



Return to In-Person Instruction and Continuity of Services Plan (RIPICS)

The Lawson Academy

School Years:

2021/2022

2022/2023 2023/2024

Most recent revision date: 4/11/2022

The details in this document are subject to change as directives are provided by governing authorities and/or health officials or as environmental conditions change.

The Lawson Academy (the Academy) is committed to ensuring a safe, productive, innovative and high-quality educational experience for students, parents, staff and the community. COVID-19 permanently changed the landscape of education in our country. The pandemic is still evolving and changing, as are the protocols and safety measures required to continue educating the children of the Houston area. This RIPICS plan is fluid and it will be revisited frequently (no less than every 6 months) and may be modified based on current public health needs and CDC guidance.

The Academy will hold in-person instruction at all campuses for the 2021/2022 school year. No virtual instruction will be offered. Although there are no strategies that completely eradicate the transmission of COVID-19 in communities, we are committed to keeping transmission as low as possible to safely continue having in-person instruction.

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How will The Lawson Academy maintain the health and safety of students, educators, and other staff?

TEA Requirements:

Texas Education Agency (TEA) significantly streamlined their [Public Health Guidance](#). The Lawson Academy revised our Public Health Guidance to closely match TEA's.

Masks:

Per Governor Abbott's May 21, 2021, [Executive Order GA-36](#), governmental entities in Texas are prohibited from requiring or mandating wearing of masks or face coverings. After June 4, 2021, no student, teacher, parent, or staff member or visitor can be required to wear a mask while on campus. In accordance with GA-36, The Lawson Academy cannot require the wearing of a mask or face covering. However, any student, teacher, parent or staff member or visitor may wear a mask or other face covering. Students and adults are encouraged to wear face masks throughout the instructional day, on school buses and at all school functions.

Masks will be provided for students who do not have them. The monthly Academy Newsletter provides information on safety protocols including masks.

Physical distancing:

Whenever possible, students and staff will maintain consistent groupings of individuals to minimize the spread of COVID-19. The use of outdoor space will be considered when possible and appropriate for learning.

Social distance according to desk setup and floor marking (6 feet) should be adhered to at all times by all campus personnel and students.

Each classroom contains no more than 20 student desks with plexiglass dividers on each desk and a teacher's desk. Most classroom sizes provide sufficient spacing between students and teacher.

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Handwashing and respiratory etiquette:

All students, staff, and visitors will be reminded to use proper handwashing techniques or apply hand sanitizer as often as appropriate. Hand sanitizer will be available in classrooms and common areas. Information specific to respiratory etiquette, including cough etiquette, will be available at the Academy.

- [CDC's Cough etiquette:](#)
 - Cover your mouth and nose with a tissue when coughing or sneezing;
 - Use the nearest waste receptacle to dispose of the tissue after use;
 - Perform hand hygiene (i.e. hand washing or sanitizing) after having contact with respiratory secretions.

Handwashing should be done frequently, particularly after touching surfaces. Bathrooms maintain handwashing signage for all students and staff. Respiratory etiquette signage is located throughout the campus.

Cleaning and maintaining healthy facilities:

Daily Campus Cleaning:

- Each classroom and restroom will be cleaned and disinfected
- High-touch surfaces will be disinfected throughout the day
- All individuals will have access to disinfecting materials (i.e. hand sanitizer, handsoap, safe/non-harmful disinfectants)

All classes follow a restroom schedule which allows students three restroom breaks throughout the school day. There will be strict cleaning protocol which allows the students to enter an environment that has been thoroughly cleaned and sanitized following student use.

A small group of students will be allowed to enter the restroom at one time. A hallway/restroom monitor will be assigned to each campus to ensure that all safety procedures are closely followed.

The Academy will encourage students and staff to use hand sanitizer upon boarding any form of Academy transportation. Busses will be cleaned and sanitized each day.

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Improving Ventilation:

Ventilation equipment has been installed to increase air flow in all classrooms and common areas (e.g., cafeteria).

Contact Tracing, Isolation, and Quarantine:

Per TEA's most recent Public Health Guidance, Texas public schools are required to report any known positive COVID-19 case to TEA and to the local health authority-Harris County Health Department (HCHD).

Consistent with school notification requirements for other communicable diseases, and consistent with legal confidentiality requirements, schools must notify all teachers, staff, and families of all students in a classroom or extracurricular or after-school program cohort if a test-confirmed COVID-19 case is identified among students, teachers or staff who participated in those classrooms or cohorts.

