

TIOGA PUBLIC SCHOOLS

Central Elementary

Tioga High School

Health and Safety Smart Return to Learning 2023-2024



**“Home of the Pirates and Firestorm”
Adopted by the Tioga School District
#15 Board of Education
Reviewed: June 19, 2023**

TIOGA PSD #15 HEALTH & SAFETY SMART RESTART PLAN

Dear Tioga School Families,

March 13, 2020 through the end of the 2022 school year has been and may be challenging for our entire community, but we have found ways to cope and have embraced the required alterations. Thank you to the students, staff, parents, and community members who have helped our children succeed. In spite of difficulties, our students, parents, and community rose above the situation, and we were thankful that we were able to attend in person for the entire 2020-2021 school year and continue into the 2021-2022 year. Again, we at Tioga Schools are proud of our community support during the pandemic.

The district continues to plan for the remainder of the school year and plan for the 2022-2023 school year. We are confident that we will be successful as we address the potential impact and response to COVID-19. This plan is meant to address operating in a safe environment with effective learning, while providing a flexible framework to guide our response over the next school year.

For academic, social-emotional, and economic reasons, we have successfully returned to an in-person model; however, we cannot disregard health and safety issues concerning COVID-19. The virus remains a risk. The district must work with our regional health unit in consideration of all practical steps to keep our schools from contributing to virus spread in our community.

This plan, which would be considered for implementation during an emergency pandemic, presents hundreds of hours of critical thinking, research, modeling, work, and “learning as we continue” by our educators, staff, and school board. This group reviewed input gathered from our employees and parents and continues to address the potential changes in our school environment.

We realize that this plan may not address every question. We recognize some concepts and actions may be polarizing, and there are strong opinions about what the school should or should not do. We must remain open-minded to what is possible and consider all options so we can move forward.

Thank you for your time reviewing this plan. Like you, we continue to learn. We most certainly do not have all the answers. Subsequently, we encourage everyone to ask questions and communicate concerns as we move forward. Together, our school can provide a quality education to our children in a safe and healthy manner. We need to continue to work together to solve future issues.

Respectfully,

Carolyn Eide
Superintendent

Mark Schmidt
School Board President

Assumptions & Assurances

- Every student should have the opportunity to engage in learning in some way, shape, or form, regardless of the spread of COVID-19 in our school district. The academic needs of the students will continue to be addressed during in-person learning or some other form of learning.
- Schools have a vital role in providing safe environments for students, focusing on both social-emotional and physical health.
- By working together with educators, staff, health care professionals, parents, students, and community members, we can create effective learning while following health and safety guidelines from local, state, and national health care officials.
- Classroom arrangement and procedures will look differently than in previous years, if needed.
- The situation can change at any time and may require quick and decisive action by school personnel.
- The Tioga School Board will ensure our plan meets the needs of Tioga students, educators, staff and community members.

Tioga Fall Restart Team Organized in 2020

The Tioga High School's Return to Learning Plan was crafted and reviewed by a team consisting of the following:

- | | |
|-----------------------------|---|
| ● Teachers | School Board Members |
| ○ Jessica Ornelas, Central | ○ Jeff Moberg, Jr. |
| ○ Lori Germundson, Central | ○ Gail Joyce |
| ○ Tara Mosley, Central | ● Plant Maintenance |
| ○ Doneen Larson, THS | ○ Tom Sabinash |
| ○ Mallory Klabo, THS | ● Bus Supervisor |
| ○ Tom Larson, THS Counselor | ○ Jay Wolla |
| ● Paraprofessional | ● Food Service |
| ○ Claudia Tande | ○ Tonya Zochert |
| ● Parents | ● Secretaries |
| ○ Keri Fedler | ○ Jayme Jorstad |
| ○ Pete Peterson | ○ Stephanie Ramberg |
| ○ Pete Wonser | ● Administration |
| ○ Chris Norgaard | ○ Carolyn Eide, Superintendent |
| ○ Ronica Pederson | ○ Brodie Odegaard, HS Principal |
| ○ Mike Hanson | ○ Tim Schaffer, Elementary Principal |
| ○ Sarah Rice | ○ Bridgette Odegaard, Technology Director |
| | ○ Ryan Albrecht, Athletic Director |

