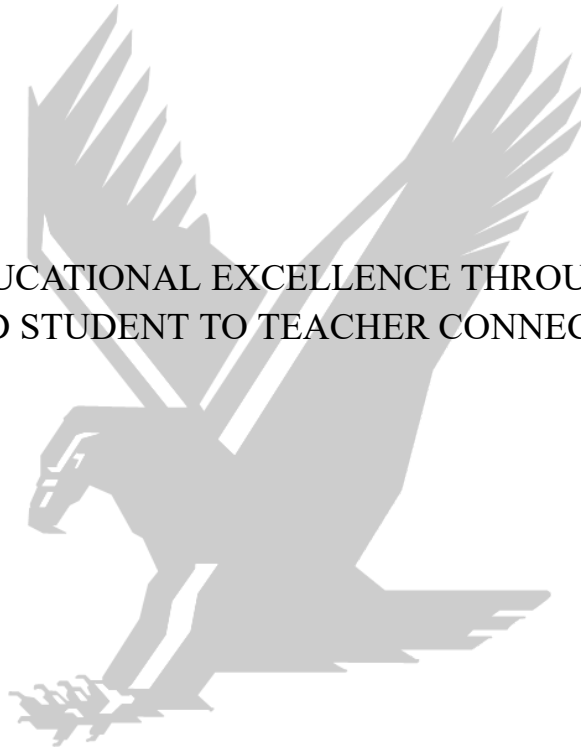


TYRONE AREA CYBER ACADEMY

~TACA~

HANDBOOK

PROVIDING EDUCATIONAL EXCELLENCE THROUGH TECHNOLOGY
AND STUDENT TO TEACHER CONNECTIONS



It is the policy of the Tyrone Area School District not to discriminate on the basis of sex, handicap, race and national origin in its educational and vocational programs, activities, or employment as required by Title IX, Section 504, and Title VI. Please direct questions about this policy to the Superintendent of Schools at 814.684.0710 ext. 4123.

Soaring Forward to Explore, Challenge, and Succeed

TASD MISSION

We establish high standards of learning and expect all students to achieve. Our goal is to facilitate collaboration among staff, parents, and community to create an environment that supports, engages, and challenges students to achieve high levels of success.

TASD VISION

LEADERSHIP

- District leaders promote a culture of learning, support and monitor use of best practices, and provide opportunities for professional growth.
- District leaders facilitate collaboration among all members of the school and community.

CLIMATE

- Students are engaged. Teachers are motivating. Administrators are supportive. Parents and community members are involved.
- All members of the learning community feel safe, both physically and emotionally.
- Efforts and success of students and staff are recognized and celebrated.

CURRICULUM AND INSTRUCTION

- High expectations are met by providing research-based, data-driven instruction that is aligned to the state standards.
- Curriculum and instruction integrates technology to enhance teaching and learning.
- Curriculum and instruction prepares and inspires students for future endeavors.

STUDENTS

- Students take ownership of their learning through active participation.
- Students believe in themselves, put forth their best effort, and take pride in their abilities and achievements.

COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIPS

- Parents, as the first and most influential teachers, are committed to their children's education.
- The district collaborates with local businesses and outside agencies to provide support and opportunities for students.
- All members of the school and community share the responsibility for student success through continued involvement and commitment to the educational process.

PERSONNEL

- Staff recognizes a shared responsibility for enforcing and modeling school rules and increasing student achievement.
- Professional Learning Communities collaborate to make data-based decisions and implement best practices to enhance student success.
- Staff effectively communicates with parents and community to support student success.
- Staff takes ownership for their professional growth.

Tyrone Area Cyber Academy Contact Information

District Administration

Mrs. Leslie A. Estep, Superintendent of Schools
Mrs. Kristen N. Pinter, Director of Curriculum and Instruction

TASD Cyber Academy

Mrs. Lindsay Miksich	Cyber Academy Coordinator	814-684-4240 ext 3106 lnmiksich@tyrone.k12.pa.us
Mrs. Lynda Hoover	Cyber Academy Secretary	814-684-4240 ext 3704 lahoover@tyrone.k12.pa.us
Mrs. Nikki Goodwin	MS Attendance Office	814-684-4240 ext 3712 nkgoodwin@tyrone.k12.pa.us
Mrs. Amanda Raup	HS Attendance Office	814-684-4240 ext 3703 alraup@tyrone.k12.pa.us
Technology Help Desk (send screenshot of issue if possible)		814-684-4240 ext 3330 helpdesk@tyrone.k12.pa.us

