

Questions and Answers on COVID Testing Available for Students and Staff

General Information

What is the COVID-19 Testing Program?

The Department of Health's Testing Program offers free, regular testing to students and staff for COVID-19. Regular testing means that testing is offered to everyone on a regular basis, even if they don't have symptoms of COVID-19.

Why does the Department of Health recommend school testing?

Testing is a safe, effective way to help prevent the spread of COVID-19, and help keep our schools open for in-person learning. Many people with COVID-19, especially children and teens, don't have symptoms, but can still spread the virus, so regular testing helps find infections before they can spread to others. This is especially important for children under 12 years old who are not yet able to get vaccinated against COVID-19, families and staff with younger children at home, and others who are not vaccinated or are otherwise at risk for getting seriously sick from COVID-19. Regular testing will help us keep students in the classroom and allow students to take part and engage in activities they value.

Does my child have to get tested to attend school in person?

No. COVID-19 tests are optional, although strongly encouraged. If you choose not to test your child, they can still attend school in-person. Students will not be tested without both the student and guardian giving their consent.

Does my child have to get tested to take part in school sports and extracurricular activities?

No. COVID-19 tests are optional at this time, although strongly encouraged. If you choose not to test your child, they can still take part in school sports and extracurricular activities. Students will not be tested without both the student and guardian giving their consent.

My child is fully vaccinated. Do they need to be tested to attend school in person?

No. Current CDC guidance states that if your child is fully vaccinated, they do not need to be tested unless they develop COVID-19 symptoms or have been in close contact with a person with COVID-19. Testing will be recommended in accordance with CDC testing guidance.

How will the school protect my child's privacy?

Testing results will be shared only for public health purposes, which may include notifying close contacts that they may have been exposed to COVID-19 and taking other steps to prevent the further spread of COVID-19 in your school community. **Information sharing and notifying of contacts will be done in a way that protects your child's privacy.** Sharing of information about your child will only be done in accordance with applicable law and policies protecting student privacy and the security of your child's data.

How the Program Works

How will the testing be done?

The COVID-19 tests will be free, quick and easy. Parents will accompany their child to the testing location. Depending on the testing location, they will use a viral test known as [an antigen (rapid) test, which returns a result in as little as 15 minutes or a nucleic acid amplification (NAAT) test that is conducted by a lab and takes about 24 hours to get results back]. This test will tell if your child has a current COVID-19 infection, regardless of whether they have symptoms.

How is the test given?

The test will involve either a nasal swab, an oral swab, or spitting into a tube depending on the testing location. It is a quick and easy test.

[For nasal tests] This nasal test gently swabs the inner part of the lower nostril. The test is not painful.

[For saliva tests] This involves taking a saliva sample.

When and where will the test be given?

Parents will have the option of selecting the time and testing location. Listed below are possible testing locations.

- 19 City MD Locations
- 19 CVS Locations
- 15 Quest Locations
- 14 Go Health (Northwell) Locations
- 11 STAT Health Locations
- 11 Walgreens 11 Locations
- 10 Sun River Health Location
- 6 Rite Aid Locations
- 5 ProHealth Catholic Services Locations
- 4 Long Island Urgent Care Locations
- 3 MD 365 Locations
- 3 Enzo Labs Locations
- 2 American Family Urgent Care Locations
- 2 Excel Urgent Care Locations

Will my child miss class to get tested?

It is highly recommended that parents schedule testing appointments before or after school, so as not to interfere with your child's class schedules.

What if my child tests positive?

We will ask you to keep your child home. You will be asked to provide information about your child's close contacts, so that everyone who has been exposed can be notified. The district, as well as the Department of Health contact tracers will be in contact to discuss medical care and other support for your child and family.

What if someone in my child's school tests positive?

If your child was exposed to someone who has COVID-19, the district will be in contact to discuss what actions to take. A COVID-19 test will tell us what further preventative actions are needed.