If The Lawson Academy is made aware that a student is a close contact, the Principal will ensure that the student's parents are contacted. Contact will be made with the parent/guardian of all students in the same "HUB" of the student that has been identified as a confirmed COVID-19 case. The affected student and any other student(s) who live in the same hold will be required to stay at home during the stay-at-home period if they are in an area with high or rising COVID case rates.

The CDC recommended length of stay-at-home period may change from 10 days to fewer. The Lawson Academy will require a negative COVID-19 test prior to the return of students or staff who were confirmed to be COVID-19 positive.

Diagnostic and Screening Testing:

All staff and students must be temperature checked each day at the designated area on campus. Staff members are to complete a health questionnaire and are advised not to report to campus if they not feeling well or are experiencing cold-like symptoms. Staff will be screened in the Administration building lobby. Students will be screened in the entrances to the campuses.

Campus staff should make a visual inspection of all staff and students for signs of illness, which could include flushed cheeks, sweating inappropriately for ambient temperature, or difficulty with ordinary tasks.

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Students will be screened on the campuses using the student-height kiosk.

Every individual should self-screen for any [symptoms of COVID-19](#) before coming to campus each day. Individuals should not be on campus if they are exhibiting symptoms of COVID-19. Any individual who suspects they may have COVID-19 may search for local COVID-19 testing options in the Houston area. **The Lawson Academy Superintendent can provide COVID-19 testing on campus for students, staff or family members who request it.**

A graphic is in place to make the daily decision easy for students, staff and families. **Can My Child Go To School Today** is circulated through the monthly Academy Newsletter, on the campus and during student enrollment.



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Community Vaccinations:

In partnership with local pharmacies, The Lawson Academy will provide a vaccination clinic if 40 or more students' families request this service. Monthly newsletters invite parent(s) to request a vaccination clinic. For staff or students who elect not to be vaccinated, they will be encouraged to maintain mask wearing at all times. Any individual wanting information on COVID-19 vaccines may search [vaccines.gov](https://www.vaccines.gov), call 1-800-232-0233, or text their zip code to 438829.

Accommodations for Students with disabilities:

Special Education staff (teacher and aides) will provide accommodations for any student with disabilities to maintain safe operations.

The recommended procedures described in this plan will be applied to all classroom settings, including special education settings, when possible and appropriate. Individual student needs will be addressed on a case by case basis. Appropriate accommodations for children with disabilities with respect to health and safety policies will be allowed.

Coordination with state and local health officials:

Per TEA's most recent [Public Health Guidance](#), Texas public schools are required to report any known positive COVID-19 case to TEA and to the local health authority- [Harris County Health Department](#) (HCHD). The Lawson Academy will report all test-confirmed positive cases to both TEA and HCHD.

In partnership with the Department of State Health Services (DSHS), The Lawson Academy works closely to weigh operational decisions. Changes are reported through Region IV and the Texas Education Agency's bi-weekly Commissioner Calls.

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How will The Academy ensure continuity of services?

Services to address student academic needs:

In addition to the high-quality, rigorous Tier I instruction provided to all students in the Academy, we are committed to bridging the learning gap created by the COVID-19 pandemic. The campus will determine the academic needs individual students through the use of NWEA MAP Assessments and academic analysis. Students who need significant remediation, due to the effects of COVID-19 learning loss, will be served in intensive Tier II and/or Tier III intervention. This intervention may consist of at least 30 hours of individual or small group (no more than 1:3) remediation as required by House Bill 4545.

The Academy's commitment for tutoring extends beyond just those students mandated by House Bill 4545 to receive tutoring. All students who demonstrate gaps in learning will be enrolled in high-impact tutoring sessions for Mathematics and/or Reading to increase their ability to master grade-level content.