Input was initially gathered from surveys to allow for a wide range of input, while maintaining social distancing. Surveys were distributed via the Tioga App and Facebook. Parents received one survey, while teacher and staff responses were kept separate through another survey. Both surveys addressed the same questions concerning platforms, use of masks, social distancing, and access to the internet. Parent surveys included a question about rural busing.

Parents and student participation was strong with 333 responses, while 80 teachers and staff members completed the staff survey. The questions asked, along with the percentages of responses, indicated:

Question	Parent Percentage	Teacher/Staff Percentage
Which platform is your preferred method of instruction?	67.6% Attend classes face-to-face 17.7% Hybrid of in-school/Distance learning 8.7% Distance learning	73.8% Attend classes face-to-face 13.7% Hybrid of in-school/Distance learning 1.2% Distance learning
In regards to social distancing guidelines, are concerned about social distancing?	24.3% Yes 75.7% No	32.5% Yes 67.5% No
Would you prefer that face coverings (masks) are:	12.3% Required 8.4% Recommended 79.3% Optional	11.5% Required 10.3% Recommended 78.2% Optional
If we are required to resume distance learning, do you have home internet access?	95.2% Yes 4.8% No	97.5% Yes 2.5% No
If you have been served by rural transportation, which is your preferred method of maintaining safety for social distancing?	7.6% Mandatory masks (25) 13.1% Required seating charts (43) 27.1 % No special requirements (89) 56.4% NA (185)	NA

When the survey results were studied in 2020, it was apparent that parents and teachers wanted to see students back in the classroom for in person learning. While social distance didn't appear to be a concern, the district was committed to space out students as best as possible. Masks were optional for most of the year.

The following survey results were gathered in November 2020 after the completion of the 1st quarter. Parents and student participation was strong with 305 responses, while 61 teachers and staff members completed the staff survey. The questions asked, along with the percentages of responses, indicated:

Question	Parent Percentage	Teacher/Staff Percentage
North Dakota Health Guidance has changed its guidance concerning quarantine of close contacts. If both the person that tests positive and close contacts are wearing cloth masks properly, close contacts do not have to quarantine; they would continue to wear masks and monitor their health for symptoms during the 14 day period. Positive cases would still isolate. Do you think the school should mandate masks to prevent close contacts from being quarantined when students cannot be 6 feet apart?	64.6% No 35.4% Yes	63.9% No 36.1% Yes
Please select the following statements that are true: The schools are keeping students healthy in the classroom setting. The schools are keeping students healthy in sports, music, PE, recess settings. The schools are providing a quality education to students that are distance learning because of choice, quarantine, or isolation.	83.7 Agreed 85.7 Agreed 69% Agreed	88% Agreed 78% Agreed 66% Agreed

Even with the guidelines that lessened quarantine measures, a strong opposition to masks is strong in this survey. The district's opinion was solidified at a mid-November 2020 school board meeting where masks were recommended rather than mandated. This action was rescinded five days later due to pressure by the Department of Instruction, and masks were mandated until the middle of January 2021.

Very few positive COVID-19 cases were reported after January 4, 2021. Masks will be optional when the 2021- 2022 school year begins in August should conditions remain the same as spring 2021.

COVID-19 Response Team & Coordinators

This organizational structure was crafted to assist in the development and monitoring of the district return-to-learning plan. This structure identifies leaders and guiding team members that will serve as representatives in how the district responds to COVID-19 during the school year. This plan is designed to address the issues of reopening as well as provide a nimble and responsive process to address issues that may not be recognized today.

