

Thompson Public Schools

Fall 2020 Newsletter

On behalf of the Thompson Board of Education (BOE) members, I want to extend sincere thanks and gratitude to the entire school community for a successful re-opening of school. Students attending school on site have done a fantastic job conforming to the COVID-19 environmental restrictions and face-covering requirements. The students learning from home have also adjusted to live stream instruction and have been patient as we continue to address technical issues as they come up.

Our goal is to remain in school with a full schedule as long as everyone continues to adhere to the health and safety guidelines detailed in the district's re-opening plan. I also want to remind teachers, students, and parents that our school structure can change with little advance notice. Parents need to secure childcare if we must switch to a hybrid or fully remote learning model.

The district will only cancel school if there is an imminent health risk. All decisions will be made in consultation with our local health officials at the Northeast District Department of Health.

The district has had to make some adjustments to the onsite and distant learner programs. Please be sure to thoroughly read the updated information in this newsletter.



Friday Early Release Days:

The members of the BOE approved early release days every Friday starting on Friday, October 30, 2020. The half days on Fridays are in addition to the already scheduled early release days on Wednesdays on the school year calendar. As always, students will be provided with lunch before their regularly scheduled dismissal time.

We must provide teachers with additional planning time to plan lessons that meet our students' needs attending school onsite and distant learning. Friday afternoons will provide teachers with this necessary time. The BOE will reassess the early release days at their December meeting.

Thank you to all families that responded to the survey we sent home. The selection of this day of the week for early dismissal was based on your feedback.

Preschool Early Release Changes:

- Preschool students will follow the schedule already in place for monthly early dismissal on Wednesday that is established on the district calendar (please see attached).
- On Fridays, all preschool students (both morning and afternoon sessions) will attend school in the morning.
- The dismissal time for early release for both monthly and weekly half days will be at 11:15 am. Parent pick-up and bus riders will all go home at this time.

If you have any questions about the preschool dismissal schedule, please contact your child's teacher directly.

Reporting Student Absences & COVID Testing:

Thank you to parents who have provided the school the reason your child is absent with detailed symptoms. This information provides our nursing staff with vital information to track illness. Please be sure to touch base with your child's school nurse if your child is being tested for COVID-19. When anyone in the district has a COVID test, we begin our contact tracing activities to ensure we have a list of individuals we may need to contact if the test comes back positive. Having a "heads up" when someone is out for testing allows us a couple of days to gather this information.

If you have any questions when your child is out sick, please feel free to contact your school nurse or our district health liaison, Shannon Grauer, at 860-923-9303 X 566.

Free Meals PK-12:

The district participates in an extended emergency meal program that will provide free breakfast and lunch to all children up to the age of 18. All students are now eligible for free meals through the end of the school year.

Distance learners and any child within the community may pick a breakfast and lunch daily in front of Thompson Middle School from 12:00 pm to 1:00 pm. You do not need to call ahead – simply stop by and pick up breakfast and lunch without leaving your car!



Tiger Masks Are Coming to TPS!

Thanks to a generous donation from Earl Rosebrooks, General Manager of Fluid Coating Technology, in partnership with Jill St. Cyr and the donors of "It Starts at Home", all students will be given a custom-made Tiger mask!

We cannot thank Earl and Jill, both Tourtellotte Memorial High School graduates, enough for the wonderful donation to keep our students healthy and safe!



Secondary Lesson Recordings for Distant Learners Discontinue on 10/30/2020:

Beginning on Monday, November 2, 2020, secondary teachers (Grades 5-12) will no longer be required to record and post lessons for distance learners to access later in the day. Students learning remotely from home must log in to their classes regularly within the school day to receive instructions and assignments. Students who do not log in to the scheduled class time will be marked absent.

As a reminder, students learning from home are required to attend school daily to be considered present.

Elementary teachers will continue to record and post daily lessons by the end of the day for distant learners. The district reached this agreement with teachers because we all understand that families with young children may have childcare issues that could impact regular attendance. Elementary students will be recorded as present if they log into lessons and/or complete their daily classwork assignments.