

Tiger Tracks



Taft Middle School Newsletter

August 2024

BACK TO SCHOOL WELCOME TO THE 2024-2025 SCHOOL YEAR

If you have not already done so please complete the E-verification on the Taft website (taft@crschools.us)

Scroll down to the "QUICKLINKS" menu and link on Infinite Campus.

*For step-by-step directions, see Mr. Hatfield's letter included in your packet.

HOURS FOR 2024-2025

Monday - Friday hours are 7:50 am-2:50 pm

First Day of School:

Friday, August 23, 2024

Early Dismissal at 1:20 p.m.

LUNCH will be served.

6th Graders-meet your advisor in the auditorium by 7:50 a.m. Doors open at 7:30 a.m. After some general information is given, your advisor will take you to your rooms, where you will review schedules and get oriented to the school.



DISTRICT BUS TRANSPORTATION SCHEDULES

A Student's bus route with pick up and drop off times will be available in Infinite Campus beginning in mid-August.



6TH Grade Open House

Thursday, August 22nd, 5:00-6:30 p.m.
There will be a presentation in the gym at 5:00 pm followed by an informal walk-around of the building and classrooms lasting until approximately 6:30 pm. Students will have the opportunity to get their school supplies organized and practice opening their lockers. If they haven't yet received their schedules or locker assignment they will at this time.

7th & 8th Grade Open House

Thursday, August 22nd, 7:00-8:00 p.m.
This is an opportunity to meet teachers, get locker assignments, and drop off supplies before school begins.

TAFT FAMILIES,

The 2024-2025 school year is quickly drawing near. You can feel the excitement in the community beginning to build as the thoughts of returning to school increase. Taft truly is a special place. For decades, our staff, parents and students have all worked together to make Taft a top-notch school where all kids have the opportunity to reach their fullest potential. We strive to help each other become Tigers. Taft is full of unique individuals. Being a Tiger doesn't mean being the same. It does mean that we feel a connection to our classmates, community, and school. It does mean that we show respect to those around us. It does mean that we look out for those who need our help. We will continue to build and strengthen the "Taft family" in the coming year.

Taft received a few facility upgrades this summer. The dome support repairs have been completed after nearly eight months of fences around the domes. The portable classrooms that sat in the small parking lot have been removed as well. We also had surfacing repairs of the tennis courts. We take a lot of pride in the condition of our building and hope that having a nice facility helps build pride in our school.

The staff is excited to see the 7th and 8th grade students return. These two classes are full of potential. We are eager to see how they continue to conquer adversity and excel. We are also excited to welcome the new 6th graders to Taft. These latest Tigers have many great days ahead of them. They are our future. They come to us from a variety of elementary schools, but they will forever more be Tigers!

The Taft Staff attempts to live each day according to our mission statement: "To provide a quality education for all students while educating the whole child in an atmosphere of respect for self, others, and the school environment." Mission statements are wonderful, but meaningless unless you live them out each and every day. So how does Taft live its mission?

Quality Education for All Students – We believe that every child has the right to be challenged academically. To that end, we will provide enrichment for students who seek additional experiences while at the same time offering help for students who are struggling. Taft consistently scores well on the Iowa School Report Card achieving some of the highest scores in our area. However, as I tell the students, what we do tomorrow is more important than what we did yesterday. It is the job of our staff and students to make sure that we keep our tradition of success rolling.

Educating the Whole Child – While we always place academics at the forefront of everything we do, we also realize the incredible importance of the fine and performing arts, athletics and wellness, character development, and student-interest organizations. We place a great deal of time, effort, and resources into supporting these programs. We offer programs that range from Chess Club to AAAP, from Show Choir to Best Buddies. If your child wishes to get involved, he or she will find an activity at Taft.

Atmosphere of Respect – We believe that all people should be treated with compassion and respect. "When you treat others, as they ought to be, they become that." – Johann Wolfgang von Goethe. This quote really says it all. We pledge to offer respect to all students and parents. There will be times of disagreement, but one of the lessons that we can teach our students is how to resolve disagreements in a productive manner.