The three components have been identified as key operational teams that consist of multiple departments. Each operational team will work to implement the return to learn plan and address challenges as they arise.

COVID-19 Building Level Coordinators

Each school building will have an identified COVID-19 Coordinator who will be responsible for the health and safety preparedness and response planning. Coordinators will make themselves available to the NDDoH 24 hours a day / 7 days a week to respond to phone calls from public health. This position will assist public health in identifying and notifying close contacts in the school setting. The coordinator will report cases of COVID-19, found in the school setting, to health officials and the State Superintendent's office.



Carolyn Eide, Superintendent, will assume the role of building level coordinator in all Tioga School buildings. If the coordinator is unable to be reached, the secondary contacts will be Brodie Odegaard, Tioga High School Principal, and Timothy Schaffer, Central Elementary School Principal.

Phases

The following phases will be used to define the community risk level associated with COVID-19. These phases align with the color-coded guidance in the ND Smart Restart Plan. Each level is reported to schools by the NDDoH after rigorous testing and assessment of cases in the community. [ND Smart Restart Plan](#)

ND K12 Smart Restart

RISK LEVEL

North Dakota is in the GREEN - Low Risk Level

Who determines the Color of our State?

The Governor, in consultation with the North Dakota Department of Health (NDDoH), makes the determination if and when the state or a specific county may change colors.

How Do I Know the Color of my County?

Currently, the entire state is **GREEN** - Low Risk Level. North Dakota's K12 Smart Restart will follow what is identified at the state level. If the state adjusts from a statewide color to a county color, communication will occur among the NDDoH, NDDPI, and the Governor's Office and local public health will be informed. The NDDoH, in coordination with local public health, will provide updated information to school districts if this occurs.

Can I choose the color for my school district?

No. The color is determined by the Governor in consultation with the NDDoH.

May our district choose to implement more stringent health and safety protocols?

Absolutely. School districts may choose to implement specific mitigation protocols that are more stringent than what is included in the current color risk level.

How do we handle a positive test result?

Every school district **must follow** the protocol provided by the NDDoH in response to a positive test result with staff or a student. To learn more, click on https://www.health.nd.gov/sites/www/files/documents/Files/MSS/coronavirus/School%20Resources/NDDoH_COVID-19_Recommendations_for_Schools.pdf

How do we handle a close contact?

Every school district **must follow** the protocol provided by NDDoH in response to a close contact. To learn more, click on https://www.health.nd.gov/sites/www/files/documents/Files/MSS/coronavirus/School%20Resources/NDDoH_COVID-19_Recommendations_for_Schools.pdf

Instructional Models

The instructional models used by the district will be guided, in part, by the risk level of COVID-19 in the community as defined within the phases above. This is a guide as instructional models could be altered based on other factors, such as occupancy levels, age of children, and abilities to move certain classes online.

As of June 17, 2021, Tioga will not offer distance learning as an option except in the case of isolation or quarantine or if a mandated shutdown of North Dakota Schools is issued. The district adopted the policy, ABAC: Virtual Learning Because of Weather or Other Conditions, in October 2021 that allows for distance learning as an option for inclement weather, unforeseen emergency, or inability to effectively hold school based on health and/or weather conditions, but only when in person learning will be severely affected by such events.

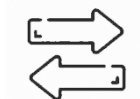
The district will continue to work with students and staff regarding social, emotional, and mental health through the pandemic. Each building has a dedicated counselor to directly work with students. Teachers are sensitive to changes in student behaviors and make any concerns known to the appropriate personnel. The district is aware that Social-Emotional Learning (SEL) is important since some of our students have struggled with many facets of COVID-19.

The school will continue to utilize the Summer Food Service Program (SFSP) and the Emergency Summer Food Service (ESFS) as long as the USDA approves us to do so. Both programs are currently reimbursing for free breakfast and lunch for students, and in the summer, for children ages 1-18.



