

**Tyrone Area School District**  
**Frequently Asked Questions**  
**Students and Parents/Guardians**  
**2021-22**  
8-12-2021

*Updated 8-18-2021; Updated 9-2-2021; Updated 9-4-2021; Updated 9-27-2021*

**Q: Does my child have to wear a mask?**

**A:** Yes, according to the PA Department of Health Order issued on 8-31-2021, “each teacher, child/student, staff, or visitor working, attending, or visiting a school entity *shall wear a face covering indoors, regardless of vaccination status,*” as of Tuesday, September 7, 2021. Additional information can be found in the [PA DOH Mask Order](#) and the [FAQ page on the PDE website](#). Face coverings are also still required on buses.

The District will require compliance with any state or federal orders which require masks/face coverings on public transportation. **Currently, masks/face coverings are required on public transportation, including school buses and vans.**

Students and staff who travel to other locations for services/events must adhere to the Health and Safety Plan of the location of service or of the event venue.

**Q: Are schools *required* to follow an Order from the Department of Health?**

**A:** Yes, our school district solicitor and insurance carrier have advised that we must follow and enforce the Order from the PA Dept. of Health at this time. Choosing to defy the order places increased liability risk on the district and individuals and jeopardizes the district’s insurance coverage. Per the PA Dept. of Education, the Order applies to the following school entities: public PreK-12 schools, brick and mortar and cyber charter schools, private and parochial schools, career and technical centers (CTCs), intermediate units (IUs), PA PreK Counts programs, Head Start programs, Family Centers, Preschool Early Intervention Programs, Private Academic Nursery Schools and locally funded prekindergarten activities, and all child care providers licensed by the Department of Human Services of the Commonwealth.

**Q: Can TASD enforce the PA DoH Mask Order?**

**A:** Yes, under the Order, school districts are required to enforce this Order. As stated in the PDE FAQ, “...school entities are expected to enforce the Order as they do other state laws and school rules and polices...reasonable steps may include...enforcing already existing policies...taking corrective actions in instances of noncompliance among staff, students, customers, or visitors. School entities should follow their local policies and procedures on managing student and staff misconduct.”

*As always, we respectfully request that staff, parents, and students remain cooperative with school staff in following the Code of Conduct in order to maintain a safe and orderly environment.*

**Q: Is there a parent opt-out process that we can use?**

**A: No**, unfortunately at this time, there is no approved parent opt-out form/process. There is currently legislation proposed to make this an option. Should such an option be approved, parents will be notified.

**Q: May I use a religious exemption to keep my child from wearing a face covering.**

**A: No**, currently, there is no provision for a religious exemption provided in the Order. Should such an option be approved, parents will be notified.

**Q: My child has a medical condition making wearing a mask difficult. What should I do?**

**A:** Section 3 of the DoH Order addresses exceptions and we recognize that there may be circumstances where students have special needs or medical conditions that make wearing face coverings difficult or impossible. Similar to the 2020-21 school year, before granting an exception, we will first require parents/guardians to share medical documentation of this condition and its limitations in accordance with Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act and/or IDEA. In the case of an exception, we will collaborate to develop a plan that includes alternative safety measures. Parents will need to contact their school office and these instances will be handled on a case-by-case basis.

**Q: Will TASD return to optional masking once the Order is lifted?**

**A: Yes**, our Health and Safety Plan allows for masking to be optional as long as there is not a federal or state mandate ordering us to do so. The current mask Order supersedes our Health and Safety Plan.

**Q: Will there be field trips, assemblies, and extracurricular activities this year?**

**A:** We anticipate that many activities which were not possible last school year will resume in 2021-22. Decisions will be made by the district on a case-by-case basis based upon variables such as location, availability, level of community spread at the time of the event/activity, etc.

**Q: Why is some physical distancing still being implemented in classrooms and other educational spaces whenever appropriate?**

**A:** The PA Department of Education has directed school districts to utilize the CDC's Guidance for Schools in developing their Health and Safety Plans. The CDC is advising that schools continue to implement physical distancing in these settings whenever feasible and appropriate. Physical distancing is one of the most effective methods of reducing quarantines and is a recommended layered prevention strategy. When using contact tracing to determine who has to be quarantined/excluded from school, the distance measurement used may be reduced from 6 feet to 3 feet if all students are wearing masks.

**Q: Will spectators be permitted at events?**

**A: Yes.** If gathering limits are not in effect, the district has no plans to limit attendance at events. All spectators are encouraged to physically distance as feasible and appropriate and to wear a mask/face covering if not vaccinated. Many events will be livestreamed on the [Tyrone Eagle Eye YouTube channel](#).