As a staff, we set high standards for ourselves. We also expect a lot from our students – your children. We look forward to working with you, as partners, in the education of your kids. We appreciate your faith in us and will work every day to maintain that faith.

Be Proud! Be a Tiger!



Gary Hatfield
Principal





IMPORTANT PHONE NUMBERS

Main Office: 558-2243, option # 3

Attendance: 558-2243, Option #1

Counselors: 558-2243, Option # 4

SET UP YOUR PARENT PORTAL!

Make sure you can access your Infinite Campus Parent Portal. The parent portal allows the parent access to important online information. If you don't know your username and password, contact your student's school.

Complete your annual verification in Infinite Campus.

This confirms your student's enrollment for the upcoming school year.

- Update contact information for school communications.
- Update your child's emergency contacts.
- Complete yearly release agreements, including field trips forms, laptops device and technology permissions, etc.
- Complete eligibility for reduced book fees, transportation fees, etc.

MORE WAYS TO STAY INFORMED...

Taff's homepage contains information about Taff, students, staff, programs and events:

www.taff.crschools.us

Cedar Rapids Community School District:

www.crschools.us

Sign-up to receive text message updates! Follow us on Twitter:

1. Send a text to 40404
2. The message needs to read "follow taffnotify". Standard text messaging rates apply. Follow us on Instagram at [tafftigercrsd](#) OR on Facebook at Taff Middle School (look for posts from Gary Hatfield)

Follow the District on ,  @crschools, and 

SAFETY CONCERNS

Cedar Rapids Community School District takes your safety seriously and welcomes your input. Please contact your building principal/administrator and report any safety concerns that you may have. Thank you for helping us keep staff and students safe.

EMERGENCY CONTACT INFORMATION

State Law requires that every student must have emergency contact information on file with their school. You can enter this information through e-verification. Once you enter your information, it becomes available to Taff through Infinite Campus.

If you do not have access to a computer, we will have computers available for you to come in and use. Please call 558-2243 to set up a time to come into the main office for assistance.

"The Board believes inappropriate student appearance causes material and substantial disruption to the school environment or presents a threat to the health and safety of students, employees and visitors. Students are expected to adhere to standards of cleanliness and dress that are compatible with the requirements of a good learning environment. The standards will be those generally acceptable to the community as appropriate in a school setting. When, in the judgment of the principal, a student's appearance or mode of dress disrupts the educational process or constitutes a threat to health or safety, the student may be required to make modifications or be subject to disciplinary action."

- School Board Regulation 603.1



The following items have been determined to be disruptive to the educational process at Taft and should **not** be worn:

- Clothing that reveals undergarments
- Bandanas, hats, or any other head coverings (unless for specific religious convictions) between 7:50-2:50
- Hoods should be down between 7:50-2:50
- T-shirts with suggestive or inappropriate messages such as ads for tobacco, liquor, bars, drugs, weapons, or gangs
- Very short skirts or shorts
- Low-cut, halter tops, or extreme crop tops
- Volleyball-style spandex shorts
- Sunglasses
- Slippers
- Costumes
- Large headphones or earbuds should only be worn when needed in the classroom and should only be used for instructional purposes

Other attire may be deemed inappropriate for school if it contributes to the disruption of the educational process at Taft.

STUDENT FEE WAIVER

Students whose families meet the income guidelines for free and reduced price lunch, the Family Investment Program (FIP), Supplemental Security Income (SSI), transportation assistance under open enrollment, or who are in foster care are eligible to have their student fees waive or partially waived. *This waiver does not carry over from year to year. Parents and/or students who may qualify will need to register for this waiver in Infinite Campus under Release Agreements in E-Verification. E-Verification is listed on Taft's website under "Quicklinks" and then click on Infinite Campus. If you need assistance contact the Taft main office at 319-558-2243, option 3.