Traditional Learning

All instruction is delivered in-person with some building and group modifications. Teachers and students maintain a normal daily schedule. Safety precautions are implemented to enhance staff and student safety.



Hybrid Learning

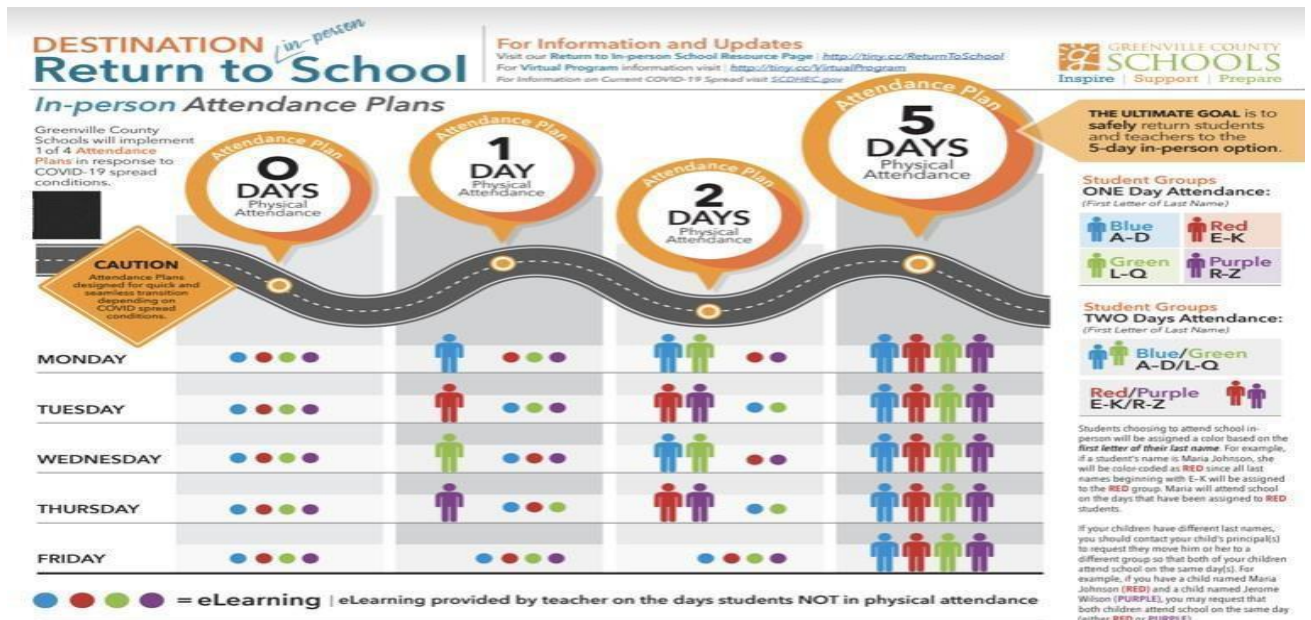
Students report to school on a modified schedule. Multiple hybrid models of instructional delivery may be appropriate to meet the educational needs through a variety of delivery models. Students with special needs and those struggling with academic work would have priority in attending in-person.



Distance Learning (Google Classroom)

All instruction is provided off-campus through the use of distance learning resources suited to the unique needs of the student.

An example of a return-to-school survey is shown below. This shows how Distance Learning (0 Days), Hybrid Learning (1 Day or 2 Days), and Traditional Learning (5 Days) could be implemented.



Health and Safety Guidance

The district strives to provide a healthy and safe environment for all who occupy our schools. The following guidelines are intended to provide a framework for the district's response to COVID-19.

