

TICONDEROGA CENTRAL SCHOOL DISTRICT

Frequently Asked Questions

Q & A

Updated 8/27/2020

District Objectives:

- Mitigate risk of infection**
- Provide in person learning as much as possible**
- Meet the requirements for social distancing**
- Support students doing remote learning**

BOCES Programs

Q- Will CV-TEC be happening? What will it look like?

A- Yes, Vocational programs will continue this year. First year students will be attending on Mondays and Tuesdays for full days. Second year students will be on campus Thursday and Fridays for full days.

Q- Will our students who attend full-time classes at CVES Mineville Center be attending classes there or be remote?

A- At this time, these classes will be meeting daily in person.

Physical Education / Sports

Q- What is the current plan for gym class?

A- Gym classes will meet. Activities will be different to comply with social distancing of 12 ft of separation and no contact.

Q- Will students be using lockers? Will students be changing for PE class?

A- The locker rooms will not be used until further notice. Students will not change for PE classes.

Transportation

Q- I'd like to drive my child(ren) to school, where do I go? Am I committed to everyday and for how long?

A- The District is working to gain the information regarding who will be riding the bus, who will walk and who will be driven. We need accurate and stable consistent information to plan our routes.

There will be drop off and specific pickup places at the elementary building. At the Jr Sr HS, students will be released and should have a plan with whomever is providing the ride as to where they will meet. Congestion and traffic backups are expected.

Q- My child will be riding the bus. What will that look like? Will there be social distancing? Must they wear a mask?

A- All students will be required to wear a mask while riding the bus. Seats will be assigned and each seat will be distanced and staggered. A 60 passenger bus may only hold 17-18 students given these requirements. Siblings will be seated together. Students must be assessed by their parent and to be assured that they are healthy prior to riding the bus.

Q- Bus passes: I need to change where my child goes, how do I do that?

A- In order to adhere to guidelines set forth by the Department of Health, the district has had to modify the transportation procedures. Therefore, transportation will now only be provided to one location whether it's the child's primary residence or daycare location for students in grades K-8. Transportation will be provided to the primary residence for students in grades 9-12. A student's bus stop must be at the same location daily and week to week. Additionally, bus passes will not be authorized or allowed.

Q- How are the morning/afternoon bus runs going to work? Are there going to be multiple trips made or more buses used to ensure social distancing? If multiple trips, what is the plan for the children who are dropped off at school the earliest in the beginning of the day? Where would they be placed until the rest of the students arrive and the school day begins? Would this concept entail school letting out earlier at the end of the day to get kids home in a timely manner?

A- Until we have complete information from parents we cannot finalize plans to answer all of these questions for transportation. All of these questions have been recognized and will be addressed to the best of our ability to do so.

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Q- Where are the high school students who walk to school/get off a bus in the morning supposed to congregate until school starts?

A- Students will be allowed to enter the building at a specific time and will be monitored to assure that they proceed directly to their first class. Breakfast will be a grab and go option and taken to first period assignment. No congregating will be allowed.

Q- How are kids getting to their classrooms in the morning? Is there some sort of organized system to prevent mass chaos in the halls?

A- At the Jr Sr High, students will be directed to enter in single file into one entrance and to move directly to their first class. At the Elementary, grade levels will be assigned one of two main entrances and they too will be going directly to their rooms in single file. No one will wait in the Fishbowl this year. Busses will release students one bus at a time. Multiple adults will be monitoring and directing students.

Cafeteria

Q- Will there be breakfast provided?

A- Yes, breakfast will be available daily.

Q- Will there be lunch?

A- Yes, lunch will be available. The "free meals for all" option is no longer available. Not all students will receive a free meal this year. Those who are fullpay or reduced pay should pre-pay to avoid any concerns.

Q- Will meals be delivered home if I am using a remote learning option or if the school is closed again?

A- It is required that meals be provided to those eligible for free or reduced meals at their home during periods of remote learning. How to implement this process is being developed.

Q- Where are elementary/middle school students going to be eating breakfast and lunch this year? If it is obligatory that they eat at their desks, but are also required to wear a mask all day due to social distancing issues, how are they being kept safe during their meal period since they would have to remove their mask to consume their meal?

A- Some classes will be in their classrooms, while others will be eating in the cafeteria. In both cases, the students will be at desks that will be at least 6 feet apart. Students will be allowed to remove their masks while seated and to eat.