ID CARDS

All students will be issued ID cards at the beginning of the year and they are expected to bring them to school daily. ID cards are needed for school bus transportation. Bent, damaged, or lost ID cards can be replaced through the counseling office for a fee of \$5.00 to be paid by students or billed to parents.



CELL PHONES AND OTHER TECHNOLOGY

Cell phones can be a useful tool for keeping children in contact with their parents, reducing communication lapses, and ensuring student safety to and from school. If used inappropriately, they can also be very disruptive to the learning environment. Taft developed the following cell policy in order to help students learn appropriate cell phone use.

Students must have cell phones turned off and in their lockers from 7:50-2:50 in order to protect instructional time. Cell phone use outside of this timeframe is not permitted. This allows students to communicate with parents to arrange rides, etc. but also protects the important instructional time of the school day. This time restriction is non-negotiable with students. If a student absolutely needs to call a parent during the school day, the student may ask to use a teacher's classroom phone. There is a bountiful supply of teacher phones in the building, so there is no reason for students to have their cell phone from 7:50-2:50.

No videotaping or photography is allowed at Taft without staff approval.



YOUR FAMILY CAN HELP SUPPORT TAFT HY-VEE CASH 4 STUDENTS

With this program, Hy-Vee receipts equal funds for Taft!

Accumulate your Hy-Vee receipts and drop them off at the Attendance Window.

Hy-Vee will award our school \$1.00 for every \$200.00 worth of receipts.

*Receipts may be from April 1, 2024 to March 31, 2025.

Last school year Taft earned around \$1000.00. The check was submitted to the PTA in early June.



VIRTUAL BACKPACK

The District offers an online Virtual Backpack site to support the efforts of community organizations wanting to share information about educationally-based programming. Individuals or organizations wishing to post material on the Virtual Backpack submit items electronically and approved materials will appear online for families to access.

Organizations will find a link to submit flyers for consideration on the District homepage at www.cr.k12.ia.us. Families can access the Virtual Backpack from their school Web site.

STUDENT SUPERVISION AFTER SCHOOL

Middle school students are dismissed at 2:50 p.m. daily. Please take notice that by 3:10 p.m. all middle school students MUST be out of the building and off campus unless under the direct supervision of a staff member. Relieving staff supervising students from 3:15 until their workday ends at 3:30 allows our professional staff to have time to work with students one-on-one, prepare lessons, and attend committee, building, and district meetings.

Please make some kind of arrangement for your child after school. Parental responsibility begins at 2:50 when students are dismissed from school. If you cannot pick up your child until 3:10 p.m. or later, please make other arrangements.

We would never jeopardize the health or safety of any students. For these reasons, you can be sure we will allow students to stay inside during inclement weather if they are awaiting a ride after 3:10 p.m.

Social Emotional Behavioral Learning

We can all agree that character building is an important part of growing up. At Taft, we are not only dedicated to building the academic skills of every student, but we are also dedicated to educating students in their social, emotional, and behavioral growth. The process by which we do this comes from direct instruction and practicing appropriate behaviors.

Caring School Community

During the school day, students will be engaged in the Caring School Community (CSC) curriculum where we work to build student's social skills through a variety of lessons, activities, and conversations. The goal of CSC is to build up every student's social and emotional IQ as they progress through their middle school years.

P.A.R.R.T.

Taft's students' expectations are summarized with the PARRT acronym that helps guide student behavior and school culture. Teachers model these expectations and practice them regularly with the students.

Personal Best - We strive for high quality products and outcomes.

Active Listening - We listen with our eyes, ears, hearts, and undivided attention.

Respect - We show tolerance and regard for people, property, and ideas.

Responsibility - We follow directions and procedures. We are dependable.

Trustworthiness - We are truthful, reliable, and choose to do the right thing.