Resources

ND Department of Public Instruction - <https://www.nd.gov/dpi/parentscommunity/nddpi-updates-and-guidance-covid-19>

ND Department of Health - <https://www.health.nd.gov/diseases-conditions/coronavirus>

Center for Disease Control and Prevention - <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-nCoV/index.html>

Best Intentions

Despite taking every reasonable precaution, there is no guarantee that our schools will be without risk as it relates to COVID-19. The virus will be present on our buses, in our classrooms, and at our activities. In certain situations, social distancing is not possible in a school setting. Our actions, as outlined in this plan, will not guarantee that students or staff members will not come in contact with the virus.

Protect Yourself and Others

Wash your hands often



- If needed, social distance may be recommended. This is especially important for people who are at a higher risk of getting sick.
- Alternate or modified schedules, adjustments to use of common areas, use of outdoor spaces and other actions that increase physical separation may be considered.
- If needed, physical separation on busing, one student per seat, will be recommended but cannot be guaranteed. Masks MAY be recommended-and may eventually be required-on buses.
- If needed, visitors, to include parents and vendors, will be limited to the office areas unless prior arrangements have been made (i.e. IEP meeting, parent-teacher meeting, etc.)



Cover coughs and sneezes

- Always cover your mouth and nose with a tissue when you cough or sneeze or use the inside of your elbow.
- Throw tissues away and wash hands or use hand sanitizer to prevent spread.



Clean and disinfect

- School staff should clean and disinfect frequently touched surfaces daily.
- Shared materials should be cleaned.
- Classrooms will be cleaned nightly by custodial staff and disinfected as needed.



Cover your mouth and nose with a cloth face cover when around others

- The wearing of masks will be optional but may be changed to “recommended” or “required” at any time.
- If needed, students will be taught how to properly wear a face covering so they are prepared to use them on school buses or other situations in close proximity with others.
 - Resources from NDDPI and Tioga School District will be provided to teachers, if needed.



Tioga COVID-19 PPE Guidance Example

STAFF	PPE
Traditional Learning All Staff	Optional to wear cloth face coverings.
All Students	Optional to wear cloth face coverings.
Public facing staff (i.e. receptionists/clerical) unless a plexiglass partition is in place.	Optional face shield or cloth face mask. Plexiglass partitions may be used as needed.
Staff caring for / instructing a student in a small space – small group – for more than 15 minutes. (i.e. SPED, EL, educator)	Building administrators, in consultation with health officials and educators, will determine if face coverings or face shields are recommended . This may be influenced by instructional and learning needs of the student and health considerations of all occupants in the room. Plexiglass partitions may be used as needed.
Hybrid Learning All staff	Recommended to wear a cloth face covering.
All Students	Recommended to wear a face mask. Students will be provided breaks and allowed to remove their mask when outside or in spaces that can accommodate social distancing.
All staff and students in school bus	Recommended to wear a cloth face covering.



Monitor your health daily

- Be alert for symptoms. Watch for a fever, cough, or shortness of breath.
- Parents are asked to screen their children each day before sending them to school. Use the screening guidance provided (see page 18).
- Be alert for symptoms. Watch for a fever, cough, or shortness of breath.
- **Staff and students who are sick are highly encouraged to stay home.**
 - Symptomatic students will be isolated, and their guardians contacted.

Health & Safety Protocols

Monitoring the health of students and staff will be an important component of a safe and healthy educational environment. Tioga Public School will take the following measures to protect all students and staff while they are at school.

Identifying Students & Staff at Higher Risk

- Back to School and enrollment processes will include conversations with families regarding concerns and if their child is at-risk, based on a health professionals' diagnosis. This information will be provided to the building principal (COVID-19 Secondary Coordinator) who will contact the family and discuss instructional model options.
- Employees are encouraged to contact the Superintendent if they are at-risk, based on a health professionals' diagnosis. The Superintendent will work in partnership with the building principal and the employee to coordinate adjustments to the work schedule or workplace.
- When the NDDoH or the local health district (UMH DU) informs the school district of a student or staff member that is COVID-19 positive, that information will be passed on to the Superintendent, Business Manager, and the building principal as allowable within district policy and law.

