



"Together We Fly"

**Universal Academy  
2021-2022 Return To School Guidance  
Safe Return to In-Person, On Campus Instruction & Continuity of Services Plan**



**Disclaimer:**

The information in Universal Academy's Return to School Guidance and on the website is currently in ongoing status. We will continue to conduct surveys and feedback from the school board, parents, faculty, staff, students, and the community.

Universal Academy will continue to update the guidance based on mandates received from Governor Gregg Abbott, Texas Education Agency (TEA), Federal-State health experts and the county judges. All of the proposed protocols and procedures listed in this document are subject to continually change based on the information and guidance received from the federal, state, and local authorities.

The situation with COVID-19 is continuously changing, as are the protocols and measures needed to keep faculty, staff and students safe. Plans will remain flexible to accommodate potential changes and these guidelines may be modified as needed. As adjustments may be necessary throughout the coming school year, it will be our priority to keep the community informed of those changes and updates. The Universal Academy website will provide you with the most up-to-date information.

## **Universal Academy Priorities**

As a school district, Universal Academy looks forward to welcoming faculty, staff, and students back to on-campus life. Although we continue to face the challenges with COVID-19, our district will continue to provide academic excellence to our students. As the public health crisis continues, we have been planning for the opening of the 2021-2022 school year with a focus on the health, safety and well-being of our faculty, staff, students, and community.

While Universal Academy is planning for In-Person, On-Campus instruction our plan follows recommendations for school opening and operations provided by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), the Texas Education Agency, and state and local health officials.

Our planning process has continuously evolved around new information and guidance that we receive from the state and local authorities, Texas Education Agency (TEA), School Board, Site Based Decision Making Team, COVID-19 Committee, and Administrative Advisory Groups. We have planned with the following key priorities and focus areas in mind:

- Public Health and Safety
- Instructional Continuity
- Academic Progress
- On-Campus Safety Protocols and Procedures
- Maintaining Workforce
- Parental Support
- Innovation
- Communication

## **Safe Return to In-Person Instruction Continuity of Services Plan Introduction and Overview**

On March 11, 2021, the American Rescue Plans (ARP) Act was signed into law. In it, the U.S. Department of Education provided an additional \$121.9 billion for the Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief Fund (ESSER). This legislation will award grants to state educational agencies for providing local education agencies with emergency relief funds to address the impact that COVID-19 has had, and continues to have, on the elementary and secondary schools across the country.

This plan describes how Universal Academy will provide for the safe return to school in August of 2021 as well as provide a continuity of services for all students in our schools. This document complies with all reporting requirements of the ARP Act, the ESSER II and III grant terms established by the U.S. Department of Education.

One requirement in creating this plan was to seek input from staff, students, parents, and community stakeholders using a variety of methods including public meetings, informational flyers, surveys, and needs assessments. After reviewing all of the information received through stakeholder input, top priorities were identified and the ESSER grants were written and submitted to the Texas Education Agency.

Although it is impossible to eliminate all risks related to COVID-19, our goal is to maintain a layered approach to reducing the risk of spread in our schools. These practices are flexible and can be adapted or changed quickly depending on the current nature of the pandemic and the latest information from state and local health agencies. Guidance published by the American Academy of Pediatrics states, "all policy considerations for the coming school year should start with a goal of having students physically present in school." The AAP also provides a variety of reasons why schools are fundamental to the overall health and development of children and adolescents. From the instructional aspect to social and emotional wellness, as well as providing meals, school services, and physical activity, schools play a critical role in the lives of students and in the overall health of a community. We appreciate the continued support of our Universal Academy stakeholders as we strive to serve our students in the best possible way.

Universal Academy will continue to review and revise this plan at least once every six months as required by the ARP Act.

## **Safety Protocols**

### **Protocols for Face Coverings**

For the 2021-2022 school year, in accordance with current Governor's orders, face coverings are optional at Universal Academy. Students, staff, and visitors may wear face coverings if they choose, but they are not required while on campus or at school activities. However, we strongly encourage everyone to wear face covers/masks while they are on campus.

The district maintains the ability to require face coverings if the situation changes, such as a higher transmission level or Governor's order. Universal Academy will continue to work with the Dallas County Public Health and consider recommendations from this entity should health conditions change in our area.

### **Protocols for Screening and Isolation**

#### **Screening Protocols**

- Staff will self-screen for COVID-19 symptoms prior to reporting to work each day. Staff must ensure they do not come to campus if they have symptoms causing suspicion that they are infected with COVID-19.
- Parents/guardians are expected to screen their students for COVID-19 symptoms each day prior to sending their student to school. Parents must ensure they do not send a child to school if they suspect the student is infected with COVID-19.
- The list below details possible symptoms of COVID-19:
  - Feeling feverish or a measured temperature greater than or equal to 100.4 degrees Fahrenheit
  - Loss of taste or smell
  - Cough
  - Difficulty breathing
  - Shortness of breath
  - Headache
  - Chills
  - Sore throat
  - Shaking or exaggerated shivering
  - Significant muscle pain or ache
  - Diarrhea
  - Teachers will monitor students and refer to the office if symptoms are present.