ATTENDANCE MATTERS

Attendance at Taft

The Taft Attendance Committee works hard to help families remove any barriers that might prevent students from attending school. The committee consists of the School Counselors, Engagement Specialist, School Nurse, and the Attendance Secretary. We communicate with families about missed days and the importance of attendance to student academic success.

The average Cedar Rapids student misses no more than 5 days a year, and we would like to see that number drop for Taft students. Many of our students have perfect attendance or miss just one or two days throughout the school year.

If your child will be missing school for any reason, the first step is to contact Kara Davenport, Taft Attendance Secretary, at 319-558-2243 x1 or kdavenport@schools.us. Teachers, Counselors, and the School Nurse can also be contacted as needed for support with any extended absences.

Taft families have been very receptive and supportive of our efforts. Thank you for continuing to communicate with us about your child's needs and attendance.



PTA

It's a brand-new school year and we want to hear your ideas and questions you have about Taft!

Join our first PTA meeting September 11th
at 6:30 pm in the library to have
your voice heard!

Any questions email Megan Heims at megan1625@hotmail.com.

NEW TO TAFT MIDDLE SCHOOL

Taft would like to welcome 2 new individuals to our staff and congratulate one staff member for a change of assignment.



MANDY BRADFORD

We are happy to announce that Mandy Bradford will be joining the Taft Staff next year as a Start II ID teacher.

We will be combining our Severe Disabilities and Moderate classrooms for one year due to lower student numbers.

Mrs. Bradford will lead both programs. Last year, Mrs. Bradford was a special education teacher at Jefferson High School and has a passion for working with students with more involved disabilities.



LEVI COWAN

We are excited to announce that Mr. Cowan will be joining the Taft staff as our Vocal Music teacher.

He recently graduated from the University of Central Florida and will be an Iowa Transplant over the summer.

Mr. Cowan has extensive knowledge in music and has an exciting future as an educator.

We are excited to see the energy he will bring to Taft as he takes over the Vocal Music position. He will also direct Adrenaline and our Drama productions.



