

Start and Stay Strong! *Back-to-School Guidelines*

TEA REQUIREMENT: Providing Notice

Sunshine Cottage is providing notice to parents, families, and the community regarding back-to-school plans and instruction through this initial document. As further required, one week prior to the start of school, a plan to prevent COVID-19 will be distributed via Blackbaud to all families and posted on the school website. Preliminary information is posted in these guidelines and is subject to change based on state and local decisions.

COVID-19 Response Team – Sunshine Cottage has developed a COVID-19 Response Team to respond to concerns and communicate the school’s decisions. Members of the team and email addresses are noted below:

Mark E. Eads	Executive Director	meads@sunshinercottage.org
Jeff Bryan	Principal	jbryan@sunshinercottage.org
Mary Bueno	Human Resources	mbueno@sunshinercottage.org
Lisa Lopez.....	Parent Infant Program Director	llopez@sunshinercottage.org
Cindy Escobedo	Educational Resource Director.....	cescobedo@sunshinercottage.org
Otis Hernandez	Maintenance Supervisor	ohernandez@sunshinercottage.org

TEA REQUIREMENT: Prevent and Mitigate

Sunshine Cottage must identify and implement practices to prevent the virus from entering the school and to reduce the likely spread inside the school; therefore, district practices and guidelines have been established for various areas noted below.

Health and Safety Guidance

- **Social and Emotional Well-Being** – Students’ social and emotional well-being are a top priority. Together, schools and families can support your child during this challenging time. With the endless COVID coverage, it is natural for your child to experience some changes in behavior and mood. We will continue to work closely with families and students to ease the stress. Keeping routines predictable, sharing COVID facts that are age-appropriate, making time to listen and share feelings, and reaching out to us for support are all important. We are here for you and your child(ren).
- **Masks** – Schools are expected to comply with the Governor’s Executive Order for wearing masks or face shields, where this is most developmentally appropriate. All adults are required to wear masks when in the building, classroom, and/or office with others. Exceptions to this requirement include lunch breaks with appropriate social distancing. Classroom teachers may use face shields and social distancing when providing direct instruction in the classroom. During classroom monitoring and circulations, masks are required.

Students are required to wear masks when arriving to campus, moving out of the classroom, and leaving the campus. It may be impractical for students to wear masks or face shields while participating in outdoor activities such as P.E. or recess. When it is impractical for students to wear masks or face shields during those activities, schools must require teachers and staff to wear masks or face shields as they arrange themselves in positions that will allow them to maintain safe distancing. It is highly recommended that masks be rotated and thoroughly cleaned daily. Sharing of masks with other family members is extremely risky and discouraged.

- **Handwashing/Sanitizing** - Students and staff are required to use hand sanitizer when entering the building, classroom, and/or office. Frequent handwashing and sanitizing will also be incorporated in the daily schedules. Each classroom will be provided with sanitation kits that will be used during transitions. Classrooms and other common areas within the school will be thoroughly disinfected daily and deep cleaning schedules will be regularly conducted.
- **Temperature Checks/Screening** – Per Center for Disease Control (CDC) guidelines, initial monitoring of symptoms begins at home. Individuals who are feeling ill, including symptoms like fever, cough, shortness of breath, sore throat, abdominal pain, fatigue, muscle aches, or headache, should stay at home and consult with a medical professional regarding school participation.

Temperatures will be taken for each student before leaving their car. If a student's temperature is at or above 100.4°, the student will not be allowed to exit the car.

TEA Guidance is as follows for students:

“Parents must ensure they do not send a child to school on campus if the child has COVID-19 symptoms (as listed in this document) or is lab-confirmed with COVID-19, and instead should opt to receive remote instruction until the below conditions for re-entry are met. Parents may also opt to have their students receive remote instruction if their child has had close contact with an individual who is lab-confirmed with COVID-19 until the 14-day incubation period has passed. School systems may consider screening students for COVID-19 as well. Screening is accomplished by asking questions by phone or other electronic methods and/or in person. The screening questions should also be asked of a student's parent if that parent will be dropping off or picking up their child from inside the school.”