## **Isolation Protocols Students or Staff Displaying COVID-19 Symptoms**

- As with all illnesses, students will be sent home if they have a fever of 100.4 or higher, are vomiting, or have diarrhea. Students will also be sent home if the administration determines the symptoms may be from COVID-19.
- Students who are ill will be separated from their peers and should be picked up within 1 hour from the time the campus contacted the student's parent/guardian.
- Staff members suspected of being infected with COVID-19 will follow district protocols including isolation from students and other staff members.
- Any individuals who themselves either: (a) are test-confirmed to have COVID-19; or (b) are determined to have the symptoms of COVID-19 (listed above) must stay at home throughout the infection period, and cannot return to campus until the school system screens the individual to determine if the conditions for campus re-entry have been met:
  - In the case of an individual who is symptomatic and is diagnosed with COVID-19, the individual may return to school when **all three** of the following criteria are met:
    - at least 24 hours have passed since recovery (resolution of fever without the use of fever-reducing medications);
    - the individual has improvement in symptoms (e.g., cough, shortness of breath); and
    - at least ten days have passed since symptoms first appeared.
  - In the case of an individual that is asymptomatic but has received a positive COVID-19 test result, the individual may not return to the campus until ten days have passed since a positive test result.
  - 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, though for health privacy reasons the note does not need to indicate what the alternative diagnosis is, or (b) obtain an acute infection test at a physician's office, approved testing location (<https://tdem.texas.gov/covid-19/>), or other site that comes back negative for COVID-19.
  - If the individual has tested positive for COVID-19 and believes the test was a false positive, 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, though for health privacy reasons the note does not need to indicate what the alternative diagnosis is, or (b) obtain two PCR acute infection tests (at a physician's office, approved testing location, or other site) at least 24 hours apart that come back negative for COVID-19.

## **Determining Close Contact**

This document refers to "close contact" with an individual who is lab-confirmed to have COVID-19. For clarity, close contact is defined as:

- Being directly exposed to infectious secretions (e.g., being coughed on, sharing a drink); or
- Having significant and sustained contact with an individual who is lab-confirmed to have COVID-19. Factors like social distancing, masks, ventilation, presence of dividers, and case symptoms may affect this determination.
- Either scenario above defines close contact if it occurred during the infectious period of the case, defined as two days prior to symptom onset to 10 days after symptom onset. In the case of asymptomatic individuals who are lab-confirmed with COVID-19, the infectious period is defined as two days prior to the confirming lab test and continuing for 10 days following the confirmed lab test.
- If you are determined to meet the definition of close contact with a lab-confirmed case of COVID-19, you may be required to self-quarantine.

## **Stay-at-Home Period for Close Contacts**

Universal Academy will notify parents if their children are determined to have been in "close contact" with an individual who tested positive for COVID-19.

Although the Stay-at-Home Period for Close Contacts is recommended, parents make the final call in this situation. While Universal Academy teachers will provide assignments and assistance to students who are quarantining at home after confirmed exposure to COVID-19, any absences resulting from the quarantine will be calculated in students' final attendance documentation.

Universal Academy may not receive funding for either asynchronous or synchronous learning options for students in the 2021-2022 school year, per the Texas Education Agency.

For individuals who are determined to be in close contact with an individual who tested positive, the recommended stay-at-home period can end for individuals experiencing no symptoms on Day 10 after close contact exposure without testing, or on Day 7 after close contact exposure and after receiving a negative test result (that is administered at least 5 days after the last close contact) and with no symptoms.

### **Additionally:**

- A vaccinated individual does not need to stay at home following close contact exposure to a test-confirmed individual if both of the following conditions are true:
- The exposed individual is fully vaccinated (at least two weeks have passed since receiving the second dose of a two-dose vaccine or the first dose of a single-dose vaccine) AND
- Have not experienced any COVID-19 symptoms following close contact exposure to a test-confirmed individual.
- Individuals who have tested positive for COVID-19 within the past 3 months and

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recovered do not have to stay at home or get tested again, as long as they do not develop new symptoms.

- Individuals who develop symptoms again within 3 months of their first bout of COVID19 may need to be tested again if there is no other cause identified for their symptoms.

