

PONDER INDEPENDENT SCHOOL DISTRICT

400 W. Bailey ■ Ponder, TX 76259 ■ (940) 479-8200 ■ www.ponderisd.net ■ Fax: (940) 479-8209

January 12, 2022

Dear Families of Ponder ISD Students:

We wanted to communicate with you in regards to the recent increase in Covid-19 cases in our school district. As is the case most everywhere, Ponder ISD is experiencing a fairly significant increase in student and staff illnesses in the past couple of weeks, and a rise in the number of active Covid-19 cases as well. Some of our local area school districts have also made the difficult decision to close schools for a time due to the circumstances in their communities. However, at this time Ponder ISD does not have any plans to close school due to illnesses. In general, as long as we have a sufficient number of healthy adults present in the district to continue to provide all necessary school services, we will plan to keep the school doors open for our students who are able to attend. However, it takes all of us in the Ponder ISD community to make this happen, and so we share the following information and request you to help us with the following:

- We are closely monitoring our Covid cases daily. You can also monitor these counts as well at <https://www.ponderisd.net/Page/9534> to help make the best decisions for your family.
- We have updated our Covid protocols recently to reflect recent changes as recommended by the Texas Education Agency and the Texas Department of State Health Services. You can read those updated protocols (in both English and Spanish) at <https://www.ponderisd.net/Page/8553>
- Please note that the recent changes in the guidelines from the CDC suggest that students can return to school after only a 5-day quarantine period after testing positive for Covid-19 (assuming they are asymptomatic). We are also receiving some notes from doctors who are authorizing students to return to class after only 5 days out. *Please note* that the quarantine rules for students that we operate under from the TEA and TX DSHS still require a 10-day quarantine period for students in these cases. As such, please know that we will follow those 10-day guidelines as per our protocols posted at the link above.
- Please remember to monitor your students each day for symptoms and please do not send your students to school when they are sick or exhibiting symptoms. Specifically, please do not send your students to school if they have had a fever within the past 24 hours, or if their fever is being controlled by medications.
- Please continue to help us remind your students of the good habits we have been emphasizing for the past several months: wash your hands often, cover all your coughs or sneezes, and be careful to keep your distance from folks who are sick or exhibiting symptoms.
- We are now able to provide some rapid testing services for our Ponder ISD staff, so please know that we are diligently working to take care of them as best we can, and to make sure that they are healthy when they are at school.
- If you are interested and able to help us out even more directly, we are always looking for good folks to serve as substitute teachers! Please visit our website at <https://www.ponderisd.net/Page/15> to apply.

Thank you very much for your help and patience with us as we continue to navigate another challenging school year - we sincerely appreciate our partnership with you as we work together to educate our students. If you have any specific questions or concerns related to this information, please contact your campus principal or nurse's office for additional information and clarification.

We are #OnePride -

Jeremy Thompson
Superintendent, Ponder ISD