- Teachers and staff are required to self-monitor. The self-screening should include teachers and staff taking their own temperature. Teachers and staff must 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 as noted below. Additionally, they must report to the school system if they have had close contact with an individual who is lab-confirmed with COVID-19, as defined at the end of this document, and, if so, must remain off campus until the 14-day incubation period has passed.
- **Social Distancing** – Staff and students will maintain six feet of social distancing in indoor and outdoor settings, to the extent possible. Classrooms will be arranged to allow for six feet of space between seating areas, as feasible, and transitions will be limited to only P.E. Staggered school start and dismissal times will be used. Students will be assigned to classroom and student cohorts to minimize their interactions with others.
- **Personal Protective Equipment** – Staff and students will be provided with a mask and face shield, plus they may provide their own masks. Fans will be prohibited to minimize additional air circulation.
- **Students with Health Conditions** – Parents and families know their child's needs. While we are taking all measures to ensure each student's safety, parents must place their child's health needs first. Remote learning options are discussed later.

- **COVID-19 Cases** – Sunshine Cottage will take all safety precautions. However, if a student or staff member tests positive, the student or staff member will shift to remote learning for 14 days (includes weekends). If a student or staff member has been in close and/or prolonged contact with someone who has tested positive, the student or staff member will move to remote instruction for a minimum of three days to allow for additional sanitation, disinfecting and monitoring. Staff and students who test positive and/or were directly exposed will not be permitted to return to school until they are cleared by a medical professional. While this may cause an added burden on families, our goal is health and safety for all students.

TEA Guidance on Individuals Confirmed or Suspected with COVID-19:

Any individuals who themselves either:

- A. Are lab-confirmed to have COVID-19; or*
- B. experience the symptoms of COVID-19 (listed below) must stay at home throughout the infection period, and cannot return to campus until the school system screens the individual to determine any of the below conditions for campus re-entry have been met:*
- C. In the case of an individual who was diagnosed with COVID-19, the individual may return to school when all three of the following criteria are met:*
 - i. at least three days (72 hours) have passed since recovery (resolution of fever without the use of fever-reducing medications)*
 - ii. the individual has improvement in symptoms (e.g., cough, shortness of breath)*
 - iii. at least ten days have passed since symptoms first appeared*
- D. In the case of an individual who has symptoms that could be COVID-19 and who is not evaluated by a medical professional or tested for COVID-19, such individual is assumed to have COVID-19, and the individual may not return to the campus until the individual has completed the same three-step set of criteria listed above.*
- E. If the individual has symptoms that could be COVID-19 and wants to return to school before completing the above stay at home period, the individual must either (a) obtain a medical professional's note clearing the individual for return based on an alternative diagnosis or (b) 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/>.*

Campuses and Classrooms

- **Visitors, Drop-off, and Pick-Up** – All visitors must be scheduled via an appointment. Sanitizing will occur after each parent meeting. The number of visitors in the school will be limited to ensure that students are safe; therefore, alternative meeting options may be scheduled, including virtual meetings.
- Traditional campus events such as Popsicle Social, Sunshine Nights, etc., have been suspended. Once the COVID situation has flatlined, we will reevaluate how to proceed with these activities. Campuses will use other means to keep parents and families up-to-date and engaged in their child's learning, including online platforms.
- **Classroom Configurations** – Sunshine Cottage will arrange student learning spaces six feet apart, as feasible.
- **Restrooms and Water Fountains** – Students' physical needs are extremely important. Social distancing and hand washing will remain the priorities during restroom breaks. Because water dispensers have shared surfaces, these will be disabled/turned off. Students will be provided with other options for hydration. Further information will be communicated prior to the start of the school year.

- **Materials and Supplies** – Students will be expected to use their own materials and supplies which will be kept in individually-assigned boxes. Sharing of materials will not be allowed.
- For early childhood classrooms, nap mats will be spaced out according to physical distancing guidelines and will be sanitized daily.
- **Backpacks and Other Personal Items** – Student backpacks should be cleaned and sanitized each night. Every effort should be made to minimize personal items brought from home. All supplies will be kept in the classroom to minimize contact, and additional information will be sent regarding the classroom supply list.
- **Additional Instructors in Classrooms** – In certain instances, additional staff members may be assigned to classrooms to instruct specific students. These individuals will sanitize prior to entering and exiting the classroom, and masks will be required as they interact with students using social distancing.
- **Field Trips** – Campuses will refrain from scheduling field trips and other social events until further notice.

