



Bedford Public Schools COVID-19 Testing Program

Consent

To view and complete the state provided test consent form for staff members or on behalf of your child, please click [here](#).

Families with more than one child enrolled in the Bedford Public Schools will need to complete a consent for each child.

Please note for students and staff that to participate in any aspects of our testing program we must have a signed consent on file before any testing can occur.

COVID-19 Testing Overview

1. **Symptomatic testing** is used when a student shows symptoms of COVID-19 during school. As always, students should not come to school if they are feeling ill at home. Some symptoms of the virus look identical to other illnesses like the cold or flu and this rapid test tells us whether a symptomatic student has COVID-19 or not. This is a rapid test, and we receive the results within 15 minutes.
2. **Routine COVID safety checks** minimize disruption to learning by helping us catch potential spread of the virus before it starts. Each student administers the safety check on a weekly basis samples are collected at school in groups of 5-10 individuals. The samples are grouped together at the lab and all samples in the group are tested for COVID -19 together. In almost all cases it will take less than 24 hours to receive safety check results. Students can continue to come to school while awaiting results.
3. **Test and stay** allows students who have had close contact with a person who tested positive for COVID-19 while at school to stay in school if the student is not showing symptoms. Instead of needing to quarantine and miss school, these students will take a daily rapid test while they remain in school as long as they are not symptomatic. Students participate in the test and stay for at least 5 days after they may have been exposed.

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Symptomatic Testing

It is imperative that individuals who develop symptoms at home remain home and do not attend school.

Students and staff demonstrating the following symptoms will be considered a possible case of COVID:

One of the following:

- Fever 100°F or higher, chills or shaking chills
- Difficulty breathing/Shortness of Breath
- New loss of taste or smell
- Muscle aches or body aches

Two or more of the following:

- Cough (not associated to known cause)
- Chills/Rigors
- Sore throat
- Headache
- Nausea/Vomiting
- Diarrhea
- Nasal congestion/ Runny nose
- Muscle aches
- Fatigue

There may be times that students or staff develop symptoms while in school. In such cases individuals may be tested for COVID-19 using a rapid antigen test, Abbot BinaxNOW. Individual nasal swabs are collected from the lower portion of the nose and tested by the building-based school nurse. Results will be obtained in 15 minutes.

Those testing negative and with mild/isolated symptoms AND the school nurse deems it appropriate the symptomatic individual may be allowed to remain in school. All positive test results will be dismissed from school as soon as possible to begin isolation. Positive test results will be reported to the Massachusetts Department of Public Health and the Bedford Health Department

Any student/staff member who remains home due to COVID-19 symptoms should seek advice from his/her primary care physician and obtain a referral for additional COVID-19 testing. Any student/staff member who does not wish to be tested and has not received an alternative diagnosis from their primary care physician may return to school 10 days from the start of symptoms, if their symptoms have improved, and they have been fever free without fever reducing medication for at least 24 hours prior to their return.

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COVID-19 Testing Weekly COVID Safety Checks (aka “pooled testing”)

Participating in a weekly testing program is easy! Routine weekly safety checks will keep schools safe by identifying positive cases before they spread.

Once a week at school, participating students and staff will provide a weekly sample via two quick, non-invasive lower nasal swabs.

- Please note that this is a **NEW** process where each individual provides two swabs - one for a pooled test and a second sample for individual PCR testing if necessary to identify the positive case in a pool.
- With this process there is no need for quarantine while waiting to be called in for rapid antigen test follow up.
- If a pool returns a positive result, each member of the pool's second swab will be tested (PCR molecular test) to identify the individual who tested positive for COVID-19.
- If a pool returns a negative result, no COVID-19 was detected.

Test and Stay

For when individuals are identified as close contacts of a COVID-19 positive individual while at school.

- Samples are collected at school using the BinaxNOW rapid antigen test
- Tests are administered daily for at least seven days from the date of exposure
- As long as individuals test negative and are free from symptoms, they can stay in school.
- Please note: Test and Stay is only for close contacts identified in the school setting.

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FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

1. **Does the swab hurt? I've heard COVID-19 testing swabs can be painful.**
2. Unlike other COVID-19 tests, the sample collection swabbing will just be in the very lower part of the nose, and is not painful.
3. **If my child doesn't have symptoms, why bother testing them?**
Individuals can be completely free of COVID-19 symptoms (or asymptomatic), but still capable of transmitting COVID-19 to others. By participating in testing you are helping protect others in the school who may be more vulnerable, and you are helping to limit asymptomatic spread and keep our schools open.
4. **Is there a cost to participate?**
No, there is no cost to individuals to participate.
5. **Does my child have to participate?**
No. Participation is a choice, and while we hope everyone in our community chooses to contribute to this effort to keep our schools safe, health, and open, we will respect every family's decision, and no child will be made to feel stigmatized or singled-out for not participating.
6. **How will I receive notification of routine safety check test results?**
You will receive a direct notification by phone if your child tests positive. A general notification will be made each week by email when all routine safety check test results have been received and no further results are outstanding
7. **What will the weekly test results tell us?**
The test will tell us if COVID-19 was detected. A negative test result means that SARS-CoV-2, the virus that causes COVID-19, was not detected. A positive test result means that SARS-CoV-2 was present.
8. **Is there a potential for false positives?**
Yes, all COVID-19 tests have the potential for a false positive, but in last year's state-wide testing program false positives were very rare.
9. **How long does the consent last for and can I revoke consent if I do not want to continue?**
Consent is provided for the duration of this year's program, and families can revoke consent at any time by emailing the school nurse at your child's school (contact information below).
10. **If I have received a COVID-19 vaccine can I still participate?**
Yes! Having received a COVID-19 vaccination does not cause false positives, and continuing to participate after receiving the vaccination provides a useful mitigation against the possibility of asymptomatic infection after vaccination (as no vaccine is 100% effective).
11. **If I have previously tested positive for COVID-19, can I still participate in weekly safety check testing?**
After testing positive for COVID-19, you must wait 90 days to return to weekly safety check testing in order to avoid false positives.

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13. Can individuals identified as a close contact while at home (i.e., non-school based close contact) return to school and participate in the Test and Stay program?

Per DESE/DPH, the Test and Stay program is intended for school-based close contacts only.

Need to reach your school nurse?

Please do not hesitate to contact your school nurse with any questions. Please be sure to reach out if your child is ill, has been identified as a close contact to someone with COVID-19, or has tested positive..

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Tracy Fernald	JGMS	Tracy_Fernald@bedfordps.org	781-275-3165
Kathy Webster	Lane	Kathy_Webster@bedfordps.org	781-275-7623
Jennifer Capece	Davis	Jennifer_Capece@bedfordps.org	781-918-4906

For more information:

[DESE Protocols for Responding to COVID-19 Scenarios](#)
[COVID-19 Protocols Flowcharts August 30, 2021](#)
[DESE's Testing Protocol](#)