Other Important Phone Numbers

Middle and High School Main Offices		814-684-4240
Mr. Chad Packer	High School Principal	Ext 3701
Mr. Shane Cowher	Middle School Principal	Ext 3712
Ms. Kristin Musselman	Elementary Principal	Ext 2701
Mr. Lucas Rhoades	HS Dean of Students	Ext 3708
Mrs. Amy Fleck	MS Dean of Students	Ext 3714
Mrs. Lynda Hoover	HS Counseling Office	Ext 3704
Ms. Becky Schreckengost	MS Counseling Office	Ext 5226
Office Robert "Bub" Dick	School Police	Ext 3724

TYRONE AREA CYBER ACADEMY

This handbook has been written for a typical school year and is the Board-approved handbook for specific information regarding students enrolled in the Tyrone Area Cyber Academy (TACA).

While this handbook contains procedures that are specific only to students enrolled in the Tyrone Area Cyber Academy (TACA), students are also subject to applicable rules and regulations contained in the student handbook for their grade level and of that respective building. A copy of the appropriate handbook can be found on the district website. Failure to adhere to the policies and procedures within the TACA Handbook and Parent/Student School Handbook may result in a student's removal from the TASA Cyber Academy and/or discipline in accordance with either manual and the TASA School Board Policies

PROGRAM OVERVIEW

While the Tyrone Area School District continues to carry the belief that the interaction with professional educators truly extends learning to a higher level, we also recognize that there is value in offering different educational options, like distance learning. The Tyrone Area Cyber Academy (TACA) is an educational learning environment designed to meet the needs of students who desire to pursue their education in a non-traditional format and with the flexibility of when during a 24 hour period a student works and in what order of subject material. This educational program offers a distance learning option that includes a variety of interactions with professional educators, school counselors, and opportunities to interact with peers of the students' own ages.

Like the educational program of the Tyrone Area School District's traditional "brick and mortar" system, the learning environment of TACA is based on the Pennsylvania Academic and Pennsylvania Core Standards. This standards-aligned curriculum emphasizes the students' demonstration of mastering specific skills by engaging in an academic program that emphasizes proficiency in all curricular activities, whether the academics are acquired through distance or local learning.

Students participating in the Tyrone Area Cyber Academy (TACA) demonstrate their proficiency in a variety of ways and range academically from those who have a sound skill base in all areas to those who have been identified as having learning deficiencies. Like all students in the Tyrone Area School District, students enrolled in TACA have access to Tyrone teachers, counselors, and other support services and also receive a Tyrone Area High School diploma upon graduation.

The Tyrone Area Cyber Academy (TACA) strives to engage students in a highly motivational, student-centered educational program that relies on basic educational principles while utilizing the latest information and communications technology to promote student achievement and foster higher-order thinking and problem-solving skills. Students have a chance to master essential content skills and a chance to build a strong foundation to compete in the workforce of today and tomorrow.

GOALS

The goals of the Tyrone Area Cyber Academy (TACA) are to:

- Offer a non-traditional learning environment to the students of the Tyrone Area School District that is aligned with the district's mission and vision statements.
- Provide students who desire a non-traditional learning environment with opportunities to acquire the education necessary to earn a diploma from the Tyrone Area School District.
- Provide students who select TACA with balanced educational experiences that include synchronous and asynchronous academic programs, personal interactions with professional educators, and opportunities to interact with peers.
- Establish individualized learning plans for participating students that are consistent with the Pennsylvania Academic and Pennsylvania Core Standards and graduation requirements of the Tyrone Area School District.
- Provide students with a sense of ownership and responsibility for their academics.
- Utilize web-based learning and existing courses in addition to assignments, tests, products, and portfolios as means of assessing students' mastery of competencies to advance to higher learning.

APPLICATION, REGISTRATION and ORIENTATION

All students interested in the cyber program must complete the TACA Application, available on the district website, to begin the acceptance process. Building principals and/or counselors will approve or deny cyber applications and determine appropriate courses for students to be enrolled. After a student's application is approved, the Cyber Academy Coordinator will contact the family to schedule an orientation meeting. **In order to begin coursework, each student, accompanied by a parent/guardian, MUST meet with the TACA Coordinator to register.** At this time, the courses will be explained, the student will receive passwords, and the Coordinator will give instruction about how to best use and navigate the program. **Every student must have an orientation, even if they have previously been a student of the TASA Cyber Academy (TACA).**

Students may only enroll in TACA within the first 5 days of each **semester** (two marking periods) and must remain in the program through the end of the **semester**. (See district calendar for specific dates on semester breaks).

