your school nurse and primary health doctor for further guidance.

What is the last date of exposure?

This is the last date that your student was in close contact with the person who has tested positive for COVID-19.

What is the tentative return date?

This is the date that your student can return to campus after completing their 10-day quarantine period and if he/she has remained symptom free for the full 10 days. If your student develops COVID like symptoms during the 10-day period, or if your student is exposed to someone else in the household that tests positive for COVID-19, his/her return date will change so contact your school nurse for further guidance.

Should I have my student tested for COVID-19?

It is not recommended that your child be tested if your child remains symptom free during the 10-day quarantine period. However, if you would like to have your student return before the 10-day quarantine period then you have the option to have your child tested no sooner than 5 days after the last date of exposure. You are not required to have your student tested to return to school if your child completes their 10-day quarantine period. If you wish to have your child tested for an earlier return then you will need to obtain a PCR test, NOT the rapid test. If your child has a negative PCR test and is not experiencing any symptoms then he/she may return to school on day 8 after exposure. This protocol only applies if your student does not have any COVID like symptoms. Please keep in mind that your child may develop symptoms of COVID-19 any time during the 14 days after the date of exposure even if your child has had a negative test result. Therefore, it is highly recommended by the Health Department and CDC that your student complete their 10-day quarantine period. If your child develops COVID like symptoms, even after a negative test result, please keep your child at home and contact your school nurse for further guidance.

What are the symptoms of COVID-19?

Symptoms include: fever (100.0 Fahrenheit or greater), cough, shortness of breath or difficulty breathing, repeated shaking with chills, muscle pain, headache, sore throat, loss of taste or smell, diarrhea, congestion or runny nose, nausea or vomiting, fatigue.

What if my student develops COVID like symptoms during the quarantine period?

If your student develops COVID like symptoms during their quarantine period you should contact your school nurse and primary health doctor for further guidance. Most people can recover from COVID-19 at home and just treat the symptoms with over the counter medications.

What is the rapid test the school is administering?

If your child is symptomatic or part of a group that is designated for testing, **if you consent**, your child can receive a free BinaxNOW rapid test for the COVID-19 virus with your written permission. Testing involves using a swab, similar to a Q-Tip, placed inside the shallow part of the nostril. A trained school staff member will administer the test. Older students can be instructed to collect the sample and give it to the test administrator. Test results will be made available to the parent/guardian who signs this form below. The results will be sent by text message or email within 24 hours of the test. **This program is entirely optional for students and staff members.**