

SHERMAN INDEPENDENT SCHOOL DISTRICT

COVID-19 Frequently Asked Questions

When is Sherman ISD going to make a decision on how the district will reopen school?

Sherman ISD will share the district's reopening plan the week of July 20. Click [here](#) to view a video message from Dr. Hicks that highlights the results from our Distance Learning and Reentry Plan parent and staff survey and shares information on when to expect our final district reopening plan.

Will Sherman ISD notify parents each time there is a confirmed case of COVID-19 with a student or employee?

Sherman ISD will always communicate a confirmed case of COVID-19 within our district to parents. Parents of students and SISD employees that have direct contact with an individual that has a confirmed case within our district will be contacted personally by Sherman ISD. If you are not contacted directly by Sherman ISD, you are not considered at risk regarding a specific confirmed case.

What is the best way to contact my child's campus or anyone from Sherman ISD if I have a question during school closure?

During school closure, each SISD campus will check voicemails throughout the day. Feel free to call your child's campus and leave a voice message. If you have a specific question about distance learning, email distancelearning@ShermanISD.net. If you have a question about anything else, please click [here](#) to submit your question and someone will follow up with you as soon as possible.

What is a coronavirus?

Coronavirus is a large family of viruses that cause respiratory symptoms such as fever, cough, and shortness of breath. Similar to the flu, these viruses spread through coughing or sneezing. The coronavirus generating concern around the world is Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19). There is currently no vaccine for COVID-19.

What are the symptoms of COVID-19?

People who have been diagnosed with COVID-19 have experienced mild to severe respiratory illness. Most of the illnesses around the world are mild, with fever and cough. A much smaller percentage of cases are severe and involve pneumonia, particularly in elderly people and people with underlying medical conditions. The following [commonly reported symptoms](#) may appear 2-14 days after exposure:

- Fever
- Cough
- Difficulty breathing

****Based on guidelines from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC)***

How does the virus spread?

Health experts are still learning the details. Currently, it is thought to spread:

- Between people who are in close contact with one another (within about 6 feet).
- Via respiratory droplets produced when an infected person coughs or sneezes.
- These droplets can land in the mouths or noses of people who are nearby or possibly be inhaled into the lungs.

Based on guidelines from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC)

Are children more susceptible to the virus that causes COVID-19?

No, there is no evidence that children are more susceptible. In fact, most confirmed cases of COVID-19 have occurred in adults. However, infections in children have been reported, including in very young children. Children should engage in usual preventive actions to avoid infection, including cleaning hands often, using soap and water or alcohol-based hand sanitizer, avoiding people who are sick, and staying up to date on vaccinations, including influenza vaccine.

What if I have a general question about COVID-19?

Texas Health and Human Services:

- For questions about COVID-19, dial 211 then choose Option 6.
- Hours: 7:00 am – 8:00 pm, seven days per week
- If you experience difficulty when dialing 2-1-1, please email coronavirus@dshs.texas.gov.
- For local assistance, see the listing of **Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19) Local Health Entities**.

What does the Governor's declaration of a State of Emergency mean for Texas?

Governor Greg Abbott declared a state of emergency in response to COVID-19 on Friday, March 13. The Governor indicated in his press conference that declaring a state of emergency does not mean Texas isn't open for business or recreation or tourism. It should not cause any additional anxiety or panic. In fact, it should do the opposite. The declaration will help ensure resources are available to the state to combat COVID-19. It is meant to provide reassurance that the state is taking every reasonable step to contain the spread of the virus and protect our most vulnerable communities.

How to Protect Yourself

What can I do to prevent COVID-19?

COVID-19 is a respiratory illness, and [practicing good hygiene habits](#) is the best way to stay healthy and avoid the spread of illness:

- Avoid close contact with people who are sick.
- [Cover your cough or sneeze](#) with a tissue or cough or sneeze into your upper sleeve, not your hands.
- [Wash your hands](#) often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds or use an alcohol-based hand cleaner with a concentration of at least 60 percent.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth with unwashed hands.
- Clean and disinfect frequently touched objects and surfaces.
- Stay home when sick.

My child feels anxious about COVID-19. Do you have resources for how I can talk to them about the virus?