STUDENT EXPECTATIONS

Participation in the TACA requires organization, motivation, and the willingness to assume responsibility for one's education. Failure to adhere to any of the following requirements may affect the student's success in the program and/or may result in the removal from the Cyber Academy.

Full-time TACA students will:

- Complete **specified number of hours of online work, every day school is in session** to count for attendance. This time **does not include** research and/or work done outside of the program OR note-taking activities. Only actions done in the Edmentum program count toward the 5 hour attendance time. Any time and/or action done outside of the Edmentum program (for ex. on a different tab) is equivalent to studying and work that students in the brick and mortar setting do outside of school hours. TACA students may also be required to complete coursework on other virtual platforms, including but not limited to Canvas or World of Learning.
 - Part-time students should work one hour per day per course, each day school is in session.
- Respond to **all** communications with TACA Coordinator and teacher(s) in a timely manner
- Access their electronic communication account daily. This includes Edmentum and Canvas email accounts as well as TASD student email.
- Make contact with the appropriate TACA staff if support is needed
- Complete offline activities (guided notes, essays, midterms/finals, etc) by established deadlines. These deadlines are noted in each teacher's syllabus.
- Read and sign all course syllabi.
- Complete and submit one's own work
- Work in the order in which assignments are posted; no skipping around
- Participate in phone conferences, virtual check-ins, and/or in-person meetings as scheduled
- Attend mandatory testing dates in building as scheduled (Keystone exams, PSAT, NOCTI, ASVAB, etc).
- Check grades posted in Sapphire weekly.
- Report problems with Chromebooks or other district issued devices in a timely manner, so as not to disrupt attendance or completion of assignments.

The device issued by the Cyber Academy should NOT be used to access sites other than those used for curricular purposes.

COMMUNICATION

Communication between TACA students and the TACA staff is crucial for success. Students may contact Cyber Academy staff by email, in-person, or on the phone. Failure to communicate on a regular basis will affect the student's success in the program and can result in poor performance.

All TACA students will have access to the TACA Coordinator and teachers via electronic communication (student T ASD email account). Students are required to check their accounts each time they log in and out of their cyber courses.

In the event a student needs academic help, he/she should contact the teacher first. If the issue cannot be resolved by talking to the teacher, the student should contact the **building principal**, not the TACA Coordinator. If the student has a problem with the Edmentum program, has a schedule concern, or a general question about the TACA, he/she should contact the TACA Coordinator.

FOLLOW COURSE SCHEDULE

Students are required to follow the order in which assignments are listed. Students are not permitted to work out of order, unless instructed by a TACA staff member. A zero or a "missing" will be entered as the grade for all skipped assignments until the assignment is submitted and graded.

GRADES

In the Edmentum program, students are shown two different progress measures at any given time. One is the grade for the work that has been completed and turned in, regardless of how much of a course the student has completed. A student could only be finished with 10% of a course at the mid-term point and have achieved "A" grades on that 10%, so it looks like the student is doing well. However, the student is actually failing the course at that time because he/she is behind in pacing. If the quarter were to end the next day, the student would earn zeroes for the other 90% of the course work that hasn't been completed yet. **Accurate, up-to-date grades are posted in Sapphire.** Because of the different progress measures within Edmentum and teachers including additional assignments outside of the Edmentum program (essays, participation grades, grades on guided notes, etc), the only place that reflects accurate grades is Sapphire.

Teachers will update grades at least once per week. Work that has been turned in late, as defined by the course syllabus, will be graded at the discretion of the teacher. Students should not expect teachers to immediately grade an assignment submitted after the due date to allow the student to participate in a privilege or extracurricular activity.

COURSE PROGRESS & PROGRESS MONITORING

If a student has worked ahead and completed a marking period early, with passing grades, the student should notify the TACA Coordinator to open the next marking period early. If the student does not contact the TACA Coordinator, the student may be marked absent if they do not complete the specified amount of time required. The next marking period not being available will not be an excuse for not working.

If a student is consistently ahead of pace, the TACA Coordinator may move the student to *progress monitoring* status. A student on progress monitoring will not have daily time requirements for attendance as long as they are hitting the required benchmarks/deadlines. In this case, the student will continue to be marked *present* for attendance each day while they are in progress monitoring status, regardless of their time that day. If a student fails to hit the progress monitoring benchmarks set by the TACA Coordinator and/or cyber teachers, he/she will be taken off progress monitoring and will again have daily time requirements.