Q- Are students allowed to bring items between home and school such as backpacks and lunchboxes? If not, will the school be supplying lunch for those kids who would have otherwise brought a lunch?

A- Students will be allowed to bring and carry a backpack. They may bring their own lunch and snacks which they may access while seated at their desk during lunch or in another designated place.

Academic Programming

Q- What is being done with the specials/electives?

A- In the K-6 building the special area teachers are traveling to the students classrooms as much as possible. Electives at the high school level will continue and be treated like any other class.

Access

Q- How do you plan on providing computers/internet access to those students who lack them for virtual learning days?

A- The District will look at each student's situation and work with the family to try to provide an appropriate device, help them obtain access or device a plan in which those students are afforded space within the school buildings to work.

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Remote Learning

Q- What's the difference between a Remote Learning option and Homeschooling?

A- Home schooling is a separate form of learning where a family opts to teach their child(ren) at home by an adult in the household. This is independent of the school curriculum. The family must follow certain NYS regulations that are then overseen by the district. If you are choosing this model you will need to fill out separate paperwork to be homeschooled and then to have your student unenrolled from Ticonderoga. This option does not result in earning a NYS high school diploma.

Choosing to keep your student home and receive instruction remotely during COVID, when you are not comfortable with your student attending school, and you want them to learn remotely, is an option. You can do this. The school will then teach your child the same curriculum as all the other students in that grade or class, only they will not be coming to school. With all of the DOH and NYSED guidelines we will not be able to accommodate students making a daily or weekly choice. Decisions may be changed every 10 weeks. Opting out for remote learning may happen at any time but opting to in-person instruction may only take place each quarter.

Once again, there is no perfect answer but we need to be able to plan to be safe and responsible. Thank you for being part of the solution.

Q- Why isn't there an online only option for those parents who don't feel comfortable sending their children back to school yet? What were the final numbers on parents willing/not willing to send their kids back from the survey the school sent out?

A- There is an option for remote learning being provided.
The surveys have not all been returned. Many parents remain undecided.

Q- What will the remote instruction look like?

A- The school will then teach your child the same curriculum as all the other students in that grade or class, only they will not be coming to school. Teachers will utilize Google classroom as the standard tool to deliver instruction. Virtual meets, phone conferences and videos will be among the tools used to provide this instruction. Regular times will be established and students will be required to "tune in" during the school day. Attendance will be required and grades will be issued for work assigned.

Q- Why a Virtual Learning Day?

A- Two primary reasons for allocating a day dedicated to remote learning are: 1) All students will benefit from practicing how to access and participate in a remote learning environment should the district need to be closed once again as occurred last spring. 2) Given that many families may opt for this form of instruction, the teachers will need to have time dedicated to supporting those students.

Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)

Q- What will be required and available?

A- Masks are required for all students and employees. Parents are encouraged to provide and maintain cloth masks for their child. If that is not possible, the District will provide masks for students.

Q- When do students and staff need to wear masks?

A- Lunch- No, when seated and socially distanced.

Recess- Yes, if social distancing can't be maintained

Outdoors- Yes, if social distancing can't be maintained.

Music- Yes if closer than 12 feet.

Physical education- If outside and 12 ft apart no.

Hallways- Yes

At their desk- No, when working alone. If others are in close proximity masks will be required.

Walking out their classroom- Yes

Masks may be required at all times at the teachers discretion, based on a medical concern in the room.

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Q- Where will the masks come from? Who is providing them?

A- Parents are being asked to provide and maintain cloth masks for their children. The District will provide masks when parents are not able to do so.

Q- Are students pre-k through 6th going to be required to wear masks for the entire day at school, even at their desks? I understand that the recent budget cuts have caused an overall downsizing in the teaching staff and that some classrooms that now have more students may not be sizable enough for 6ft distancing. If that be the case, why aren't partitions around the desks being considered and/or an affordable option considering most of the after school programs proposed in the approved budget are not being implemented this year?

A- The UPK-6 building has been set up, so that each classroom allows for at least 6 feet of space between students while at their desks. This is also true for the 7-12 building. At the Elementary building there is sufficient space for it to be possible for all students to attend daily in-person instruction. At the Jr. Sr. High School, the classrooms are too small to accommodate every student everyday and therefore the plan is to divide the population.