It's natural to be worried or anxious about a new virus. Remember, children look to adults for guidance on how to react to stressful events. If parents seem overly worried, children's anxiety may rise. Parents should reassure children that health and school officials are working hard to ensure that people throughout the country stay healthy.

Teaching children positive preventive measures, talking with them about their fears, and giving them a sense of some control over their risk of infection can help reduce anxiety. The [National Association of School Psychologists has specific guidelines and talking points for families](#) when having conversations about COVID-19 with their child.

- Remain calm and reassuring.
- Make yourself available.
- Avoid blaming.
- Monitor television viewing and social media.
- Maintain a normal routine to the extent possible.
- Be honest and accurate.
- Review and model basic hygiene and healthy lifestyle practices for protection.

Mental Health Resources

We know that school can be a place of comfort and support for many of our students. Students who struggle with mental health challenges often gain support at school. While schools are closed, it's good to know that many of our community mental health resources will continue to be available to students and families during the Coronavirus school closure. Please review the list below:

- Texoma Community Center will continue to work with children and families who receive their mental health services there. They will also continue to provide crisis services. If your child or any family member has a mental health crisis, Texoma Community Center is available for assessments and referrals. Their crisis number is: 1-877-277-2226.
- Child and Family Guidance Center will continue to work with children and parents via telemental health. If you would like to request a new appointment, you can do that via the website. Here is the link:
<https://cfgcenter.org/contact-us/appointment-request.html>
- Children's Medical Center Plano provides telebehavioral health counseling to students in grades 5 through 12. If you are interested in this program, please contact Aileen Hays at ahays@shermanisd.net.
- The Child Mind Institute has a good video for parents on how to best talk with and support their children during the Coronavirus. Click [here](#) to view the video.
- Region 10 Education Service Center has developed an informative video to help children understand the challenge of COVID19:
<https://youtu.be/kiVpWZBXLug>
- Here for Texas Mental Health Navigation Phone Line is a free helpline offering guidance, information, resources, and support for mental health and substance abuse issues. The phone line number is 972-525-8181. You can also find helpful information at <https://www.herefortexas.com>, for a searchable database of mental health providers.
- A Teen Self-Injury Prevention Webinar will be hosted by Families for Depression Awareness on Tuesday, March 24, 2020 at 7:15pm. [Register today!](#)
- The National Child Traumatic Stress Network has a resource to help parents and caregivers talk to their children about social media about traumatic events. [Visit the webpage to download a PDF copy of the resource.](#)

School Related Questions

Is Sherman ISD prepared for the possibility of a widespread illness?

The school district has a pandemic plan which is being reviewed internally and in collaboration with local and state public health partners. This plan includes responses to significant staff absences, school closures, distance learning plan, or other circumstances that affect our ability to operate school as usual.

How are schools and buildings in Sherman ISD cleaned and disinfected?

District and school staff clean all buildings daily. This includes:

- Daily cleaning of common surfaces (e.g., desks, tables, countertops, walls) and frequently touched objects (e.g., doorknobs, light switches, railings, door frames, etc.) restrooms and water fountains with cleaning products.

- Providing disposable wipes so that commonly used surfaces (e.g., keyboards, desks, remote controls) can be wiped down by students and staff before each use as supplies are available.

How will Sherman ISD determine whether schools need to close?

We will follow our state and local health officials lead on any closures or other health measures as necessary.

If the Sherman ISD has to close schools, is there a distance learning plan in place?

Our curriculum and instruction team and campus instructional staff have created a website to support at-home learning. The Sherman ISD Distance Learning Website is available for all SISD students and will include lessons and parent and student resources for at-home instruction. The website contains both online and non-digital student and parent resources for extended learning at home. The website may be accessed through www.shermanisd.net/COVID19.

If I am still concerned about COVID-19 after school resumes, can I keep my child home from school?

We will continue to do everything in our power to prevent the spread of illness in our schools. As a parent, it is at your discretion to keep your child home due to a health concern.

In the event of an outbreak in our community, we would follow our health department's lead on any closures or other health measures as necessary.

How will the district handle student absences if I choose to keep my child home?

Parents have the right to excuse their child's absence and should notify their child's school as they normally would. If a family indicates they're keeping their child home out of concern for COVID-19, the absences will be excused when:

- The family provides the school with this decision in writing - email or letter.