CHEATING/PLAGIARISM

It is unacceptable for students to receive credit for work that is not their own. Plagiarism occurs in a variety of ways. Consequences will be assigned to any student or students who deliberately cheat or cause others to cheat. The consequences will include, but are not limited to, a zero being given for the assignment (test, quiz, project, midterm, final, homework, etc.) where the cheating occurred as well as a possible disciplinary consequence. Depending on the weight of the assignment where the cheating occurred, the student may fail the marking period or even the entire course. The teacher and/or an administrator will notify parents and the appropriate school counselor as to what occurred. A student will be expected to redo the assignment (for NO credit) or take an alternate examination and turn it in to the teacher for evaluation.

Students having questions about the use of appropriate documentation for their work should speak with their teacher or the librarian. A research guide with MLA style is available for checkout from the library or accessed online.

PARENTAL RESPONSIBILITIES and EXPECTATIONS

Student success is greatly impacted by parent/guardian involvement. During orientation, parents/guardians will be shown how to monitor their student's progress. The TACA Coordinator can be contacted via-email, telephone, or in person. Progress can be assessed by the students and parents/guardians in both the Edmentum program and the Sapphire Community Portal and will be provided to students and parents/guardians by the teachers of the courses. Remember to use Sapphire as the primary source for accurate grades.

Parents/guardians will:

- Provide a safe and secure learning environment. This requires that the student has adequate adult supervision during the entire school day in order for the student to complete his or her work and meet attendance requirements.
- Ensure that the student is an active participant in school and is completing work in all courses, as assigned.
- Ensure that the student is attending school in accordance with the district and state attendance policies.
- Monitor student progress, assignment completion, and grades via the Sapphire Community Portal.
- Maintain an active, consistent Internet account or be willing to transport a student to a location with active, consistent Internet service so that the student can complete online assignments and meet attendance requirements.
- Check email regularly. The TACA Coordinator and teachers often email with important dates, updated assignment information, etc.
- Respond promptly (within 48 hours) to all school communication.
- Expect students to spend at least 5 hours per day engaged in online coursework and virtual lessons.
- Comply with state and local testing requirements.
- Ensure student participation in all online proctored local assessments.
- Ensure student participation in all required in-person state assessments.
- Provide transportation for students to state-mandated testing locations, allotting time for test completion.

CONTINUATION IN THE CYBER PROGRAM

Cyber students and their parent(s)/guardian(s) may be required to meet with the TACA Coordinator, principal, counselor or other school staff when success is not being reached. A review of the student's performance will be assessed, and a new plan will be implemented to increase student achievement. All policies and procedures contained in this document will be reviewed. If a student is still not meeting expectations or following through with the new plan, he/she may be removed from the cyber program prior to the end of the semester.

CYBER ATTENDANCE

Students enrolled in the Tyrone Area Cyber Academy are subject to the same attendance policies, requirements, and consequences as any other TASD student, with the exceptions explained below and in this handbook. **It is very important to read and understand the Attendance Section in the Parent/Student Handbook of your child's grade level.**

Attendance is taken daily to ensure that students are working online. A **MINIMUM** number of hours, established during the orientation meeting, must be recorded to be considered present for the day for full-time students. Students must attend school every day on the school calendar (*found on the district website*). Due to the nature of the cyber school model, instructional time and progress can be completed on any day (eg. weekends, holidays, etc.) and at any time, 24 hours a day, seven days a week. **However, time logged on a non-school day will count toward progress, but NOT toward the 180-days.** Students are expected to log into the online system each **scheduled school calendar day**. If attendance is not recorded on a school day as listed on the school calendar, the student is marked as absent.

Students should use the guide set forth by the Pennsylvania Department of Education of 180 days of instruction with 900 (elementary) 990 (secondary) instructional hours per year. Daily progress reports are generated using the instructional software and district monitoring tools to ensure that the student is “present” and working for the minimum amount of time.

As with all T ASD students who are absent, if a T ASD Cyber Academy student does not complete their specified hours of online work and is counted as absent, parents/guardians must submit a written excuse (can be emailed or delivered to the Attendance Office secretary) **within three (3) days** of the absence. In the case of extended illness, the student should make arrangements with the TACA Coordinator to complete all work missed in a reasonable length of time. Failure to follow this policy may result in dismissal from the Cyber Program.

DISTRICT ATTENDANCE POLICY

Experience and research provide evidence that regular school attendance and sound academic achievement are related. The importance of time on task in reaching the district’s educational goals can hardly be overestimated. Student attendance and tardy patterns are very important indicators of potential student success. Students who fail to attend class usually are unable to perform satisfactorily in their classes and are unable to benefit from class interactions and activities.