Q- How are you enforcing mask wearing, especially in smaller children. What happens to a child who refuses to mask or keeps taking it off? Are young children going to be punished for something a good deal of adults voluntarily reject doing?

A- Every effort will be made to have all students wear masks when required. Students who continually refuse may be moved to remote instruction until such time as they are able to comply.

Trainings

Q- Will staff and students receive COVID specific health and safety training?

A- All employees will participate in extensive safety training at the beginning of their school year. Students will have a number of training sessions as well for how to wash their hands, masks, social distancing and other aspects of self care. Use of the restrooms will also be reviewed and reinforced throughout every day.

Water

Q- Drinking fountains, will they be working?

A- The bottle filling option will be operational on all fountains having that option. Students may fill, carry and use their own water bottles. Bottles should be labelled with their name.

The fountain portion of all fountains will be closed off so that students are not able to drink directly from the fountain thus causing the potential for contamination.

Where bottle fillers are not accessible, bottled water will be provided.

Bathrooms/Locker rooms

Q- When can students use bathrooms, how will they be monitored?

A- Students will sign out of their room to use the restroom. Traffic will be limited to one person at a time in the restrooms.

Q- How will bathroom breaks for students look and how do you plan on preventing overcrowding in the rest rooms?

A- The bathrooms will not be used during hall passing times. Students will be released during teaching periods to better assure social distancing.

Health Assessment

Q- Why are health screenings/temperature checks not being done at school and at the bus stop prior to staff and students entering the building?

A- For many reasons parents and employees are being asked / required to monitor the temperatures and health of their child or themselves. It is not feasible to stop the bus on the highway for a sufficient amount of time to take temperatures of all students prior to having them board the bus. Parents are being encouraged to drive their children to school if possible. Each building will be performing random testing throughout the day to assess the situation and monitor the health of our students. Student privacy rights will be maintained throughout the screening process as well. Trained personnel will assist the health care personnel to conduct the random temperature screenings. Trust and cooperation will be needed to ensure that everyone's safety is maintained.

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Q- Testing for COVID

A- This is not the function of a school district. No students will be tested on our campuses. We will work closely with the Essex County Health Department, and the primary care providers to ensure that appropriate testing is occurring on a case by case basis.

Q- Health monitoring

A- Temperature checks at home before leaving for school. Parents and employees are being asked to attest to accountability questions daily. Random temperature checks will take place throughout the school each day by the nursing staff and administrators trained to conduct the checks.

Q- What happens when someone at school exhibits symptoms?

A- When an employee or student exhibits symptoms that indicate the possibility of the disease, the individual will be isolated. Staff will be sent home to seek the review of their health care provider. Parents will be notified and students will be sent home to be assessed by their health care provider.

Q- What happens if 1 child in a family has symptoms, will the children/adults from that family be quarantined?

A- Students who are confirmed to have the disease will be monitored by the Department of Health. The school district will work closely with the local DOH and comply with their quarantine directives.

Q- Will there be rooms or areas to quarantine children and adults who exhibit symptoms?

A- There will be a designated area in both buildings for these individuals to remain in isolation until they may be relocated to seek appropriate health care assessment and treatment if warranted.

Q- What is the plan/protocol if a child or teacher were to test positive for covid?

A- The District will be notified by the DOH if a case is confirmed for anyone attending our schools. The District will work closely with the local DOH and will follow their guidance to contain the virus.

Q- How quickly do you plan on addressing a situation like that with the parents?

A- The DOH takes the lead in all such situations. Contact tracing will be conducted by the DOH.

Q- What is the plan for keeping up with sick students if we only have one nurse between all the buildings?

A- The District is currently seeking applications for a second RN who will provide support to the school for health monitoring. This will afford a RN to be housed in each building.

Q- How will a steady flow of traffic be kept in the nurse's office if multiple children are ill (not even COVID related) at once?

A- We all know that there is always a rise in colds, allergies and flu like symptoms every fall. Continual monitoring of the routine ailments of students will continue. Students will be socially distanced while waiting to see the nurse for assessment of any symptom.

Q- If one student from a family gets sick (cough, fever ect.) are the siblings going to be asked to stay home until a negative covid test can be confirmed or a diagnosis made? (For people who have multiple kids within the district.)