Isolation & Quarantine

- Definitions
 - Isolation – For people who are already sick from the virus. A prevention strategy used to separate people who are sick with the virus from healthy people.
 - Quarantine – For people who are not sick but have been exposed to the virus. A prevention strategy used to monitor people who were exposed for a period of time.
- **Tioga Schools will follow isolation and quarantine guidelines and directives as set by NDDOH and Upper Missouri local health unit. The Tioga School Board may provide input on isolation and quarantine issues.**

If a student or staff members becomes sick at school (or school event)

- Student
 - Direct / escort the child to the office.
 - The child shall be provided a facial covering and isolated in the building sick room.
 - Parent / guardian will be contacted to pick up their child.
- Staff
 - Inform supervisor immediately and wear a face mask / shield until a substitute is found if supervising students at that time.
 - Leave the school building/grounds and consult with a healthcare professional.

Return to School

- When a student or staff member has been isolated or quarantined as directed by NDDoH or Upper Missouri Health or local guidance they will be allowed to return to school after being cleared by the NDDoH / NDDoH /school board guidelines.

Guidance for Grade Level & School Building Level Closure

This is intended as guidance for COVID-19 Coordinators and school leaders on when to close classrooms, grades, and buildings.

- **If a school is closed for any length of time, the district will determine which mode of instruction will be utilized.**

Tioga Public Schools will work with local health officials, UMHDU, and NDDoH to determine the criteria locally for closure. Phases and plans will be subject to rapid change.

Facility Accommodations & Protocols

Signs - Additional signage will be posted concerning hand washing, social distancing, and health protocols

Restrooms and school facilities - Frequent cleaning will occur. Additional supplies will be on hand. Additional personnel will be hired, if needed.

Common sense will prevail.

Transportation

Routes – Will run as normal. When evidence is available, changes may be made to include splitting routes, adjusting times, etc. as conditions warrant. A building-to-building transportation route will continue to be used. As phase levels change, transportation needs will be re-evaluated.

Safety & Health – Masks, seating charts, and sanitization will all be addressed, as needed.

Operational Guidance During an Emergency Pandemic

Traditional Learning	
Priorities:	Encourage students and staff who are symptomatic/sick to stay home. Implement reasonable accommodations to reduce school-wide and community spread. Parents are asked to follow guidelines on before school questionnaires before sending students if children exhibit new cold/flu symptoms. (See page 17).
Districtwide Practices:	Social distancing where possible and reasonable.
Disinfecting/Cleaning:	Buildings are routinely cleaned and disinfected according to CDC guidelines. Special focus on high touch/traffic areas. Handwashing integrated throughout the day. Hand sanitizer available throughout each building.
Schools:	Protective measures may be implemented in office spaces. If necessary, school event cancellations will be assessed on a case-by-case basis. Access to campus may be limited with new protocols.
Classrooms:	Students issued “technology” and trained on how to access online learning resources including the LMS system adopted by school. (Google Classroom) Desks arranged to allow for cohort groups and social distancing where possible and reasonable.
Common Areas:	Common area procedures may be altered, if needed, as determined by administrative decision to keep students well and safe. Some practices may include: Students, when moving around the building, will move in cohort groups and reasonably try to limit exposure to other groups. Central and THS lunch may be picked up in the serving line; all precautions will be made to prevent sneezing, coughing, etc. on food. Masks for cooks are optional when serving.
Extracurricular & Activities:	Guidance and directives from the NDHSAA and other governing boards will be used to guide these activities.
Communications:	Share information about how to stop the spread of COVID-19.