ALISHA MALAMPHY

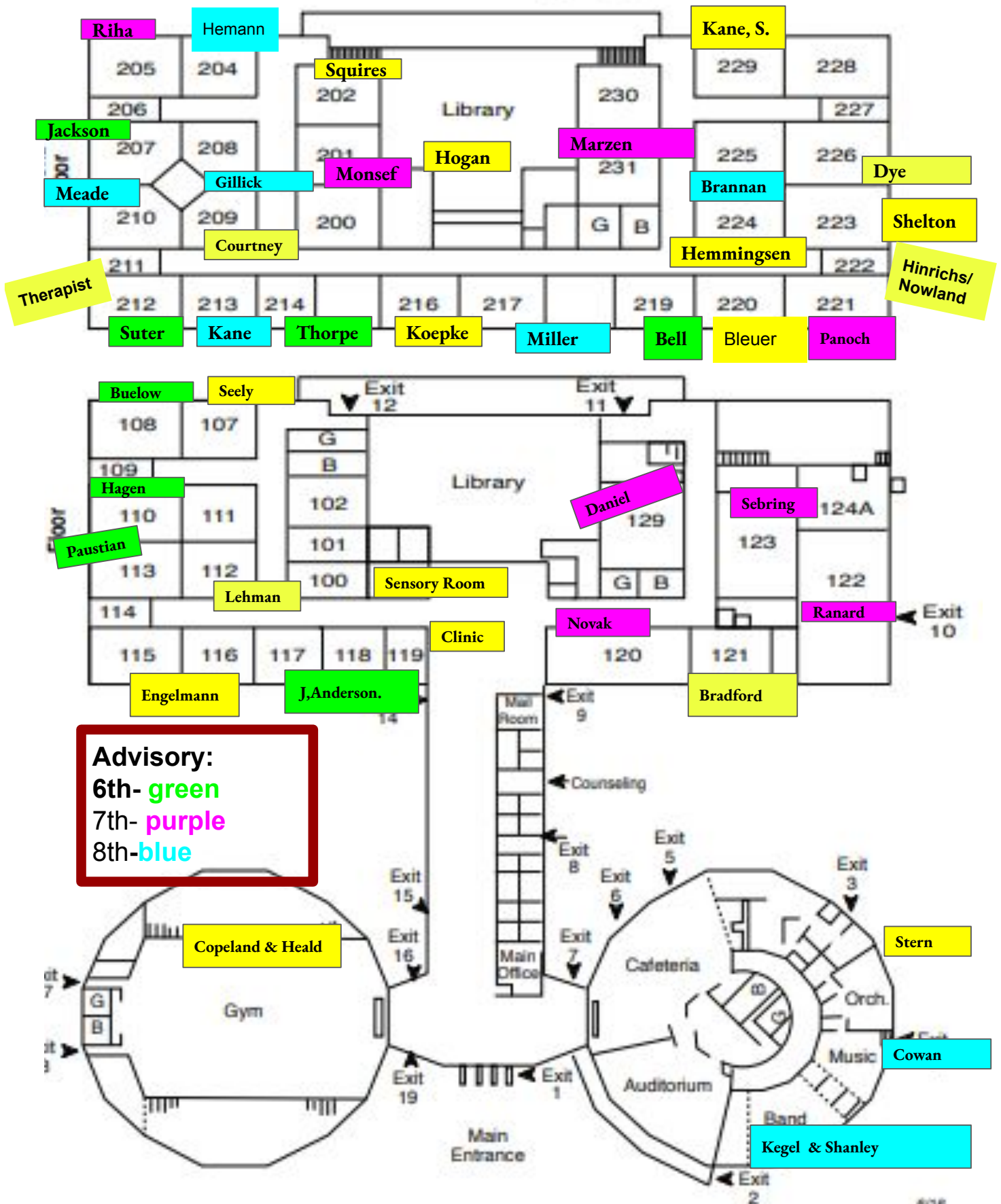
We are proud to announce that Alisha Malamphy will be changing her role at Taft. She will be Taft's new Associate Principal Secretary.

Alisha has worked at Taft in food service and as a para for the last few years.

Her superb work as a para, work ethic, and willingness to help in any capacity will translate well into the secretary position.

WE ARE PROUD TO WELCOME THEM INTO THE TAFT FAMILY!

Teacher Room Location TAFT MIDDLE SCHOOL



Advisory:
 6th- green
 7th- purple
 8th- blue

TAFT CLINIC INFORMATION

Stephanie Nederhoff, RN - School Nurse • Rebecca Utterback - Health Secretary

Cedar Rapids Community Schools promotes the belief that healthy students are better learners. Each school's health office is staffed by a school nurse and a health secretary. The school nurse has multiple building assignments and will visit each school at least once each week. They are available by pager for questions or consultation at all times. The health secretary is certified in CPR, First Aid and medication administration and is in the health office every day.

The school should be informed of a student's significant health condition. This information should be provided at the beginning of the school year on student(s) E Registration. The information will be shared with school staff that need to know about your child's condition. If the condition requires special adjustments in the school environment, the school nurse should be contacted. Any changes in student health status during the year should be communicated to the school nurse or health secretary.

Students are sent to the health office if they are injured or appear ill. Depending on the student's need, their temperature may be taken. If the student has a temperature that is 100.4 degrees F. or over, the parent/guardian will be called and the student will be sent home. The student may return to school when they have been fever free, without the assistance of medicine. Temperature is not the only symptom that influences the decision to send the student home; general appearance and functioning are also important factors.

After a period of observation, a decision will be made to do one of the following:

- Call the parent/guardian
- Allow the student to rest in the health office for a brief period
- Return the student to class
- Parents will also be notified of injuries, which appear to require close observation or
- medical attention.

IMMUNIZATION REQUIREMENTS FOR ALL INCOMING 7TH GRADE STUDENTS

1 dose of Meningococcal vaccine -received on or after age 10. A booster dose will be needed at age 16.

