

Tawas Area Schools

245 West M-55 Tawas City, MI 48763
Telephone (989) 984-2250 Fax (989) 984-2253

September 14, 2021

Dear Tawas Area Staff, Students, and Families:

Below is updated information from the release of this letter on August 27, 2021. This update will provide you with our plans as of today, which may change should we receive public health orders from CDC, MDHHS, MIOSHA, and/or DHD2. Athletics will adhere to rules set forth by MDHHS and MHSAA.

COVID-19 & Communicable Disease Protocols

Are face masks required at school?

Tawas Area School District, in partnership with the CDC, MDHHS, and District Health Department No. 2 strongly recommends that students and staff wear face masks while indoors. Our current case rates within the community and the school have increased, and we are encouraging all families to support the safety measures by having their child wear a face mask. These case rates are revisited weekly during our meetings with our local health department.

- **Transportation(Busing and School Vehicles):** School buses are public transportation per the CDC. All drivers and passengers on school buses will be required to wear masks to and from school and when traveling for extracurricular activities. THRUN Law, our legal firm, confirmed this requirement in their July 29th legal update.

Will my child be required to get the COVID-19 vaccine in order to attend school?

No. The COVID-19 vaccine is not listed on the School Required Vaccination List. For more information, please see: [School Required Vaccines for Parents by MDHHS](#)

Will you separate students who are vaccinated from students who are unvaccinated?

No. Vaccination status is a personal choice.

Will students be in cohorts in the classroom or on the playground?

No. As of June 22, 2021, MDHHS has discontinued all gathering limits for residential and nonresidential settings. However, we naturally cohort students in the elementary and in some middle school grade levels. We are also investigating alternative seating

arrangements in classrooms that will allow us to maximize the space available, and spread students apart with the intent to reduce students who are considered close contacts.

Will contact tracing continue?

Schools are required to report communicable diseases to their local health department within 24 hours. Positive or probable COVID-19 cases will be reported to DHD2 following our Communicable Disease Board Policy 8450 and Michigan Law Act No. 368 of the Public Acts of 1978. For a complete list of reportable diseases, please see the following document: [2021 Reportable Diseases](#). When there is a positive or probable case within a classroom, an exposure letter will be sent out through our district communication tools. We also have a COVID dashboard on our website that will keep track of positive cases within the District. This process will look similar to what was done during the 2020-2021 school year.

Will Tawas Area Schools quarantine staff and students?

MIOSHA requires us to quarantine unvaccinated staff if they are determined to be a close contact. Any student or staff member who tests positive for COVID will be required to quarantine under the current guidance provided by the CDC, MDHHS, and DHD2. All close contacts will be shared with DHD2 as required by Board Policy 8450 to determine quarantine time periods. A close contact is defined as being within six feet for more than 15 minutes over a 24 hour time period. Quarantines for a close contact are 10 days for a confirmed positive case. The process will look similar to what was done last year. *This guidance continues to change, and we are working with our local health department to interpret and apply the information appropriately. Even today, information was changing during our meeting. As more information becomes available, I will share it with our families. I have provided other documents with this letter regarding quarantines from MDHHS, and DHD2 will communicate with school officials once they have the process clarified and established.*

Will student athletes need to be tested for COVID-19 to participate?

No, MDHHS and MHSAA lifted all requirements for student testing as of June 22, 2021.

What will our food service process look like moving forward?

Tawas Area Schools will use available spaces, like our gymnasiums, to spread students out while they eat lunch.

Any family whose child is under quarantine and in need of assistance with food is asked to contact Mrs. Jan Sancrant at jsanocrant@tawas.net

Symptoms for COVID-19

Please monitor for onset of symptoms related to COVID-19, including nasal congestion, fever, cough, difficulty breathing, headache, diarrhea, new fatigue or loss of taste or smell. If you note any change in the health of your child, please call your regular medical provider or call 911 for support.

Academic Support for Quarantined Students

For Clara Bolen, teachers will be reaching out to our families to discuss how to access Google Meet links so students can be a part of lessons, as well as other ways to support your child's learning. We are currently scheduling Chromebook distribution on Wednesday, September 15th and Thursday, September 16th.


For the Middle School/High School quarantine students in these buildings, Google Meet links will be provided in your child's Google Classroom, and they are expected to follow the bell schedule.

What will cleaning and sanitizing look like for the 2021-2022 School year?

We will continue with best practices that we established last year. High-frequency places such as classrooms, bathrooms, cafeterias etc. will be cleaned every day minimally. Hand sanitizer is available throughout the building and hand washing will be promoted. Also, school buses will be sanitized between each run in the morning and evening.

Thank you for your continued support and patience as we finalize all details for the start of the 2021-2022 school year. We are looking forward to seeing your child(ren) next week!

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Mr. John Klinger". The signature is written in a cursive style and is positioned above a light gray rectangular box.

Mr. John Klinger

Superintendent, Tawas Area Schools