



Hughes Springs

INDEPENDENT SCHOOL DISTRICT

November 16, 2020

HSISD Families –

Our goal at Hughes Springs Elementary is to have a great year of learning in an environment that is safe and secure for our students and our staff members. **We believe the best place for students and teachers is, and always will be, in the classroom.**

As we navigate the public health situation, we must remain **adaptable** and be willing to adjust to the evolving situation.

The Department of State Health Services (DSHS) has recently advised that they expect to see a rise in the number of COVID cases due to the upcoming holidays. We also expect to see a rise in the number of flu and strep cases, as is normal this time of year.

To help us avoid mass quarantines of students and staff, we ask that all students in grades 2nd, 3rd, 4th, and 5th wear masks beginning Monday, November 30, 2020.

The students will wear the mask for the duration of the day, except when eating or participating in physical activity (such as PE or playing on the playground).

While we understand the governor's order only covers those 10 years of age and older, we know that masks are the main tool we have to prevent mass quarantines. The Texas Education Agency (TEA) guidelines state that when determining close contact, we can take into consideration "if both the infectious individual and the potential close contact have been consistently and properly masked".

Without the masks, if a student in your child's homeroom classroom contracts COVID-19 and has been in class within 48 hours of becoming sick, we must quarantine the whole class. **We do not want that for our students, and we know that parents do not want that for their child.**

Situations may still arise that warrant a child's quarantine, but with the masks in place and everyone's cooperation those should be few and far between.

We have included some literature from the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) regarding face coverings.

While TEA guidelines allow students to wear face shields, the CDC & DSHS both advise that they are not as effective as masks at preventing the spread of illness. We understand that face shields are often easier for the students to adapt to, but we want to be sure parents understand they are not as effective as masks. **If you still choose for your child to wear a shield, in lieu of a mask, please ensure it fully covers their face from side to side and hangs below their chin.**

We plan to re-evaluate this new masking policy once the spring rolls around.

As always, please screen your child daily for the signs and symptoms of COVID-19 and please be sure to contact the nurse if someone in your household tests positive or your child has been in close contact with a positive case outside of the school setting.

If you have any questions or concerns, please feel free to reach out to Brenda Fincher, 903-639-3881 or Brandi Pittman, 903-639-3838. We will be happy to answer any questions you may have.

Thank you in advance for your understanding and cooperation! It is going to take all of us working together to keep our students, staff, and community healthy!

Sincerely,

Sarah Dildine

Brenda Fincher

Brandi Pittman

Superintendent

Principal

Elementary Nurse

Signs & Symptoms of COVID-19 include:

- Feeling feverish or a measured temperature greater than or equal to 100.0 degrees Fahrenheit
- Loss of taste or smell
- Cough
- Difficulty breathing
- Shortness of breath
- Fatigue
- Headache
- Chills
- Sore throat
- Congestion or runny nose
- Shaking or exaggerated shivering
- Significant muscle pain or ache
- Diarrhea
- Nausea or vomiting