### **Community Transmission Levels**

Although Universal Academy believes the worst of COVID-19 is behind us, the district wants to be ~~pp~~ prepared if there are outbreaks. Universal Academy will monitor local/county transmission levels and seek input from Dallas County Public Health to determine the risk level for students and staff. Should transmission levels in Dallas County increase significantly, the district will revert to a "closed campus" policy that prohibits outside guests and will reinstate stronger COVID-response protocol including more frequent sanitation of high-touch areas, physical distancing between students and staff as much as possible, limiting capacity on school buses, and possibly reinstating the requirement of face coverings (if directed by local or state orders).

### **Prevention Practices in the School Setting**

Measures and precautions taken to protect students and staff may vary throughout the year depending on the transmission level. At a minimum, the following measures will be in place:

- Assigned seats in classrooms and bus routes to identify close contacts
- Frequent reminders to wash hands
- Hand sanitizing stations at every campus entrance and in all classrooms
- Daily sanitation of all campuses
- Reminders to parents and staff to perform daily self-screening for COVID symptoms

### **Protocols for Campus Visitors**

As long as transmission levels are low, Universal Academy will allow visitors with principal approval and consistent with campus procedures. If transmission levels become more severe, any impacted campuses will revert to a "closed campus" policy that prohibits outside guests during the school day.



## **Protocols for Disinfecting and Hand Sanitizing**

### **Hand Washing/Sanitizing Expectations**

- Alcohol-based hand sanitizer will be available at the main entry to the campus, in all classrooms, in the cafeteria and in common areas throughout the campus.
- Staff and students will be expected to regularly wash or sanitize their hands.
- Training will be conducted for all employees and students on effective hand-washing techniques. Posters will be hung beside sinks to demonstrate appropriate hand-washing measures.

### **Disinfecting Expectations**

- Staff will have access to disinfectant supplies to sanitize high-touch and working surfaces and shared objects regularly.
- Staff will limit the use of shared supplies when possible.

## **Protocols for Campus Cleaning and Disinfecting**

### **Daily Campus Cleaning**

- Each classroom and restroom will be cleaned daily.
- The cafeteria tables will be disinfected between lunch periods.
- Staff will have access to disinfectant supplies to sanitize working surfaces and shared objects after each use and during breaks in instruction.

### **Additional Cleaning Measure for Covid-19 Positive Cases on Campus**

- Custodial staff will perform additional cleaning in areas of heavy use (classroom, restroom, workroom, etc...) for any individual who is lab-confirmed to have COVID-19 while at school.
- Campuses will close off areas that are heavily used by individuals who are lab-confirmed to have COVID-19 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.

## **Work and Learning Environments**

### **Classroom Configuration**

- All large, unnecessary furniture and fixtures will be removed from classrooms to allow as much space as possible for students to have physical distancing.
- Teachers will use assigned seating charts to allow contact tracing for test-confirmed cases.

### **Collaborative Work and Projects**

- During low transmission levels, collaborative work and projects will be allowed.
- Should transmission levels increase, based on the direction and advice of the TEA, the CDC, and DCPH, collaborative work and group projects may be suspended.

### **General Classroom Supplies**

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- Hand sanitizer, tissues, and trash cans will be available in all classrooms to limit student and staff movement.
- Universal Academy will provide adequate supplies to minimize the sharing of high touch materials.

### **Physical Education Classroom Protocols**

- Sanitizing areas and access to handwashing will be provided.

### **Meeting Spaces**

- During low transmission levels, face-to-face meetings will be allowed.
- During moderate transmission levels, only meetings essential to school operations will be allowed.
- During substantial transmission levels, no visitors are allowed. All meetings involving individuals outside the school district will be conducted virtually.

### **Transitions**

- During low transmission levels, transitions and traffic patterns are determined by campus procedures. There are no requirements of social distancing during this time.
- During substantial and moderate transmission levels, traffic patterns will be established throughout the campus that separate individuals to the greatest extent possible. When transitioning between classes, students shall travel corridors as far to the right as possible.

### **Arrival**

- Students may not be dropped off until the building is open. The buildings will be open by 7:30 a.m.
- There are multiple designated doors for entry at each campus. These may be based on arrival methods: bus riders, drop-off, students who walk to campus, and students with unique needs. Campus administrators will communicate entry procedures.
- Designated entry doors will be continuously monitored by staff to stop unauthorized access and to monitor for threats.
- Parents may not accompany students into the building. (Exception: Pre-K and Kinder parents may accompany their students into the building on the first day of school; all visitors must leave the building by 8:15 on the first day.)

### **Dismissal**

- Sanitizer stations will be placed near campus exits and students will be encouraged to sanitize hands prior to exit.
- Students will be dismissed according to campus protocol for bus riders, car pick-up, after-school care students, and students who walk home.