When should I keep my child home from school?

It can be challenging knowing whether your child is too ill to go to school. Your child is too ill to go to school if he/she has any of these signs or symptoms:

- Seems very tired and needs bed rest (this can be common with flu).
- Is vomiting or has diarrhea.
- Becomes short of breath or has an increase in wheezing during normal activity.
- Has a cough that disrupts his/her normal activity.
- Has severe pain from earache, headache, sore throat, or recent injury.
- Has yellow or green drainage from the eye(s).
- Has a rash that is weeping or oozing.
- Has a fever of 100.0°F or above, and any of the above noted symptoms.

What is the district's plan concerning employee or student personal travel?

We will follow the lead and recommendation of the CDC and state and local health departments for official guidelines in regards to students/families returning from impacted locations.

All upcoming district-sponsored travel will be canceled throughout the duration of school closure.

This was a particularly difficult decision to make given the knowledge that field trips such as these are the first opportunity that many students have to travel outside of Sherman, throughout our state, and outside of our state. We also recognize the significant financial investment made by families to make these trips possible. However, given the continued spread of this disease and increasing recommendations from health officials to limit travel, we don't feel it would be appropriate to continue with these trips at this time.

- **Privately scheduled trips**As for privately scheduled trips (staff and students/families), families are encouraged to visit the CDC's website (www.cdc.gov) for Travel Information and COVID-19.

School Closure Information

How will I be notified of a school closure?

If a decision is made to close or reopen school, Sherman ISD will notify parents through the communication channels listed below:

- Sherman ISD Blackboard Alert System: SISD Automated Call/Text/Email (If your contact information has recently changed, please visit the SISD Parent Portal to update your information to receive district notifications.)
- Sherman ISD Website at www.ShermanISD.net/COVID19

- Sherman ISD Social Media: Facebook and Twitter

How long do you expect Sherman ISD to be closed?

We are unable to give a specific time frame on school closure. We are monitoring daily and will provide updates to employees and parents as soon as information is received.

What is Sherman ISD's plan to continue educating students during school closure?

Our curriculum and instruction team and campus instructional staff have created a new website to support at-home learning. The Sherman ISD [Distance Learning Website](#) is available for all SISD students and will include lessons and parent and student resources for at-home instruction. The website contains both online and non-digital student and parent resources for extended learning at home.

Will school closure affect my child advancing to the next grade?

School closure will not affect students advancing to the next grade. Sherman ISD has launched a distance learning program for all students to complete assigned work from teachers. All students should complete all work assigned during school closure and stay current on all school work assignments.

If I do not have internet or technology access, will my child be penalized for not completing an online work assignment?

No student will be penalized for not completing online work assignments because of lack of internet access. Printed lessons will be provided for students without internet access. Students may pick up paper copies at their home campus during the hours of 10:00 am-2:00 pm on Monday or Tuesday of each school week. Completed work should be returned to your child's campus on the following Monday or Tuesday.

Will the district provide my student with internet access?

The following resources have been gathered for families in need of internet or technology access:

Everyone ON is a program that helps families to find low-cost technology devices and internet service based upon zip code and family need. For more information, please click [here](#).

Sparklight is offering a 15 Mbps internet plan for \$10 per month for the next 60 days to help low-income families and those most impacted from coronavirus challenges. No documentation will be required to sign up for this plan. Please call 877-692-2253 or click [here](#) for additional information.

SISD Technology Services may be available if you are unable to gain access through the resources above. We have limited availability of hotspots and laptops, and priority will go to our students that are required to complete online course work at Perrin Learning Center or Sherman High School's dual credit and AP courses. Please email DistanceLearning@ShermanISD.net to inquire about these district resources.

Will printed material be available for students without internet access?

Printed lessons will be provided for students without internet access. Students may pick up paper copies at their home campus during the hours of 10:00 am-2:00 pm on Monday and Tuesday of each school week. Completed work should be returned to your child's campus on the following Monday or Tuesday.

If my child receives special education services, how will accommodations be made for them during school closure?

SPED services will be available for students. Parents will be contacted by the SISD special education department and SPED resources will be located on the SISD Distance Learning website. If you have questions or need additional information, you may email distancelearning@shermanisd.net.