Individuals who are uncomfortable with large gatherings are encouraged to view the events through the livestream option.

**Q: Should parents still screen their children for symptoms before sending them to school?**

**A: Yes,** parents should screen their children each day before coming to school. If your child or a family member is not feeling well, exhibiting COVID-19 symptoms (one or more symptoms from Group A or two or more from Group B below), or taking fever reducing medication, your child should STAY AT HOME and parents should notify the school office or school nurse. If anyone in your family tests positive for COVID-19, follow the guidance provided by your health care provider, DOH, or the school nurse related to isolation/quarantine, contact tracing, and returning to school.

Group A (one or more symptoms)	Group B (two or more symptoms)
Cough	Fever
Shortness of Breath	Chills
Difficulty Breathing	Rigor
New Olfactory Disorder	Myalgia
New Taste Disorder	Headache
	Sore Throat
	Nausea or Vomiting
	Diarrhea
	Fatigue
	Congestion or Runny Nose

**Q: What if my child gets sick or must quarantine?**

**A:** If your child displays symptoms of COVID-19 or has a temperature of 100 degrees or higher, please contact your health care provider for further guidance. Do not send your child to school until you receive this guidance. If the physician is recommending quarantine, contact your child’s school nurse for further information. If your child is healthy but in quarantine, he/she will be able to continue his/her education during the quarantine period by acquiring assignments from his/her teacher(s).

**Q: Does my child have to quarantine after an exposure to someone with COVID-19 if my child is vaccinated or has already had COVID?**

**A:** The District will comply with the direction of the CDC and PA Department of Health.

At this time, those directions include:

- **Fully Vaccinated Individuals:**  
If determined to be a close contact (within 6 feet of someone for a cumulative total of 15 minutes or more over a 24-hour period) with someone who has COVID-19, vaccinated individuals **do not have to quarantine unless they are experiencing symptoms.**

However, they should:

- ✓ get tested 3-5 days after the exposure, even without symptoms;
  - ✓ wear a mask indoors in public for 14 days following exposure or until receiving a negative test result;
  - ✓ isolate for 10 days if the test result is positive.
- **COVID-19 Positive within 3 Months:**  
If determined to be a close contact (within 6 feet of someone for a cumulative total of 15 minutes or more over a 24-hour period) with someone who has COVID-19, individuals who have tested positive for COVID-19 within the past 3 months:
    - ✓ the positive result must have come from a PCR or Antigen Test. Antibody tests will not be accepted;
    - ✓ do not have to quarantine or get tested as long as they do not develop symptoms.
  - **Individuals who are NOT Fully Vaccinated:**  
If determined to be a close contact (within 6 feet of someone for a cumulative total of 15 minutes or more over a 24-hour period) with someone who has COVID-19, individuals who are not fully vaccinated:
    - ✓ must quarantine for 14 days;
    - ✓ quarantine can end after Day 10, without testing, if no symptoms develop.

The CDC guidance adds the following exception to the definition of close contact:

- In the K–12 indoor classroom setting, the close contact definition excludes students who were within 3 to 6 feet of an infected student (laboratory-confirmed or a clinically compatible illness) where:
  - ✓ both students were engaged in consistent and correct use of well-fitting face masks; and
  - ✓ other K–12 school prevention strategies (such as universal and correct mask use, physical distancing, increased ventilation) were in place in the K–12 school setting.
- This exception does not apply to teachers, staff, or other adults in the indoor classroom setting.

***We respectfully request that parents remain cooperative with school staff when quarantine and other instructions are communicated.***

**Q: How will I know if my child has been exposed to anyone with COVID-19?**

**A:** When a student or staff member tests positive for COVID-19 or has been exposed, the District will consult with the Department of Health (DOH), as necessary, to assist the District with risk assessment, isolation and quarantine recommendations, and other infection control recommendations. As required by the DOH, close contacts will be informed of their possible exposure and receive instructions regarding quarantine and exclusions. The District will follow the direction of the DOH regarding any necessary communications and other actions. Schools are required to take every measure to maintain the confidentiality of the affected individual.

***We respectfully request that parents remain cooperative with school staff when quarantine and other instructions are communicated.***

**Q: At what point would a school building have to close due to positive cases of COVID-19?**

**A:** To preserve safe in-person instruction to the greatest extent possible, T ASD will continue to work with DoH staff to determine if a closure is necessary and if so, the appropriate closure length.

At this time, the PA DoH states that a maximum 14-day suspension of in-person learning may be *recommended* if students/staff confirmed cases in a 14-day window reaches a **5% threshold**. Each school building in T ASD is considered by the DoH to be a medium sized school (500-900 staff & students). Therefore, 25-45 positive cases in one building during a 14-day window would warrant discussions with the DoH on closure recommendations.