### **Breakfast/Lunch**

- During low transmission levels, cafeteria capacity and seating arrangements will be determined by campus policies.
- During moderate or substantial transmission levels, as much physical distance as possible will be provided around each open seat.
- During moderate or substantial transmission levels, signage and staff will reinforce physical distance and traffic patterns in the cafeteria.
- Hand sanitizer stations will be available in the cafeteria.
- Microwaves and refrigerators are not available for student use.

**Off-Campus Student Activities**

- During low transmission levels, student participation in extracurricular contests (Athletics, BETA, etc...) will be allowed. Fans will also be permitted to attend these events.
- During moderate or high transmission levels, activities may be altered and attendance by fans may be limited.
- All field trips require approval of the superintendent. The transmission levels and social distancing capabilities will be considered before a field trip is approved.

**On Campus Activities**

- During low transmission levels, school-wide events (pep rallies, student assemblies, informational meetings, etc.) will be allowed. Parents and community members will be permitted to attend these events.
- During moderate or high transmission levels, on-campus activities may be altered and attendance by parents and community members may be limited.

**Continuity of Services  
Teaching and Learning**

***For the First Six-Weeks of School (August 23 – September 24) Universal Academy will offer***

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***virtual learning for grades Prekindergarten – 6<sup>th</sup> grades ONLY.*** After the first six-weeks, All students are required to return to their assigned campus for In-Person, On-Campus learning as the only mode of instruction offered at Universal Academy for the remainder of the 2021-2022 school year unless virtual learning is approved by the Texas Education Agency (TEA).

Although we were able to keep all classes and campuses open, we know that COVID has impacted student achievement since March 2020. Assessment data shows deficiencies across the district in Math and Reading. Below are steps the district plans to implement this school year to help close achievement gaps in Math, Reading, Science, and Social Studies, as well as boost student achievement through interactive technology devices and personalized, rigorous instruction.

Universal Academy has developed the following plans to mitigate learning loss for all students. This *Back to School Plan* will work in conjunction with district and campus improvement plans for this school year. The primary instructional goals for this school year will be to:

- Create rigorous, engaging learning environments.
- Create a culture of high expectations-every class, every day for all students.
- Adhere to our guaranteed and viable district curriculum.
- Provide high-impact tutoring for our most at-risk students.

## INSTRUCTION AND INTERVENTION

- Universal Academy hosted Summer School for PK – 12<sup>th</sup> grade students in Summer of 2021 and will expand and enhance this opportunity in Summers 2022 and Summer 2023.
- **Math and Reading Intervention-** Universal Academy will schedule time for targeted, high-dosage intervention for all students in grades 3-8. Intervention strategies will include small-group work with a teacher or paraprofessional as well as research-based personalized technology programs.
- **High-Impact Tutoring** – Universal Academy will provide high-impact tutoring to students in grades 4-12 who did not perform satisfactorily on one or more areas of STAAR in the previous school year. Tutoring will begin in September 2021. Delivery will be by trained instructional staff in high-impact tutoring strategies. Universal Academy will incorporate additional after-school and Saturday tutoring for identified students, offering 2 sessions of 45 minutes per week.

## PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

- **TEKS Resource System** – Universal Academy will conduct extensive/ongoing training of all components of the TEKS Resource System. Training will be provided through Region 11 ESC

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and by district and campus administrative staff. Training will be both face-to-face and through self-paced, virtual options.

- **Cambridge**-Universal Academy will conduct extensive/ongoing training of all components of the Cambridge standards.
- **Reading Academies** - All teachers in grades K-3, ESL, and SPED and all campus principals will complete HB 3 Reading Academies (approximately 60 hours) by July 31, 2022.

## TECHNOLOGY

- **iPads, Chromebooks and Laptops** – Universal Academy is making considerable financial investments in state-of-the-art technology devices to ensure that all students have equitable access to resources that can enhance their personalized learning experiences.
- **Classroom Technology** – Universal Academy will ensure that every technology device so all students in the district will have access to the latest technologies that help boost student achievement.

## SOCIAL EMOTIONAL LEARNING

- **Character Education** – Universal Academy will implement a Social Emotional Learning (SEL) program for all students in grades PK-12 for guidance lessons centered on the social and emotional health of students. In addition to the SEL focus on campus, SEL resources will be shared with families in their home language to extend this emphasis at home. In our continued desire to promote character building, Universal Academy will follow its Character Education traits highlighted throughout the school year; staff and students will model and practice these traits to better manage personal emotions, appropriately solve interpersonal conflicts, and promote healthy self-images.
- **Family Engagement** – Universal Academy will publish a schedule of family engagement calendar of events and activities to share pertinent information with parents that encourage parent and family engagement as we recognize the importance of viewing parents as their children's first and most important teachers.
- **District Core Values** – Universal Academy will adhere to the mission, vision, and goals by implementing Activities will be coordinated at all campuses throughout the school year that reinforce these core values.

