



School Safety & Emergency Protocols: **Updated Fall 2026**

I. School Safety & Emergency Preparedness:

- Providing a safe and secure learning environment for students and staff is a top priority of Tawas Area Schools. Our district works closely with local law enforcement, our School Resource Officer (SRO), and other emergency responders to continually review and strengthen our safety procedures.
- School safety is a shared responsibility. We encourage families to talk with their children about the importance of reporting concerning, suspicious, or threatening behavior to a trusted adult. Students may also confidentially report concerns through OK2SAY. All safety concerns are taken seriously, investigated, and shared with law enforcement when appropriate.
- Together, we can help keep our students, staff, and schools safe.

II. Emergency Protocols for Families:

III. How does TAS respond to threats & safety concerns?

IV. Emergency Drills:

V. Standard Response Protocol: (New for 26-27)

VI. School Resource Officer & OK2SAY:



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II. Emergency Protocols for Families: Tawas Area Schools maintains emergency operations plans for each of our buildings in partnership with local law enforcement and emergency service providers. Staff regularly train and participate in required safety drills to prepare for emergency situations.

- **How Will I Be Notified?** During an actual or potential emergency, Tawas Area Schools will communicate with families through **ParentSquare** as quickly and accurately as possible once information is confirmed. Notifications may include phone calls, text messages, and/or email, with additional updates provided as circumstances change. During an active emergency, **please do not call or come to the school unless directed to do so**. This keeps phone lines, entrances, and surrounding areas available for school personnel and emergency responders.
- **Can I pick up my child?** Students will remain safely supervised until school officials and/or emergency responders determine it is safe to dismiss them. If an evacuation, relocation, or early dismissal is necessary, families will receive specific instructions regarding where and when students may be picked up.
- **When Will Families Be Notified?** Not every situation requires a schoolwide notification. Communication will depend on the severity, duration, and impact of the incident.
 - **Low Impact:** Isolated situations with little or no impact on school operations. Only the families of students directly involved will be contacted as appropriate.
 - **Moderate Impact:** Situations that affect school operations or a larger group of students. Families may receive an update depending on the scope, duration, and impact of the situation.
 - **High Impact:** Situations involving a significant or potential safety concern, such as a Lockdown, evacuation, or serious threat. Families will be notified as soon as reasonably possible and provided updates as information becomes available.
 - Scheduled drills, false alarms, malfunctioning sensors, and situations determined not to pose a safety concern **will NOT** typically result in a districtwide emergency notification.



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III. How does TAS respond to threats & safety concerns?

Tawas Area Schools takes all threats and safety concerns seriously. We use a **Behavioral Threat Assessment and Management (BTAM)** process to identify, assess, and respond to concerning behaviors or threats.

- When a concern is reported, trained school personnel conduct a **threat assessment** to determine the level of concern and appropriate response, involving our School Resource Officer (SRO), local law enforcement, and other professionals when appropriate.
- **Threat assessment is not a one-size-fits-all disciplinary process.** Each situation is evaluated individually and considers multiple factors, including the nature and context of the behavior, the student's intent, circumstances surrounding the incident, developmental and behavioral factors, relevant student history, and applicable special education or disability considerations. A concerning statement or behavior does not automatically result in suspension, law enforcement involvement, or schoolwide communication.
- Depending on the level of concern, responses may include parent contact, student supports, safety planning, counseling or behavioral interventions, disciplinary action, and/or law enforcement involvement.
- **Not every reported threat or safety concern requires schoolwide communication.** Low-impact incidents or concerns determined through investigation not to pose a credible or ongoing safety risk will generally be addressed directly with the students and families involved. When a situation presents a potential safety risk to the broader school community, families will be notified as quickly and accurately as possible.
- **Student Privacy & Confidentiality:** Student privacy laws limit the information the district can share regarding individual students, disciplinary actions, or specific details of an investigation. As a result, families not directly involved may not receive additional information about low-impact incidents or the outcome of an investigation.
- Our goal is to **identify concerns early, assess risk, protect students and staff, and provide appropriate intervention and support. If you see or hear something concerning, report it. School safety is a shared responsibility.**

IV. Emergency Drills:

- Michigan Public Act 12 of 2014 sets the foundational requirements for K–12 school safety drills: **five fire drills, two tornado drills, and three lockdown drills.**
- Our administrators and teachers use age-appropriate explanations when conducting drills to minimize undue stress while ensuring students are prepared to respond appropriately in an emergency.
- Based on recommendations from our emergency personnel and to promote **authentic and effective emergency preparedness**, drill dates and times are not shared in advance with staff, students, families, or the community. Drills follow a planned annual schedule and are coordinated with emergency personnel when necessary. Following each drill, required information is posted on the district website.



V. **Standard Response Protocol:**

- Beginning with the 2026–27 school year, in compliance with Michigan Public Act 270 of 2024, Tawas Area Schools has adopted the Standard Response Protocol (SRP). SRP provides students, staff, and first responders with clear, consistent language and expectations when responding to an incident. SRP posters will be displayed throughout our classrooms and hallways.
- **IMPORTANT COMMUNICATION NOTE:** Not every activation of an SRP action represents an actual emergency. Families will typically not be notified of scheduled drills, false alarms, malfunctioning sensors, or situations deemed not to pose a safety concern. Families will be notified when an actual or potential emergency affects the safety of students or staff.

