



Return to School Procedures

Tri-County North Local Schools is looking forward to our students returning this fall. Realizing that this year will be much different than any year that any of us have ever faced, our primary goal is to allow for students to return to school in-person, keeping them as safe as possible while also providing the best education possible. **We would like to reiterate that the safety of our students and staff is the most important thing that we are challenged to do.** For this reason, numerous policies and procedures will be implemented in an attempt to keep our students safe while they are receiving the best education possible. Although we are publishing the guidelines below today, we do want to inform you that this is still a very fluid situation and we may be forced to make changes to our procedures if the Governor and or the Preble County Health Department provide us with additional information or additional directives requiring us to do so.

Return date: We have decided to back the start date up three student days and bring all students back five days a week starting on Monday August 24th instead of the originally scheduled date of August 19th. This will provide more than 14 days after the Preble County Fair is over before our students return to class. This will also allow our teachers to be provided additional training and professional development during the week of the 17th to the 21st of August as they will return at their normal start date.

Facial Coverings: In attempting to keep **all of our students and staff as safe as possible**, Tri-County North will be requiring everyone in the building to wear facial coverings. This includes all students and staff as well as anyone entering the building. Tri-County North will be providing one cloth mask for each student or students may opt to bring their own mask from home. Multiple masks will be needed as a clean mask will be needed each day. If parents choose, they may provide their child with an approved face shield that can be worn in place of a mask. This may be a better choice for our younger students or those students who have difficulty wearing a mask. Again, we are attempting to do everything possible to protect our students and staff and keep everyone as safe as possible. If you are concerned about the rationale for this decision we will be issuing a follow-up statement prior to the beginning of the school year.

Instructional Options: Students and families who opt to stay home due to COVID-19 health concerns can receive instruction online through the Tri-County North Virtual Academy, which allows students to remain a Tri-County North student but receive instruction online. Students and parents should realize that this online instruction will not be taught by a TCN teacher, as we will be utilizing Acellus coursework, and will be much more rigorous and academically demanding than what students experienced last spring when districts were forced to implement online instruction with very little planning and implementation time. We truly believe that our students will receive the best education by returning to our building. We do understand that in these times this decision is the parent's choice therefore we will be providing more information and how to sign up for the online coursework in the near future.

Transportation Procedures: We would ask that parents take their child's temperature before sending them to the bus or bringing them to school. If your child has a temperature of 100 degrees or above please keep them at home for the day. All students will be required to wear facial covering on the school bus or any other school transportation at all times. Our drivers will also be checking children's temperatures as they board the bus. Children with temperatures of 100 degrees or above will not be permitted to ride the bus or attend school that day. For this reason, parents MUST remain at home or make arrangements for someone to be at home in the event that a child cannot board the bus in the morning. Hand Sanitizer dispensers will also be installed at the front of each bus and all students will be expected to sanitize as they get on and off. All buses will be disinfected between each route and at the end of each day. Students will also sit in assigned seats and we will do our best to keep them socially distanced. Whenever possible, parents are encouraged to bring their children to school to help reduce the numbers on each bus.

Entering our Schools: For those students who will be transported by their parents, a similar procedure will be followed. All students will be required to wear face covering at all times. We will have school employees in front of the school to take temperatures daily prior to leaving your vehicle. Again, any student with a temperature of 100 degrees or above will not be permitted to exit their vehicle and enter the school. For middle school and high school walkers and high school students who drive. They will need to enter through door number 18 where again, a staff member will take their temperature and ensure that they are wearing a face covering before entering the building. Elementary students who walk from town will be expected to cross 503 at Front Street (using the crossing guards) and enter at door number 11 where their temperature will be checked and they will be expected to put on their face covering. Again, parents are to check their child's temperature before sending them to school and make arrangements for someone to be at home in case your child must return home.

Sanitation and Cleaning: Cleaning of our classrooms and facilities will be increased tremendously. Our custodians will be disinfecting areas such as bathrooms, drinking fountains, doorknobs, handrails, and lockers while our students are in session. We have also spoken to our teachers and the student desks and chairs will be disinfected at the end of each class so that a student will never sit in a desk or chair that someone else was using until it has been cleaned. There will also be hand sanitizing stations in the hallways, the cafeteria, and all entrances as well as hand sanitizer in every classroom for the students and staff to use. Students and staff will also be expected to wash their hands frequently during the course of the day.

Visitors / Signing In and Out: Although for the past several years our practice has been to welcome visitors into our school, present circumstances require that visitors will be discouraged from entering the building. In the event that a parent must enter the building, strict protocols will be followed. These include temperature checks and facial coverings and entering through door #2 only. If parents need to sign their child in or out, they will be required to remain in the door #2 breezeway and speak to the secretary through the glass door. Parents

involved in meetings with school personnel will be advised of the location and times of the meeting by phone.

Dismissal: A staggered dismissal will be utilized to help maintain social distancing and avoid congestion. Parents should anticipate a minimal delay at times until all students and parents become familiar with this procedure.

Food Service / Lunch / Breakfast: Many of our plans concerning food service including lunch and breakfast are still in the planning stages. We will be consulting with the Preble County Health Department as well as our own food service employees to finalize these plans. At this time we are considering serving boxed lunches for our students and we will be encouraging students to bring a packed lunch from home when possible. We are also working out the details of keeping our students socially distanced realizing that students will be removing their masks to eat.

Athletics and Marching Band: Athletics, including cheerleading, will follow the guidelines set forth by the Ohio High School Athletic Association, OHSAA. As we receive more information and direction, we will keep our students and parents informed. Marching band will have similar guidelines to our athletic programs.

Activities and Extracurricular Programs: At this time many of our extracurricular programs and activities are either postponed or cancelled. Updates on the status of specific activities will be communicated to parents and students prior to the beginning of the school year.

Building Level Decisions: We realize that there will be numerous questions about specific building level guidelines. Many of these will be developed by the building level administrator and their staff. These guidelines will be communicated to our students and parents as the start of school approaches. Examples of these types of things include water bottles, recess procedures, locker assignments, directional traffic and book bags just to name a few.

Preble County Return to School Coalition: This document, which can be accessed on the Tri-County North School District website at www.tcnschools.com, was developed with representation from all school districts in Preble County and the Preble County Health Department. It includes additional information about student illness and the procedures for returning to school. **Parents should read this information carefully.**

Although opinions may differ on returning to school, we will stand behind the philosophy that **the safety and wellbeing of our students and staff is the most important thing** that we are challenged to do. For this reason, I would ask each of you to work with us to make this unpredictable time as beneficial as possible for each and every student. Your support is greatly appreciated!