Hybrid Learning

Priorities:	<p>Require students and staff who are symptomatic or ill to stay at home. Maximize social distancing cohort where possible. Consider a hybrid learning model. Parents are asked to follow guidelines on before school questionnaires before sending students to school daily. (See page 17).</p>
Districtwide Practices:	<p>Based on identified COVID cases of students and staff, targeted closures may be implemented (class, grade, department, etc.). Other schools remain open and meet students in person. Social distancing where possible and reasonable. Distancing on a school bus will be encouraged. Parents may want to consider alternate transportation to and from school.</p>
Disinfecting/Cleaning:	<p>Buildings are routinely cleaned and disinfected according to CDC guidelines. Special focus on high touch/traffic areas. Handwashing integrated throughout the day. Hand sanitizer available throughout each building. Support and train parents on use of technology tools and online curricular resources. Implement a technology support line.</p>
Schools:	<p>Protective measures will be maintained in office spaces. Some school events, assemblies and gatherings may be changed or cancelled. Each event will be assessed on a case-by-case basis. Access to campus may be additionally limited, with new protocols.</p>
Classrooms:	<p>Students may be attending school on a hybrid schedule. Students will be expected to engage in learning opportunities online using the district LMS system (Google Classroom) on days they are not in school. Teachers are expected to make direct student/family contact at least daily. Limited use of shared materials and supplies when students are in school. Desks arranged to allow for cohort groups and social distancing where possible and reasonable. Staff and students working in close proximity are advised to wear a face covering.</p>
Common Areas:	<p>Central and THS lunches will be picked up in the serving line; all precautions will be made to prevent sneezing, coughing, etc. on food. Student masks may be required. Cooks will wear masks when serving. All persons will have the option of a Grab-Bag lunch; teachers/lunch personnel will be notified by student. THS-Lunch will be socially distanced in the lunchroom with overflow in the determined classroom. Central students will be in classrooms. Lunch times and location may be altered to reduce the number of students in the cafeteria at any one time. Breakfast-Grab-Bag picked up and eaten in class at Central and 1st hour class at THS.</p>
Extracurricular & Activities:	<p>Guidance and directives from the NDHSAA and other governing boards will be used to guide these activities.</p>
Communications:	<p>Share information about how to stop the spread of COVID-19. Share technology support resources for parents.</p>

Distance Learning

Priorities:	Reduce the risk of community spread by closing schools.
Districtwide Practices:	<p>Online instruction will be used districtwide in all courses at all grade levels.</p> <p>Instruction will focus on essential learning targets.</p> <p>Attendance and academic progress will be expected.</p> <p>Grading policies will remain as if students attended face-to-face.</p> <p>Implementing internet access to support distance learning for those that may not have it in their homes will be addressed.</p> <p>Local food distribution may be implemented by food service program.</p>
Schools:	Closed to the general public except by special arrangement with the district office.
Classrooms:	<p>Students will be expected to engage in learning opportunities online.</p> <p>Classrooms will be taught as in face-to-face instruction with live video teaching. Small group meetings or instruction may be allowed, particularly for special needs students or academic interventions, if possible.</p>
Extracurricular & Activities:	<p>Guidance and directives from the NDHSAA and other governing boards, to include the Tioga School Board, will be used to guide these activities.</p> <p>Athletic and other extra/co-curricular activities likely suspended.</p>
Communications:	<p>Clear communication about academic expectations and grading shared with students and families.</p> <p>Share academic support with parents.</p> <p>Share technology support resources for parents.</p> <p>Student/family support assistance will be provided by counseling staff.</p>



BEFORE SCHOOL!

Parents are asked to review this daily health checklist by answering these questions before sending their child to school.

(Parents do not need to send the questionnaire to school)

Has your child had close contact with a confirmed case of COVID-19 in the past 14 days?

Yes____No____

Does your child have a new or worsening shortness of breath?

Yes____No____

Does your child have a new or worsening cough? Yes____No__

Does your child have a fever of 100.4 or greater?

Yes____No____

Does your child have chills?

Yes____No____

Does your child have a sore throat?

Yes____No____

Does your child have a new loss of taste or smell?

Yes____No____