Proof of Tdap vaccine (tetanus, Diphtheria & Pertussis) booster vaccination -has been required by the State for school attendance since 2013-14.

You may bring proof of Meningococcal &/or Tdap immunizations on the 1st day of school, or to the Taft Office at any time. They can also be faxed to Taft at 319-558-2661.

***Students without proof of vaccination, or a state exemption, will not be allowed to attend classes in the fall.** Please check with your primary healthcare provider **NOW** about these two vaccines.

If you do not have a primary healthcare provider, please contact the school nurse (below) or CRCSD District Metro Care Connection clinics at 319-558-2481 or Linn County Public Health at 319-892-6000 for assistance.

Thank you,

Steph Nederhoff, RN
School Nurse
558-1074

Rebecca Utterbach
Health Secretary
558-2243, option 2

TAFT COUNSELING OFFICE

Hello Taft Families!
Welcome to the 24-25 school year!

We are happy to be back and working with Taft students and families. We are eager to assist in your student's academic, emotional, and social development.

Please contact us anytime regarding your student or about any of our services.

Rick Hemann, A-L; Mild, Moderate, and Severe Disabilities Programs
School Counselor
rhemann@crschools.us

Alice Kitterman, M-Z; ELL and BF Programs
School Counselor
akitterman@crschools.us

Annette Messina
Counseling Secretary
amessina@crschools.us
319-558-2243 x4



METRO CARE CONNECTION

Metro Care Connection, Cedar Rapids Community School District's school-based health center, is available to provide free physicals during the school year. The clinic is open to any Taft student who is uninsured, underinsured, or has Medicaid. We really want to emphasize that student's with physicians and insurance need to be seeing their own health care providers for continuity of care.

The clinic will be staffed by a Pediatric Nurse Practitioner. Parents/Guardians are encouraged to be present for the physical exams. If the parent/guardian is unable to be present, students under the age of 18 must have a completed consent form and medical history form signed by a parent/guardian in order to be examined. These forms can be accessed from the MCC website: <http://mcc.cr.k12.ia.us/forms.html> or by asking the activities office or health office at the school the student attends. Please call the MCC program office at 558-2481 for an appointment.

Our nurse practitioners provide:

Physical examinations/Sports physicals • Immunizations • Treatment for minor illness
Prescriptions for medications • Health Education and counseling
Referral for complex medical condition

All students seen must have an appointment. Please call 558-2481 to schedule an appointment today.

OUR CLINIC LOCATIONS ARE:

Washington High School
2205 Forest Dr. SE
558-2459

Metro High School
1212 7th St. SE
558-2272

Jefferson High School
1243 20th St. SW
558-2221



7-8 GRADE STUDENTS PARTICIPATING IN ATHLETICS

Medical Eligibility forms and
Concussion forms are
available on the Taft website.

Medical Eligibility forms along with the
concussion form are required to
participate. Both forms must be signed
by parent and athlete.

Physical examinations are
valid for 12 months from the
date of physical.

If you have any concerns or questions
regarding health issues for your child,
do not hesitate to call your school's
health office 319-558-2243, option #2..

TAFT FALL SPORTS SEASON (2024)