Instructional Models

- **Face-to-Face Instruction and Remote/Virtual Learning** – Our goal is to **Start and Stay Strong!** While Sunshine Cottage is taking multiple precautions to protect both students and staff in school operations, we will offer parents the option for either face-to-face or remote/virtual learning. In both instances, students are expected to participate and remain engaged in high quality instruction. Each of these options is described below:
 - ✓ **Face-to-Face Instruction** – Students attend school daily, as with the regular school year, and follow safety, sanitation, and social distancing expectations.
 - ✓ **Remote/Virtual Learning** – Students participate in classroom instruction via remote/virtual learning and are expected to complete and submit assignments as communicated by the remote/virtual learning teacher(s). This home-learning model is an extension of the classroom and includes the same high-level expectations for participation and assignments as face-to-face.
- Monitoring student learning and progress remains integral to the success of the students. This includes attendance, grades, formative/summative assessments, and other monitoring systems that help teachers know how students are making progress. Attendance is mandatory for any instructional model.
- Once commitment to the instructional model has been communicated by the parent/family, a request must be submitted in writing one week prior to the end of the 9-week grading period to shift to the other model.
- **October 2, 2020 is the deadline to change your child’s instructional model for the 2nd 9-week grading period.**

- Some remote/virtual instruction will be delivered through a synchronous instruction that does not require having the instructor and student engaged at the same time. In this method, students learn from instruction that is not necessarily being delivered in-person or in real time. This type of instruction may include various forms of digital and online learning, such as prerecorded video lessons or game-based learning tasks that students complete on their own, and pre-assigned work and formative assessments made available to students on paper. Most times teachers will provide direct online instructions.
- **Attendance** – Attendance will be taken each day for both face-to-face **and** remote/virtual learning to ensure that students are actively engaged. During remote/virtual instruction, students are expected to participate and fully engage as communicated by the teacher to receive attendance credit.
- In addition, per Texas Education Code (TEC), §25.092, students must attend 90% of the days offered to be awarded credit for the school year and be promoted to the next grade. This requirement remains in force during the 2020-21 school year. This requirement applies to both face-to-face and remote/virtual instruction.
- **Grading** – Sunshine Cottage has its own grading policies. This policy must require a classroom teacher to assign a grade that reflects the student’s relative mastery of an assignment. Sunshine Cottage grading policies are published annually in the Student Handbook. Progress reports and report cards, along with parent conferences, will be used to communicate each student’s progress and performance.
- **State and Local Testing** – All students are expected to follow state and local testing requirements, whether participating in face-to-face or remote/virtual instruction.
- **YMCA After-School Program** – The YMCA after-school program will be available on the first day of instruction for face-to-face students *only*. The time for YMCA after-school program will be 2:15 p.m. – 5:30 p.m. The main office number is 210-924-2277, and the website is www.ymcasatx.org. Pre-registration will be required. This program will follow the same sanitation and social distancing requirements established during the regular instructional day.

TEA REQUIREMENT: Respond

Sunshine Cottage must identify and implement responsive actions to address the situation if there are lab-confirmed cases in a school.

Required Actions if Individuals with Lab-Confirmed Cases Have Been in a School.

- 1. If an individual who has been in a school is lab-confirmed to have COVID-19, the school must notify its local health department, in accordance with applicable federal, state and local laws and regulations, including confidentiality requirements of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA). 5*
- 2. Schools must close off areas that are heavily used by the individual with the lab-confirmed case (student, teacher, or staff) until the non-porous surfaces in those areas can be disinfected, unless more than 3 days have already passed since that person was on campus.*
- 3. Consistent with school notification requirements for other communicable diseases, and consistent with legal confidentiality requirements, schools must notify all teachers, staff, and families of all students in a school if a lab-confirmed COVID-19 case is identified among students, teachers or staff who participate on any on campus activities.*