



TONAWANDA CITY SCHOOL DISTRICT

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TIMOTHY A. OLDENBURG, Ed.D.
SUPERINTENDENT OF SCHOOLS

January 10, 2022

Dear Warrior Families,

Recently the Erie County Department of Health (ECDOH) has authorized schools in Erie County to begin utilizing a commonly used Test to Stay (TTS) strategy that limits student quarantines that is already in place in many areas of NYS. This has been implemented to help decrease the number of students placed in a mandatory quarantine when determined to be a close contact, within the school environment, to a person that has tested positive for COVID.

Our district has been planning for this opportunity. We expect to be communicating with families of students who may begin participating in this program immediately.

According to the ECDOH, TTS is defined as follows:

- P-12 students who are not fully vaccinated against COVID-19 and **who are identified as close contacts due to COVID-19 exposure while in a school setting** may attend in-person classes (instruction/academic periods), even while under mandatory quarantine orders, if:
 - the student is symptom free, AND
 - (the school has received consent for the student to undergo testing using a regimen recommended by NYSDOH, AND
 - the student is tested a minimum of two times during the five-day period following exposure, unless recognition of the exposure is delayed or weekends or school breaks intervene. One of the tests must occur on day five.

Essentially, the TTS strategy will allow parents of students determined to be exposed to a positive case, within the school environment, and identified to serve a mandatory quarantine to INSTEAD test at least two times over a five day period, as determined by the District as per the ECDOH guidelines. The appropriate free COVID-19 test would be provided and administered at school.

Please note, that the ECDOH requires that a student participating in the TTS strategy would be allowed to attend school for the academic day provided they remain asymptomatic and the test result is negative. The same student would still be considered in quarantine outside of the school day per ECDOH and would not be allowed to participate in interscholastic athletics, fine arts, or other extracurricular events.

Additional details of the TTS strategy, as required by the ECDOH, include:

- Parental consent is required.
- The exposure must have occurred in the school setting and while both the person with COVID-19 (index patient) and exposed person were consistently and properly masked.
- The exposed person remains asymptomatic.
- The exposed person is tested a minimum of two times during the five-day period following exposure, unless recognition of the exposure is delayed or weekends or school breaks intervene.
- The five-day period is measured in calendar days where the last date of exposure is considered day 0. The first test should be done as soon as possible after exposure is identified (i.e., the first day the student is in school after identified exposure).
- All will take place by the school nurse or designated personnel in the nurse's office or other designated school location. Home testing is NOT permitted for TTS.
- Please note that people participating in TTS are allowed to continue to ride the school bus following all existing guidance, including required masking. However, ECDOH strongly recommends that parents/guardians provide personal transportation for students in TTS.
- If a student tests positive for COVID during this process, the student will be excluded/isolated per existing procedures and contact tracing will commence by the district's COVID Coordinator.
- Test to Stay is available only to Erie County P-12 students, not school staff, at this time.
- **Students that are eligible for the TTS program will be contacted by the District.**
- All TTS information can be found on our website: <https://www.tonawandacsd.org/page/covid-test-to-stay-program>

Please see the following links regarding updates to isolation and quarantine requirements from the NYSDOH and ECDOH. Parents/Guardians that have questions regarding COVID quarantines for positive cases or designated close contacts can contact Mary Beth Scullion, District COVID Coordinator at 716-694-7688 or mscullion@tonacsd.org.

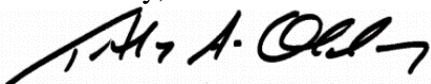
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- ✓ <https://www2.erie.gov/health/sites/www2.erie.gov.health/files/uploads/pdfs/QuarantineOrders.pdf>

Our schools continue to be a safe place for students and staff during the pandemic period. Although the reported cases of COVID in our community have risen, we have not experienced any significant evidence that COVID transmission occurs in our schools. This is in large part to the numerous and layered mitigation strategies that are employed all day, every day.

The use of face masks, social distancing, and other hygienic practices continue to make schools one of the safest venues in our community. We know that our students and families depend on our school system to provide transportation, instructional, mental health, food service, counseling, therapeutic, and social-emotional supports every day.

Thank you for your continued trust and support as we continue to safely support the needs of every student.

Sincerely,



Timothy A. Oldenburg, Ed.D.
Superintendent of Schools