The Tyrone Area School District requires that all students enrolled in the district attend school regularly in accordance with laws of the state. The educational program offered by this district is predicated upon the presence of the student and requires continuity of instruction and classroom participation. The regular contact of students with one another in the classroom and participation in a well-planned instructional activity under the tutelage of a competent teacher are vital to this purpose.

A student can miss a maximum of twelve (12) days of school, whether the absences are excused by a parental note, medical with a doctor’s excuse, or an illegal absence. All excuses must be turned in within three (3) days upon return to school. The doctor’s excuse is to indicate that the student had a medical condition that interfered with the student’s ability to attend school on the date of the absence(s) in question. **At three (3) consecutive days and all absences beyond twelve (12) cumulative days shall require an excuse from a licensed physician or the absence will be considered unlawful or**

unexcused. NOTE: For a medical excuse to be valid, a student must obtain and turn in a signed physician's note. Handwritten changes to the physician's note will not be accepted.

A warning letter will be sent home to the parent/guardians of all students who have accumulated three (3) days of unlawful absences, and a Truancy Conference will be scheduled with the School Social Worker. The Truancy Conference will address the student's violation of the Compulsory School Attendance Law.

The student will be asked to sign a Truancy Acknowledgment Form. As soon as the school issues a referral to the District Magistrate, a referral may be made to CYS (Children & Youth Services). A doctor's excuse will be required to be presented to the school after the referral is sent to the District Magistrate, in order for subsequent absences to be considered excused absences.

The student and family will be given a list of community service providers and their telephone numbers in the event they choose to seek assistance to resolve the problem.

More information about absences, chronic absenteeism, consequences and citations for violating the PA Compulsory School Attendance laws can be found in the Student/Parent Handbook for your child's grade (on the district website).

HIGH SCHOOL ATTENDANCE POLICY

Supporting the effort to improve student performance, a minimum number of days of attendance will be required to obtain credit for courses. Half-day absences will be included in the total, as well as tardies and early dismissals.

The list below indicates when privileges and or course credit will be denied:

- 5 unlawful absences - loss of parking privileges for two (2) weeks and file truancy for any student under age 18
- 10 or more unlawful absence - loss of parking privileges for remainder of marking period, NO prom or snowball
- 15 unlawful absences - loss of parking privileges for remainder of school year

These totals exclude suspensions, physicians' excuses, or other school approved absences. An appeal procedure exists for students with special circumstances. Additional information on the appeal process is available in the High School Attendance Office.

DISRUPTION OF INTERNET SERVICE

In the event that internet service is non-operational due to natural consequences (weather-related issues), it is the student/family's responsibility to notify the TACA Coordinator immediately so a record of your absence can be logged and an alternative course of action can be developed.

In the event internet service becomes non-operational due to financial hardships (inability to pay monthly bill), absences will still accumulate and all policies will be enforced. Students/families in this situation should contact the TACA Coordinator immediately to discuss solutions.

In the event that the student/family experiences hardware issues with the device supplied by the Cyber Academy, contact the **Technology Help Desk**.

BORROWING/USE OF DISTRICT PROPERTY

The instructional materials, textbooks, equipment and/or technology (i.e. computers, etc.) are, at all times, the property of the Tyrone Area School District, even when in the physical possession of the student and parent/guardian. If the student does not already have a school-issued device, the student and parent/guardian will sign an *Equipment Agreement* which will outline the specific regulations with regard to this equipment. The school district will NOT provide “consumables” to the students at home (i.e. printer paper, ink, etc.).

Students are personally responsible for the textbooks, computer, and other school property issued to them. If these items are lost or damaged, students will be required to pay the prorated replacement fees. Textbook damage through misuse or carelessness will result in students paying for the damaged books. Any outstanding bills at the end of the year may result in the withholding of a student’s report card and other materials. All financial obligations must be satisfied with the High School Main Office.

If a student is removed, returns to the brick and mortar building, leaves the district, or has completed all assignments at the end of the school year, the borrower (i.e. student/family) must return all equipment within **five (5) business days**. If equipment is not returned or is damaged, the parent or guardian is responsible to compensate the district for the cost of the equipment, or legal action may be taken.

All students enrolled in the Tyrone Cyber Academy must be equipped with a high-speed internet connection. High speed internet is preferable to dial up, as many of the educational programs that the student will utilize are complex and require a high-speed connection to work efficiently and properly. Preparing for this connection in the home is the responsibility of the student and parent/guardian.

INTERNET REIMBURSEMENT

Parents/guardians will be reimbursed the sum of \$20.00 for each month their student is enrolled in the Cyber Academy, for a total of up to \$200 per year. It is important to note that this opportunity is for **full-time** cyber students only.