| | Coaches | First Meeting | First Practice | What do you need to bring to the first practice? | How and when do you sign-up? | Any other requirements or information |
|---|------------------------|--|---|--|---|--|
| 7th Football | Mr. Koepke | Aug 26 3:00-5:00pm, meet outside the PE domes | Aug 26 3:00-5:00, meet outside the PE domes | Shorts, t-shirts, football cleats or tennis shoes if you do not have cleats yet. | Open House, first day of school (Aug. 23), or first day of practice (Aug 26). Room 216 (Koepke) | Please get Concussion Form and Medical Eligibility Form to Clinic before first practice. |
| 8th Football | Mr. Kane, Mr. Garber | Aug 26-3:00-5:00pm, meet on the Football Field | Aug 26 3:00-5:00pm, meet on the Football Field | Shorts, t-shirts, football cleats or tennis shoes | Open House, first day of school (Aug. 23), or first day of practice (Aug 26). Room 213 (Kane) | Please get Concussion Form and Medical Eligibility Form to Clinic before first practice. |
| 7/8 Boys and Girls Cross Country | Mr. Copeland | Aug 26 3:00-4:30pm, meet outside by the bleachers on the hill | Aug 26 3:00-4:30pm, meet outside by the bleachers on the hill | Athletes should wear running clothes and running shoes | Open House or first day of practice (Aug 26) | Please get Concussion Form and Medical Eligibility Form to Clinic before first practice. |
| 7th Volleyball | Mrs. Eskridge | Aug 26 3:00-3:30pm, meet in Student Lounge | Aug 27 6:30am-7:20am, meet in the Gym | Shorts, tshirt, tennis shoes, knee pads, water bottle, and paperwork | Open House, or at first meeting on Aug 26 after school. | Please get Concussion Form and Medical Eligibility Form to Clinic before first practice. |
| 8th Volleyball | Mrs. Hinrichs | Aug 26 3:00-3:30pm, meet in gym | Aug 27 3:05-4:30pm, meet in the Gym | Practice clothes and paperwork | Open House, or at first meeting on Aug 26 after school. | Please get Concussion Form and Medical Eligibility Form to Clinic before first practice. |
| 7/8 Boys Tennis | Mrs. Seely | After school on Aug. 26th or Aug. 27th in room 107 (walk-through sign-up) | Aug 28 at the Tennis Courts at 3:05-4:30pm | Non-marking shoes, racquet, shorts with a pocket. Bring a water bottle | After school on Aug. 26th or Aug. 27th in room 107 (walk-through sign-up) | Please get Concussion Form and Medical Eligibility Form to Clinic before first practice. |
| 7/8 Girls Soccer | Mr. Jandik, Mr. Thorpe | Sign up at Open House Aug 22nd or Aug 23rd after school. Pick up schedules and turn in forms in Mr. Thorpe's room (214). | Aug 26 3:00-4:30 out on the soccer field North of the IMC | Soccer shoes, shin guards, water | Open House in Student Lounge area or the first day of school in Mr Thorpe's room 214. | Please get Concussion Form and Medical Eligibility Form to Clinic before first practice. |



HELPFUL REMINDERS TO ENSURE SUCCESS

Our students do well when they know school expectations and have parents and teachers to monitor their compliance. Please review the following with your student.

- Keep valuables at home. There is no reason to bring large amounts of money or expensive items to school.
- Adhere to Taft's "Cell Phones and Chromebook Policies"
- School is dismissed at 2:50. We expect students who are not involved in school related activities to leave school grounds immediately. If a student rides a bus, he/she is expected to get on the bus after school.
- Parents, please know when your student has completed his/her after school activity and be here on time to pick him/her up. This avoids the problems that occur when students are waiting unsupervised.
- Wear appropriate clothing that is consistent with a serious learning environment. Guidelines can be found in the Parent/Student Handbook. When in doubt, don't wear it and ask a teacher, counselor or administrator for an opinion.
- Review the definition of plagiarism. Plagiarism=Cheating. Using "cut and paste" from an Internet site and turning it in as original work is not the intent when teachers assign a report.

7-8 GRADE STUDENTS PARTICIPATING IN ATHLETICS

- Physical and Concussion forms are available on the Taft website. Physical exams along with the concussion form are required to participate.
- Both forms must be signed by parent and athlete. Physical examinations are valid for 12 months from the date of physical. If you have any concerns or questions regarding health issues for your child, do not hesitate to call your school's health office 319-558-2243, option #4.

TAFT CAFETERIA BREAKFAST AND LUNCH PROGRAM

Breakfast is available on a daily basis for the 2024-2025 school year. Breakfast will be served from 7:20-7:40 am. The cost for breakfast is \$2.35.