While there are other factors to consider that may necessitate a smaller scale action (short closure of a single classroom or group activity due to several positive cases), the district will continue to track cases in a way that provides information on a rolling 14-day basis.

**Q: Will the district require proof of vaccination from staff or students?**

**A:** At this time, the district does not intend to require staff or students to provide proof of vaccination for general purposes. HOWEVER, if a vaccinated student or staff member is identified as a close contact to a positive case of COVID-19, the vaccinated student or staff member will be asked to provide verification of vaccination status to avoid quarantines, as described above.

If identified to quarantine and proof of vaccination has not previously been provided to the School Nurse, the student or staff member must quarantine (leave school/work) until proof can be presented.

***Any parents wishing to preemptively provide proof of vaccination for their child(ren) to avoid quarantines may do so by providing a copy of your vaccination card (scan/email or hard copy) to your building's school nurse.***

**Q: Will classrooms and other high traffic areas continue to be cleaned thoroughly?**

**A:** Yes. Classrooms, offices, and other high traffic areas will continue to be cleaned daily, with high touch points (desks, tables, counters, handrails, etc.) cleaned frequently throughout the day.

**Q: It seems like information regarding COVID-19 and schools is constantly changing. How can I remain updated with the latest information?**

**A:** The virus has made decision-making very difficult and has created many unknown situations. To receive the most current information, it is important that you provide your child's school with up-to-date parent/guardian contact information, including email address and phone number. Information will also be shared on our website [www.tyrone.k12.pa.us](http://www.tyrone.k12.pa.us) and via our phone messaging system as updates are available.

**Q: Is the Tyrone Cyber Academy still available to my child(ren) this year should parents/students choose not to comply with the mask Order and district's rules regarding the Order?**

**A:** Yes. Families wishing to participate in virtual learning this school year may enroll in the **Tyrone Cyber Academy**. Students later wishing to transition back to in person classes at T ASD may do so at the end of the marking period.

Coursework is mostly **asynchronous** (teachers and students *are not* online at the same time) with some synchronous (teachers and students are online at the same time) opportunities. Students are still considered enrolled in their respective buildings, can participate in activities, and receive a Tyrone Area High School diploma upon graduation.

Consultation meetings with families interested in the Tyrone Cyber Academy are currently taking place and will continue as needed. To inquire about the Tyrone Cyber Academy or to schedule a consultation meeting, please contact: [cyber@tyrone.k12.pa.us](mailto:cyber@tyrone.k12.pa.us).

[Approved Home Education Programs](#), also known as "Home Schooling" is also an option. More information about approved home education programs can be found on the PA Department of Education website.

**Q: Is there still a possibility that some remote learning could occur this year?**

**A:** Yes. Although we are planning an entire year of full-time, in-person learning for all students and staff, we cannot ignore the possibility of having to participate in at least some remote learning this year. As the first few weeks of the year unfold, the building principals and teachers will provide additional information for families regarding remote learning expectations.

**Q: My child is age 12 or older and I am interested in having him/her vaccinated. What are my options?**

**A:** Throughout the pandemic, we have been working closely with the Blair County Emergency Management Agency's COVID Task Force and Penn Highlands Healthcare. Through those connections, T ASD has been informed that the **Pfizer/BioNTech** vaccine, which is now approved for students age 12 and above, is widely available in our area.

Parents may schedule a pediatric vaccination appointment, free of charge, at a variety of sites. Links to some of these sites are noted below. Adults may also register for the vaccine at these sites. Parents should consult their primary care physicians with questions.

*Individuals who are fully vaccinated and are later deemed to be close contacts of a COVID positive or probable individual do not need to quarantine unless they develop symptoms.*

#### **Area Vaccination Sites**

Penn Highlands Healthcare (Pfizer clinics in Huntingdon)  
<https://www.phhealthcare.org/about/covid-19-vaccines-at-penn-highlands>

Rite Aid Pharmacy (Tyrone; Bellwood; Altoona)  
<https://www.riteaid.com/covid-19>

CVS Pharmacy (Altoona; State College; Philipsburg)  
<https://www.cvs.com/immunizations/covid-19-vaccine>

UPMC Station Medical Center (Altoona)

<https://www.upmc.com/coronavirus/covid-vaccine>

Centre Volunteers in Medicine

<https://cvim.net/>

Giant Eagle Grocery Stores (Altoona; Roaring Spring)

<https://www.gianteagle.com/covidvaccine>

PA Department of Health COVID Vaccination Site Clearinghouse:

<https://www.health.pa.gov/topics/disease/coronavirus/Vaccine/Pages/Vaccine.aspx>