Can students do credit recovery from home if the school closes for an extended period? Where do we need to go online to access required class work for the remainder of the semester?

All distance learning information will be located on the distance learning website at www.shermanisd.net/COVID19.

How will we insure accountability across the board for work completion?

Teachers have created classroom guidelines for work accountability. Students should complete and submit online assignments as assigned. Completed printed lessons should be submitted on Monday or Tuesday of each week, between the hours of 10:00 am to 2:00pm, at the students campus to stay up to date on work assignments. All teachers will be monitoring work submission for accountability.

What is our plan for students to submit work?

Students may submit work online through Google classroom or in person on Monday or Tuesdays at their campus from 10:00am - 2:00pm.

Sherman High School Class of 2020

When will the high school make a decision on if all senior class activities are postponed or cancelled?

Sherman High School is in constant contact with District leadership. No decision on any major senior activity has been decided. All factors will be considered when any decision is made and as a district, we will try our best to ensure that as many senior activities can remain in place, including graduation and prom. If any information is changed, SHS seniors and parents will be communicated with directly.

Will my child still graduate if they do not take the STAAR test or EOC test?

Yes, state accountability testing has been waived by Texas Governor Greg Abbott. Advanced placement testing will still take place. [Click here to see the AP test announcement.](#)

Employee Frequently Asked Questions

If I am a Sherman ISD salary or hourly employee, will I still be paid during our COVID-19 school district closures?

We plan to continue to pay all employees. The commissioner has said that as long as the district continues to educate students, we will continue to get funding. That being said, principals and directors may ask employees to work while they are not physically at school, or to come into school to get work done (following CDC guidelines). We **do not** want employees to think of this as an extended holiday, as employees will be asked to help with the task of continuing to educate our kids. We are all essential in this endeavor; however, our schedules and routines may be different. We may be asked to do things that we don't typically do, but we will get the job done.

If I have a question regarding my Sherman ISD benefits, who do I contact during our school closure?

Sherman ISD has set up a phone line specifically for employees to call for answers to benefits questions. Sherman ISD Benefits Coordinator Chelsea Muniz can be reached at 903-718-9944 M-F, 8am-4:30pm during school closure.

What are my daily work expectations during school closure?

Employees will be asked to help with the task of continuing to educate our kids. We are all essential in this endeavor; however, our schedules and routines may be different. We may be asked to do things that we don't typically do, but we will get the job done. The expectation is that you are accessible during normal school day business hours and remain in contact with your immediate supervisor.

How can I gain access to my campus/office building?

All staff must request access to their building/office through their campus principal or department director.

Should I report my absence each day I do not report to my campus/department?

You do not need to enter an absence, campus and department secretaries are taking care of this.

What do employees do with their school age children if called in to work?

If you are coming up to a building to retrieve materials, you may bring healthy children with you. They will need to remain with you at all times. Employees will need to request access to the building through their campus principal or department director. During the request, the employee must inform their supervisors of the intent to bring school age children inside of the building. Access to bring children to work will be determined by current information and recommendation from the CDC in regard to COVID-19 health recommendations.

What do employees do if they are being asked to come into work and they are sick or have a compromised immune system?

Please communicate with your supervisor. Educating students remotely is a huge task and if you have a compromised immune system, we will find you tasks to complete remotely. If you are sick, we want you to focus on your health.

Should I report my absence each day I do not report to my campus/department?

You do not need to enter an absence, campus and department secretaries are taking care of this.

What do employees do if they are being asked to come into work and they are sick or have a compromised immune system?

Please communicate with your supervisor. Educating students remotely is a huge task and if you have a compromised immune system, we will find you tasks to complete remotely. If you are sick, we want you to focus on your health.

I have traveled to a level III country, <https://wwwnc.cdc.gov/travel/notices>, and am being asked to come into work, what should I do?

Please do not come into a SISD facility and inform your supervisor. If you need something from your campus, we will make arrangements to have it delivered and will find tasks for you to work on remotely.

External Resources

Where can I find more information about coronavirus (COVID-19)?

This is an evolving situation. Stay up to date by consulting the following webpages:

- [Centers for Disease Control and Prevention \(CDC\) website](#)
- [Texas Health and Human Services](#)
- [Grayson County Health Department](#)