

## **BEXAR County Health Authority**

### **Amended Health Directive**

*Dated Sept. 3, 2020*

Recognizing that open and safe schools are vital to community health, and that COVID-19 presents an ongoing public health threat, the Local Health Authority for Bexar County and the City of San Antonio issues this Directive pursuant to the Texas Health & Safety Code §81.082 imposing requirements on all public and private schools (“School Systems”) offering instruction to students in any grades from pre-kindergarten through grade 12, effective immediately:

**Recommendations Based on Health Indicators.** School systems should tie their pandemic operational level to public health department metrics for community infection. Bexar County’s weekly metric for school re-opening is [here](#) and uses Red, Yellow and Green Zones.

- **At risk levels in the Red Zone.** In-person instruction is not recommended. Ancillary services that do not involve prolonged close contact (within 6 feet, for 15 minutes or more) should be provided one-on-one to special needs students, at-risk students and students who lack access to resources.
  - Other than drive-through events, no school-sponsored events including, but not limited to, fairs, exhibitions, academic and/or athletic competitions should take place in person, on or off campus. Athletes may engage in skill-building drills or conditioning at home, alone or with household members, under Centers for Disease Control & Prevention (CDC) guidance for youth sports [here](#).
  - Staff and students should use a fresh mask each day. Additionally, staff should wear eye protection when working indoors and within 6 feet of students who are unable to wear masks.
  - In the event of Stay Home, Work Safe or similar orders, ancillary services will cease for the duration of the orders.
  
- **At risk levels in the Yellow Zone.** In-person instruction, if offered, prioritizes special needs students, at-risk students and students who lack access to resources. Instruction should take place under guidance from the CDC for substantial, controlled community transmission. Fixed cohorts of 6 or fewer students per classroom are recommended in the Yellow zone. Building occupancy and room occupancy should be contingent on adequate ventilation and ability to create 6-foot distancing, and neither building nor room occupancy should exceed 25%. Reasonable accommodation must be made for qualified staff as required by the U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission.
  - Other than drive-through events, no school-sponsored events including, but not limited to, fairs, exhibitions, academic and/or athletic competitions should take place in person, on or off campus.
  - Athletic teams may conduct no-contact, socially distanced practices in small, fixed cohorts of 6 or fewer students, following CDC guidance for youth sports [here](#).

- Staff and students should use a fresh mask each day. Additionally, staff should wear eye protection when working indoors and within 6 feet of students who are unable to wear masks.
- **At risk levels in the Green Zone.** In-person instruction should take place under CDC guidance for minimal to moderate community transmission. Social distancing by older children and adults, frequent hand hygiene, and face coverings during high-contact activities are recommended in the Green zone. Additional guidance is [here](#). Considerations for youth sports can be found [here](#).

Back-to-school indicator bar:

<https://covid19.sanantonio.gov/What-YOU-Can-Do/Reopening-Safely/Information-for-Residents#RemoteLearning>

CDC guidance for different levels of community transmission:

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/schools-childcare/guidance-for-schools.html>

CDC considerations for youth sports:

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/schools-childcare/youth-sports.html>.

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/schools-childcare/youth-sports-faq.html>

**At all risk levels.** Staff and students should stay home when sick, and sick individuals should face no negative consequences for staying home. Symptomatic people should be referred for testing, including at free testing sites listed at [covid19.sanantonio.gov](https://covid19.sanantonio.gov).

School systems that reduce risk by the all methods below are better candidates for in-person activities and cohort sizes of up to 10 in the Yellow Zone. School systems that are unable to employ all of these methods should consider extending virtual learning or using smaller cohorts even in the Green Zone:

- Maximal use of outdoor spaces
- Adhering to American Society of Heating, Refrigerating and Air-Conditioning Engineers (ASHRAE) [guidance](#) for school ventilation
- Monitoring social distancing, including in staff break areas
- Providing one 1 fresh mask per person per day
- Prohibiting shared food or utensils among people from different households
- Promoting frequent hand hygiene and ensuring adequate access to hand sanitizer, soap and sinks
- Working with families to create transportation options that reduce risk

**District/System Panel.** Each district or School System should be advised by a 7-person COVID-19 panel that at a minimum includes: 1 student, 1 teacher, 1 parent, 1 non-instructional staffer (i.e., maintenance, custodial, food service), 1 school nurse, pediatrician or adolescent healthcare provider, and 1 human resources representative. The panel will provide guidance to

superintendents, principals and school boards on operating procedures. The school nurse or pediatric/adolescent healthcare provider should serve as a liaison to Metro Health, including for notification of positive cases.


Schools may optionally be advised by their own 7-member panels for additional guidance.

**Reporting Requirements.** In addition to weekly aggregate reporting to the Texas Education Agency, Districts and School Systems shall report COVID-19 positive staff and students to Metro Health within 24 hours by calling 210-207-8876.

**Written Plan for Protocols.** With guidance from their COVID-19 panel, and by no later than Friday, August 21, 2020, each School System shall develop a written plan with safety and health protocols for resuming on-campus instruction and extracurricular activities. School systems must make the plan available to parents and the general public including posting it on their websites. The School System's plan to mitigate COVID-19 spread in their schools based on the requirements and recommendations outlined in the School Year 21 Public Health Planning Guidance issued by the Texas Education Agency meets this requirement. The written plan is not subject to approval by the Bexar County Health Authority.

Our knowledge base about COVID-19 transmission in schools is evolving quickly, and recommendations are likely to change as new data become available. I believe this directive includes appropriate control measures based on current knowledge, including the risk for rapid spread of COVID-19 in congregate settings such as schools, and potential effects on adults in households with school-age children.

This directive is issued under my authority as the Local Health Authority for Bexar County and the City of San Antonio on this the 3rd day of September 2020.

  
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C. Junda Woo, MD, MPH  
Bexar County Health Authority