A- This self isolation will be encouraged. Only individuals that are confirmed positive, anyone identified through contact tracing by the DOH and family members will likely be quarantined by the local DOH.

Cleaning/disinfecting

- *Cleaning means to be free from dirt, contamination or impurities.*
- *Disinfecting means to destroy the harmful bacteria, viruses in or on surfaces. Sterilize.*

Q- Will there be soap and water available for classroom cleaning?

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A- Students and teachers will continue to have access to materials to use to clean their own workspaces. Teachers will have access to supplies that may be used to disinfect when students are not in their classroom.

Q- Will cleaning materials be provided?

A- Yes, the District will make such supplies available.

Q- Will hands sanitizer be used?

A- Hand sanitizer which is approved for use in schools will be on hand for staff. Students will be routinely washing their hands with soap and water throughout the day.

Q- When will “deep cleaning” take place? Why on a Monday? Wouldn’t Wednesday be a better day between groups at the Jr. Sr High school building at least?

A- The custodial staff will be cleaning and disinfecting contact surfaces throughout the day and every night. Monday was chosen for reasons beyond cleaning. Monday is the day between group B and group A being in the classrooms.

Cohorting

Q- What does this term mean? And how will it be done at school?

A- Cohorting means a group of people/students who will work together throughout the day or throughout their time in school.

Q- Will students change classes?

A- In the Elementary school building, movement will be limited to the extent possible. Specialist teachers will go to the classrooms. In the Jr. high level, students will be retained in cohorts for much of the day to limit exposure teachers will go to the students. At the Sr. high levels, students are enrolled in different classes based on their elective and course choices.

Q- Will the hallways be directional and will traffic be limited?

A- Elementary students will be walked by their teachers to and from locations and will go the most direct route possible. At the Jr. high, most classes will be all on the third floor.

Q- Will entrances and exits change? If so to what?

A- Students will be released from one bus at a time. UPK - 3 enter the main entrance, 4-6 the former Middle School entrance and Jr. Sr high through the main front door.

Social Distancing

Q- What is the distance required to be socially distanced?

A- In all classrooms desks are set 6 feet apart. In music and PE classes students will be 12 feet apart or students and staff will need to be wearing their mask.

Mobility

Q- Younger students (grades K-2) How will they remain seated all day?

A- Teachers are encouraged to take their students outside for classes, or even just for a break/walk outside.

Q- What is the outlook on breaks from learning such a recess or even just students getting to stretch from sitting at their desks for long periods of time?

A- In the Elementary building there will be scheduled playground time for each grade level. Teachers will also be encouraged to take classes outside on the fields, for a walk, to read a book, etc., to give them breaks from their desks.

Student Lockers

Q- Will my child have a locker, where will they store their belongings?

A- No lockers in either building, elementary students will keep their belongings at their desks. Jr. Sr high students will carry their belongings.

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Classroom Parties, Snacks and food from home

Q- Will there be parties and shared food? May a student still bring their lunch?

A- Food cannot be shared. Students may bring their lunch from home and any snack for their own consumption. No classroom parties until further notice in which any kind of food is shared. Any snack provided within the classroom must be individually packaged by a manufacturer.

Discipline

Q- What's happening with student discipline? Are they still allowed into the office?

A- Discipline will continue to be handled on a case by case basis. The office waiting spaces have been socially distanced. No one will be allowed to congregate.

Personal Belongings

Q- How are items such as bookbags and jackets going to be separated in the classroom?

A- Students will keep these personal items at their desks.

Safety

Q- Are students still practicing fire/active shooter drills? If so, how?

A- All required safety drills will be conducted with the distance protocols in place.

Accommodations

Q- What options is the school providing for high risk students who cannot attend in person due to previously diagnosed medical conditions or cannot medically wear a mask? Or students who currently dwell with higher risk people such as the elderly or immune deficient.

A- Remote instruction is an option for students. Individual plans may be developed with your child's Principal.

Assurances

Q- How are we ensuring that students who may travel with their families (especially to higher risk states) are appropriately quarantining for the 14 day period per NYS law before returning to the school setting and causing a potential outbreak like the one that recently occurred at the St. Mary's church?

A- This is not within our jurisdiction to enforce just encourage compliance. Any violations that come to our attention will be reported to the Essex County Department of Health.