



BISD Families,

Tomorrow and Friday are BIG days in Bells ISD. We are so excited to begin the 2020-2021 year. The eve of the first day of school always brings some jitters to students and school employees. This year, circumstances surrounding this pandemic certainly bring about additional concerns. We understand that, and please know we are here to assist ALL of our Bells ISD families. Let's work together and make this a GREAT year!

Sincerely,  
Tricia Meek, Superintendent

## Top 10 Things You Need to Know: Back to School

**1. Start of School.** We are EXCITED to welcome everyone back but we know things are going to be a little different too! We wanted some time to bring kids back in smaller groups and give time to teach health & safety protocols and also ensure our staff has time to support our remote learners. Here is the schedule for the first week and a half of school:

- **August 13th: All Remote Learners start online**
- **August 13th, 17th, 19th :** All PK-12th grade students, **A-L**
- **August 14th, 18th, 20th:** All PK-12th grade students, **M-Z**
- **August 21st :** All BISD students are **REMOTE**
- **Week of August 24th:** All face-to-face students begin for the first full week of in class learning.

*\*BES parents will have special instructions on walking kids in on Day 1*

**2. Face Coverings.** While we are under the Governor's Orders, all students in grades 4-12 will wear a face covering. Younger students are welcome to wear a mask if desired.

**3. Remote Learning.** If you are choosing remote learning, please complete the commitment form. A form must be completed for each child. Click [HERE](#).

**4. Communication.** Two-way communication is critical. Please visit our district website frequently at [www.besllisd.net](http://www.besllisd.net). Vital information can be found under the Back to School link on the home page. Also, visit the Connected Learning site for campus and teacher websites. Please start by reaching out to your child's teacher if you need assistance. Positive communication is KEY. Best results happen for our students when we are united and work together. See the Connected Learning site [HERE](#).

**5. Bus Rules.** In our Back to School plan, we highly encouraged parents to provide transportation if at all possible given that it will be difficult to social distance on our buses. We are thankful for those that were able to do so, but our bus #'s are still very high - especially in the afternoon. All students riding the bus will be required to wear a face covering, and family groups will be seated together. You are always welcome to provide your own transportation. See the bus guidelines [HERE](#).

**6. Social Distancing.** This is one of the most common questions we are asked... “How will you social distance?” I want to be really clear - we won’t be able to establish 6 feet of space between students every second of the day, but we will do our best to maintain social distancing when possible. We will be thoughtful about large gatherings, sanitize often, practice good hygiene, and be diligent in our efforts to wear face coverings.

**7. Health & Safety Protocols.** We outlined all of our processes in our [Back-To-School Plan](#). Here is a picture of how things will be the same and will be different:

- **Arrival:** Different. We will adjust our morning routines so that we don’t have the mass gatherings in our cafeteria. We will start in the cafeterias and then move students to different locations as numbers increase later in the morning.
- **Passing Periods:** Similar. We staggered JH/HS schedules to ensure students do not overlap in the hallways, but in general, we anticipate passing periods looking similar as before.
- **Break at HS:** Different. The cafeteria will be open for students to get food but students will be spread out in various locations on campus.
- **Lunch:** Some Changes. We will look to decrease the number of students per table, increase the # of tables, increase the spacing between tables, but lunch will be largely similar to before due to space constraints. This is one time when kids will largely not have face coverings on (because they are eating).
- **Dismissal:** Some Changes. We will look at spreading out students during dismissal so that kids aren’t housed in large groups.
- **Large Group Gatherings:** Different. We will encourage virtual large group meetings but we will consider events where we can socially distance (ie, outdoor pep rally for home games)

**8. Friday Night Lights.** 50% what?!? That’s right - we get to play FOOTBALL and VOLLEYBALL and do BAND & CHEER (and all of our other AMAZING activities) but we have to limit spectators to 50% capacity. The good news... we are evaluating EVERY space we can fit people in to determine our 50%. Tickets will be sold FIRST to FNL families (football, band, cheer), next to our BISD students, and then we will open up to the public. All ticket sales will happen early in the week for each game. We will post on social media whether tickets at the gate will be sold. Similar rules for VB + BB as well. Ticket information will be published soon.

**9a. Isolation.** Who goes home when? Here are the basics. See the Student Process Map for details.

- If you test positive, it is a minimum of 10 days from symptom onset (+ must be fever free for 24hrs)
- If you had “close contact” with someone who is lab confirmed positive (within 6 ft for 15+ min w/no face covering), it is a minimum of 14 days

How can you protect yourself from being asked to isolate? Wash your hands often. Wear a face covering. Cover your cough. Keep 6 feet of space when possible.

How will we determine who needs to quarantine? The campus principal and school nurse will do a thorough investigation and communicate to those needing to quarantine. We will also work with our public health authority to help make determinations.

**9b. Notification.** How will I know if there is a case? In the event of a COVID-positive case on campus, the campus will take the following steps: All teachers, staff, and families of all students in that school will be notified. We will not disclose identifiable information about that student or staff member. However you will be contacted personally if your student has been determined to have been within close contact with someone who tests positive. In addition, the local health department will be notified. *Updated process maps have been posted in our Back to School Guidance.*

**10. Fluid.** If there's one word I would use to describe what I think this year will be like, it is fluid. Things are going to change and we will respond and adapt. Please know that we're ready to pivot at any given moment and we will keep a close pulse on our school community to help make those decisions.. As always, let us know what you are thinking/feeling and how we can communicate and support you. It helps us lead better!