



Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education

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Jeffrey C. Riley
Commissioner

COVID-19 TESTING INFORMATION FOR PARENT/GUARDIANS

Date: Friday, September 10, 2021

Dear Parent(s) and Guardian(s):

The Public Schools of Northborough and Southborough, working in partnership with the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE), is offering a COVID-19 testing program as an extra layer of protection to prevent the spread of COVID-19. This program has three components:

1. Symptomatic testing for students who show symptoms of COVID-19 at school,
2. Routine COVID-19 safety checks to prevent the spread of the virus undetected among students who are not showing symptoms, and
3. Test and stay for students who may have been exposed while in school but are not showing symptoms. Each of these is a quick, non-invasive nasal swab OR saliva sample that is collected under the supervision of a school nurse or trained health provider. Unlike COVID-19 tests of the past, these are not uncomfortable and are easy for students to do themselves.

Students can only participate with permission from a parent or guardian. It is important to the Public Schools of Northborough and Southborough that you are fully informed regarding the process and that we can answer any questions that you might have in advance of asking you to sign the [consent form](#). Below we describe each of the three parts of our testing program, how they are conducted, and what they are used for.

Symptomatic testing is used when a student is showing symptoms of COVID-19 during school; **students should not come to school if they are feeling sick while at home**. Some symptoms of the virus look identical to other illnesses like the cold or flu, and this test may tell us whether a symptomatic student has COVID-19 or not. This is a rapid test, and we receive the results of this test within 15 minutes. If a student has minimal symptoms and tests negative, they can remain in school. If the student has moderate symptoms or multiple symptoms they will be dismissed and will need a negative PCR to return to school.

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 home and dropped off at school. The samples are grouped together in the lab. Once the samples get to the lab, all the 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 safety check results; they do not need to quarantine while awaiting results. With the program we are using we will know the positive individual(s) in a pool from the original sample.

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 test and stay for at least seven days after the last exposure to the positive individual.

If a student tests positive for COVID-19, they must isolate at home for the CDC-recommended ten days since symptoms appeared or ten days since the positive test before returning to school. The student must also be without a fever for 24 hours.

Although students who are vaccinated are much less likely to spread or contract the virus, all students regardless of vaccine status are welcome to participate in these programs.

To participate in the program, you must complete the [consent form](#) on behalf of your student. There is no charge for participating. To learn more about our COVID-19 testing program, please see [DESE Testing and Quarantine Protocols](#). If you have additional questions regarding the program, please contact Mary Ellen Duggan at mduggan@nsboro.k12.ma.us.

It is our hope that these measures will work together to keep our schools safe and your student in school. Thanks again for your support during this challenging time. We look forward to a great school year!

Respectfully,

Gregory L. Martineau
Superintendent of Schools