All lunches are 30 minutes. The cost for lunch is \$3.40. Students may pay for additional lunch items on a daily basis (no bill bigger than \$5 please) or parents/guardians may add money to their student's accounts using the online accounting system called "cedarrapids.familyportal.cloud." This is located on the Taft homepage. Milk may be purchased for 60 cents per carton. Special ala carte selections may be purchased as an alternative to the regular hot lunch.

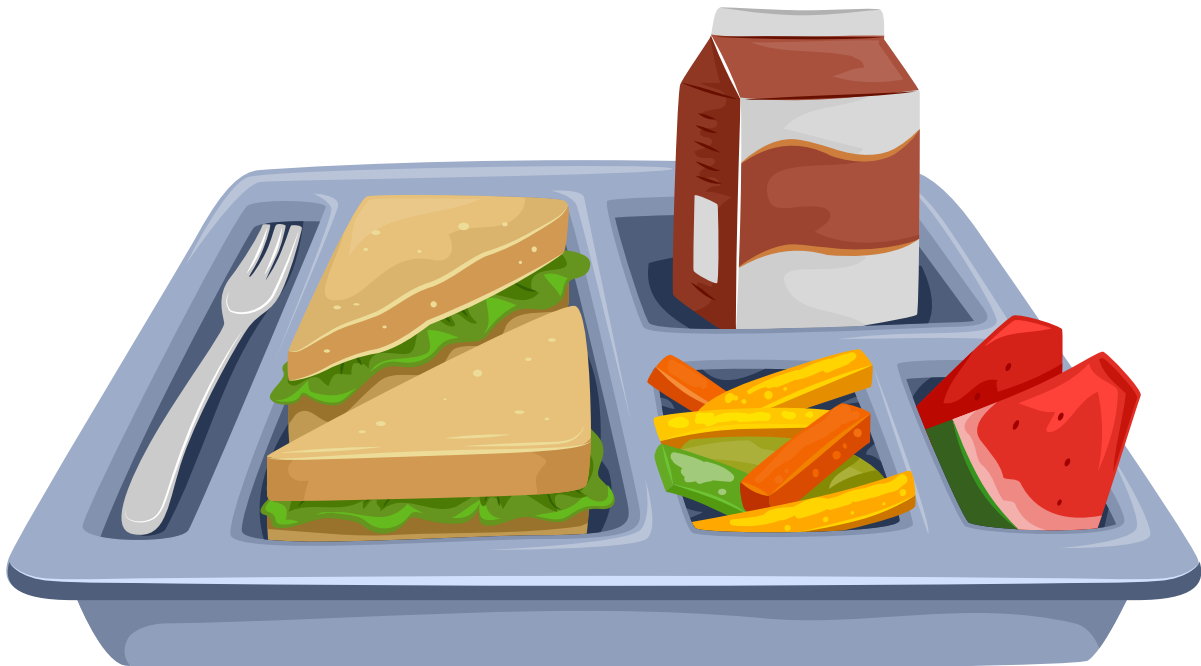
Free and Reduced Lunch

Students whose parents qualify may apply for free or reduced priced lunch by filling out the application which is located online.

Delivery of commercial prepared foods by vendors or others is not allowed.

Special Diets

If your student has a special diet form on file from a previous year and something has changed, please contact the Food and Nutrition Office at 558-2305.





TAFT
Middle School

5200 E Avenue NW
Cedar Rapids, Iowa 52405-3399
Member of the Cedar Rapids Community School District

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TAFT FIGHT SONG!
FIGHT ON TAFT, FIGHT ON
WE'LL CONQUER THE FOE.
THE TIGERS WILL WIN WHEREVER WE GO RAH! RAH! RAH!
(SHOUTED)
WE'LL SHOW OUR TRUE COLORS,
OUR SCHOOLS GREAT NAME
SO LET'S GO TAFT TIGERS,
VICTORY TO CLAIM!