Services to address student and staff social/emotional and mental health needs:

The Lawson Academy is committed to increasing the availability and participation in many social/emotional and mental health needs brought on by the COVID-19 pandemic. Specific examples of what The Lawson Academy is doing are listed below:

- **Staff Therapist** is in place to provide mental and behavioral health assistance to students and staff in need. The core objective of this role is to provide a safe, secure and private way for students to seek help from licensed mental health professional via one-one counseling sessions. The Staff Therapist provides individual supportive guidance and counseling and facilitates support groups to help them manage their emotions and interactions with peers; addressing issues such as grief and loss, depression, low self-esteem, anger management, anxiety, and suspected drug/alcohol use.
- **Habitudes**, a program by Growing Leaders for Social and Emotional Learning, utilizes the language of today's generation, images, to help students build the necessary social and emotional skills to succeed in school and in life. Delivered by campus staff, the three-year program addresses Self-Awareness, Self-Management, Social Awareness, Relationship Skills and Responsible Decision-Making in Year 1 (2021-2022). For the second year, there is emphasis on Self-

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Awareness and Self-Management through Identifying Emotions, Accurate Self-Perception, Recognizing Strengths, Self-Confidence, Self-Efficacy, Impulse Control, Stress Management, Self-Discipline, Self-motivation, Goal Setting and Organization Skills. In the third year (2023-2024), this program will address Interpersonal and Decision-Making Competencies through Perspective-Taking, Empathy, Appreciating Diversity, Respect for Others, Communication, Social Engagement, Relationship Building, Team Work, Identifying Problems, Analyzing Situations, Solving Problems, Evaluating, Reflecting and Ethical Responsibility.

- **Panorama Surveys** is in place to measure and assess key areas of educational need for low-achieving students, including classroom Expectations and Rigor, Pedagogical Effectiveness, Interest in Subject, and Learning Strategies, among others. The Panorama Student Success module will allow educators to monitor and intervene on the academic, behavioral, attendance, and social-emotional needs of low-achieving students.
- **Varsity Tutors** are in place to target specific learning needs through academic tutoring in Mathematics and Reading. The Varsity Tutors team is aligned to specific student needs and provides in-school tutoring in 2:1 or 3:1 sessions

Professional development resources from Region IV Education Service Center and Catholic Charities enables the Academy to continually provide educators with research-based and practical tips on brain breaks, mindfulness exercises, deep breathing and movement exercises, stress relief and calming activities, de-escalation, classroom management, calming zones, emotional self-regulation, behavior co-regulation and relationship-building strategies. In partnership with the Staff Therapist, trauma informed care materials are referenced during PLC's throughout the year that promote educator self-care and well-being.

How will the Academy review and revise the RIPICS?

In accordance with [Section 2001\(a\) of the ARP Act](#), The Lawson Academy must periodically review and revise this plan. The Academy will seek input from stakeholders at least every 6 months and revise this plan as needed. The Academy will also review CDC guidance and revise this plan, with stakeholder input, as deemed appropriate after significant changes from the current CDC guidance.

1. Academy Consultation: Consistent with the ARP ESSER requirements, the Academy engaged in meaningful consultation with stakeholders, and incorporated input into its plan, including, but not limited to:
 - i. students;
 - ii. families;
 - iii. civil rights organizations (including disability rights organizations);
 - iv. school and district administrators (including special education administrators);
 - v. superintendents;
 - vi. charter school leaders (if applicable);
 - vii. teachers, principals, school leaders, other educators, school staff; and
 - viii. stakeholders representing the interests of children with disabilities, children experiencing homelessness, children and youth in foster care, and other underserved students.

These stakeholders have been invited to complete ESSER surveys through newsletters, internal communications, board distribution, new student enrollment questionnaires, parent questionnaires during Field Day, parent interviews during graduation ceremonies, and ongoing dialogue with current staff, students and parents (guardians). Surveys were online on the Academy's website, as well.

In the fall of 2021, a Stakeholder Community will be formed to include the following grouping of participants for semi-annual meetings to review ESSER performance and progress. The first of these semi-annual meetings will be scheduled to occur in March of 2022 .

- Superintendent Ms. Cheryl Lawson
- Principal Dr. Marthea Raney
- Instructional Coach Ms. Dovie Smith

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- Accelerated Learning Coach Ms. Andreka Provost
- Campus Leadership Team Mr. Thierno Sow, Mrs. Kathryn Brooks, Ms. Deborah Nickerson
- Special Education consultant Ms. Terrell Hutchinson
- 5 Parents Ms. Sabrina Dearman, Ms. Crystle McDonald, Ms. Shelia Pruitt, Mr. Scotty Golden, Ms. Sharlene Bates, Ms. Nedra Cheatham
- 2 WALIPP Board Members Ms. Mary Ramos, Board Chair and Mr. Terence Frederick
- 1 Community Member Ms. Mary Williams

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