

Safe Return to In-Person Instruction and Continuity of Services Plan

Excel Academy Charter School plans to conduct in-person learning for the 2021-2022 school year with continued safety mitigation processes which are outlined below.

Excel Academy sought stakeholder input through a survey, a meeting, and an opportunity for public comment at a school board meeting. Stakeholders included employees, special program directors, school principals, school administrators, teachers, school staff, students, parents, representatives from the correctional facilities, a homeless advocate, employees with mental health backgrounds, school board members, and civil rights organizations.

Masks: Students and staff are required to wear masks at the residential correctional campuses (i.e. Juvenile Detention Center, Youth Village, and Leadership Academy). Staff are currently required to wear masks in public places. Students have the option to wear masks at the Education Transition Center campus. Individuals who have elevated health risks or have not been vaccinated are recommended to wear masks.

Physical Distancing: The school will use a three-foot physical distance practice at all campuses when it is practical.

Handwashing: Staff and students are encouraged to frequently wash hands for 20 seconds with soap and water or use a hand sanitizer with at least a 60 percent composition of alcohol.

Cleaning and Maintaining Healthy Facilities: The school utilizes fogging machines at all campuses. Custodial staff clean high-touch surfaces in public areas. The Harris County Facilities and Property Management Department regularly replaces the heating ventilation air conditioning filters at all campuses.

Contact Tracing, Isolation, and Quarantine: Contact tracing, isolation, and quarantining will continue based on local health officials' guidance. Anyone experiencing COVID-19 symptoms is not permitted in the classroom. Students with these symptoms at a residential correctional campus are to be isolated from the remaining students in the facility.

Diagnostic and Screening Testing: Daily temperature checks continue to be required for students and staff. Any staff exhibiting symptoms of COVID-19 must stay home. Students enrolled at the Education Transition Center campus who exhibit symptoms of COVID-19 must stay home too.

Vaccination Efforts: The school is collaborating with the Harris County Public Health Department to provide vaccinations to staff and eligible students. The school plans to continue partnering with local health officials to provide vaccination opportunities for staff and students.

Accommodations: The school will provide health and safety accommodations for students with disabilities based on the individual student's needs and in accordance with students' Individualized Education Plans.

Coordination with State and Local Health Officials: The school will continue to partner with state and local health officials in setting policies and procedures for keeping staff and students healthy and safe.

Student Academic Needs: The school plans to use a set of four core subject teachers to maintain very small class sizes at the Juvenile Detention Center campus. With the smaller class sizes, teachers are better able to provide more individualized accelerated instruction to students. Additionally, teachers are able to provide high dosage tutoring. The school plans to use data specialists at the residential correctional campuses to obtain educational information related to a student's grade level, courses, modes of instruction during the pandemic, and/or needs to identify students who are at-risk and candidates for credit recovery. The data specialists are to track learning loss interventions with students.

Social, Emotional, and Mental Health Needs: The school is adding campus education support specialists (CESS) to the Youth Village and Leadership Academy campus to develop individual learning plans with parent engagement, support the response to intervention (RTI) process, participate in facility staffing meetings, and assist students to transition out of the correctional facilities. After analyzing RTI data and all other available educational data, the individual learning plan is to be developed to meet not only academic but social, emotional, and mental health needs as well. The school staff plans to work with correctional facility staff to implement Trust Based Relational Intervention (TBRI) to meet the social, emotional, and mental health needs of students. TBRI is a trauma-informed intervention designed to build connections between children and anyone working with them. In addition, psychologists from the Harris Center for Mental Health are available to serve students in the residential correctional campuses.

Student Health: The school has nurses and therapists at each of its residential correctional campuses. Students have access to a physician from the University of Texas Health Science Center and a dentist from the Harris County Public Health Department.

Food: All students are to receive free breakfasts and lunches for the 2021-2022 school year.