IN AN EMERGENCY TAKE ACTION



HOLD! In your room or area. Clear the halls.

STUDENTS

Clear the hallways and remain in room or area until the "All Clear" is announced
Do business as usual

ADULTS

Close and lock the door
Account for students and adults
Do business as usual



SECURE! Get inside. Lock outside doors.

STUDENTS

Return to inside of building
Do business as usual

TEACHERS

Bring everyone indoors
Lock outside doors
Increase situational awareness
Do business as usual
Take attendance



LOCKDOWN! Locks, lights, out of sight.

STUDENTS

Move away from sight
Maintain silence
Do not open the door

ADULTS

Recover students from hallway if possible
Lock the classroom door
Turn out the lights
Move away from sight
Maintain silence
Do not open the door
Prepare to evade or defend



EVACUATE! (A location may be specified)

STUDENTS

Leave stuff behind if required to
If possible, bring your phone
Follow instructions

ADULTS

Lead students to Evacuation location
Account for students and adults
Notify if missing, extra or injured students or adults



SHELTER! Hazard and safety strategy.

STUDENTS

Use appropriate safety strategy for the hazard

Hazard

Tornado
Hazmat
Earthquake
Tsunami

Safety Strategy

Evacuate to shelter area
Seal the room
Drop, cover and hold
Get to high ground

ADULTS

Lead safety strategy
Account for students and adults
Notify if missing, extra or injured students or adults



The Standard Response Protocol (SRP) uses five clear actions. Each communicates what students and staff should do in each situation.



"Hold In Place – In Your Room or Area. Clear the Halls." Used when hallways need to remain clear (e.g., for a medical situation or maintenance issue). Students remain in their current room and instruction continues as "business as usual". Parents will **not typically be notified** for routine Holds unless the situation is prolonged or requires additional action



SECURE: "Get Inside. Lock Outside Doors." Activated when there is a potential threat or hazard *outside* the building (e.g., nearby police activity or a dangerous animal). All students move inside and exterior doors are locked while normal instruction continues. Parents will be notified if the situation is serious, prolonged, or impacts arrival and dismissal



LOCKDOWN: "Locks, Lights, Out of Sight." Activated when there is a potential threat *inside* the building. Students move out of sight and remain silent. Staff lock doors and turn out lights. **Parents will always be notified** when a Lockdown is initiated in response to an actual or potential emergency.



EVACUATE: "To a Location." Used to move students and staff from one location to another for safety (e.g., a gas leak or fire). Students follow staff instructions and may be asked to leave personal items behind. Parents will be notified when an emergency evacuation affects school operations.



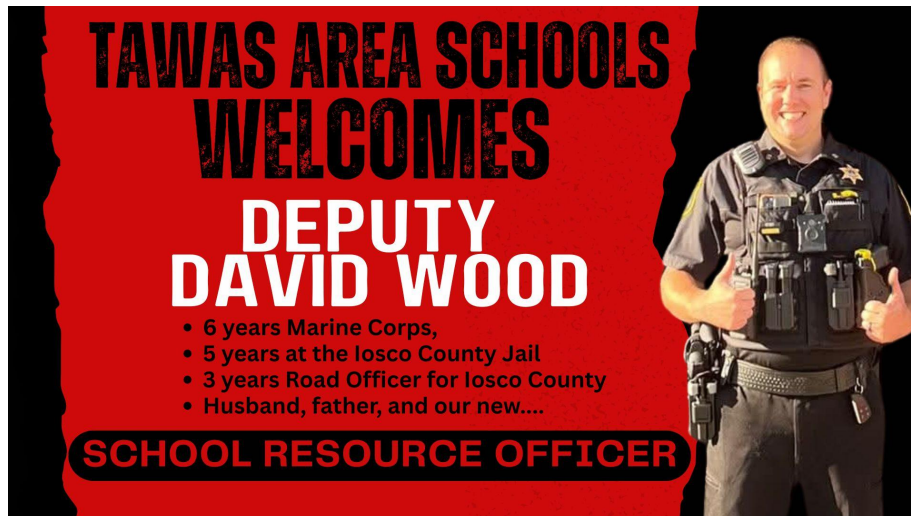
SHELTER: "State Hazard and Safety Strategy." Used for specific environmental hazards, such as a tornado (e.g., "Evacuate to Shelter Area") or hazardous materials. Parents will be notified when a Shelter action is activated in response to an actual or potential emergency.

Using common terminology helps ensure that our students, staff, law enforcement, and emergency responders have a shared understanding of what each action means and how to respond.



VI. School Resource Officer & OK2SAY:

Tawas Area Schools works closely with the Iosco County Sheriff's Department and has a dedicated School Resource Officer (SRO). Deputy David Wood serves as our SRO and works closely with students, staff, and administrators to support school safety, crime prevention, and positive relationships between students and law enforcement.



OK2Say: OK2SAY is Michigan's confidential student safety program that allows students, parents, and others to report concerns about potential harm, threats, or criminal activity involving students, staff, or schools. Tips are shared with the appropriate school personnel, mental health professionals, or law enforcement so concerns can be addressed quickly and appropriately.

