

WINDHAM SOUTHWEST SUPERVISORY UNION

Office of the Superintendent of Schools

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Stamford Searsburg Halifax Readsboro Twin Valley Unified Union SD

November 23, 2021

Dear WSWSU Families, Faculty, and Staff,

I know that this has been an incredibly challenging Fall for many. I want to express my appreciation for all that you are doing to help our students remain in school. Amidst all of the stressors surrounding education during a pandemic, our principals, teachers, and staff are continuing to put the children at the center of all they do. I am very proud of everyone for persevering and doing their absolute best during so much unprecedented change. In light of the growing concerns surrounding COVID-19 we will be taking on COVID-19 Response Testing at each of our schools in order to help mitigate the spread of COVID-19 and maintain in-person instruction as much as possible.

The Vermont Agency of Education has issued a memorandum entitled [School COVID-19 Response Testing Overview](#) outlining their COVID-19 Response Testing programs.

The COVID-19 Response Testing Programs Include Three (3) Different Test Types:

1. **Rapid Antigen Testing (Test to Stay)** based on the AOE guidance, this may be used for students and staff who are unvaccinated, asymptomatic, and identified as close contacts of someone within the school who has tested positive for COVID-19.
2. **In-School PCR Testing** based on the AOE guidance, this may be used for individual students and staff who are vaccinated or large groups of students and staff who are symptomatic.
3. **Take-Home PCR Testing** based on the AOE guidance, this may be used for symptomatic students and their families who need to stay at home.

How to Participate:

In order to participate in the school COVID-19 Response Testing programs, a parent/guardian must register. Please note that each child must be registered separately. You may register online here:

- [Twin Valley Schools](https://simplereport.gov/register/XNWE9) - simplereport.gov/register/XNWE9
- [Halifax School](https://simplereport.gov/register/H4XY3) - simplereport.gov/register/H4XY3
- [Readsboro School](https://simplereport.gov/register/7HWGY) - simplereport.gov/register/7HWGY
- [Stamford School](https://simplereport.gov/register/YV4MV) - simplereport.gov/register/YV4MV

If you need help registering, please contact your school and they will help walk you through the online registration.

When COVID-19 Response Testing Will Start at Each School:

I am actively working with our principals and nursing staff on how we can best implement the COVID-19 Response Testing programs in each school. While we anticipate our being ready to begin in early December, the Response Testing Programs may roll-out at different times from school-to-school based on when we receive our tests, personal protective equipment (PPE), and biohazardous waste removal subcontract from the State. Once all of this is received from the State, the principal of your school will announce the exact start date and times.

How Will the Rapid Antigen Testing (Test to Stay) Program Work Based on AOE Guidelines:

Please note that these guidelines from the AOE are constantly evolving and may change within the coming weeks.

1. Is my child required to participate in school COVID-19 Response Testing programs?

No. Participation is completely voluntary and optional.

2. Is my child eligible for the rapid antigen test (Test to Stay)?

If your child is unvaccinated, they are eligible to receive a rapid antigen test. If your child is vaccinated, they are not eligible for a rapid antigen test.

3. When will school COVID-19 Response Testing be available for my child?

You will receive specific dates and details regarding school COVID-19 Response Testing by your school principal, based on when each school receives their tests and other needed supplies from the State.

4. Are the rapid antigen tests (Test to Stay) available for unvaccinated school staff too?

Yes, unvaccinated school staff are also eligible to receive the rapid antigen test.

5. How do I give permission for my child to participate in school COVID-19 Response Testing programs?

A parent/guardian must register online at your child's school link below. Please note that each child must be registered separately.

- [Twin Valley Schools](https://simplereport.gov/register/XNWE9) - simplereport.gov/register/XNWE9
- [Halifax School](https://simplereport.gov/register/H4XY3) - simplereport.gov/register/H4XY3
- [Readsboro School](https://simplereport.gov/register/7HWGY) - simplereport.gov/register/7HWGY
- [Stamford School](https://simplereport.gov/register/YV4MV) - simplereport.gov/register/YV4MV

6. Do all of my children need to participate in rapid antigen testing (Test to Stay) if only one of my children has been identified as a close contact/must quarantine?

No, siblings of an identified close contact do not need to be tested unless the school has also asked the sibling to quarantine.

7. When I register for the school COVID-19 Response testing program, am I registering for all three (3) Response testing tools?

Yes. When a parent/guardian registers to participate in the school COVID-19 Response testing program, they are consenting to all three (3) response testing tools: 1) Rapid Antigen Testing, 2) In-School PCR Testing, and 3) Take Home PCR Testing.

8. Who will be administering the rapid antigen test (Test to Stay) to my child?

Test kits can be self-administered by people ages 15 and up. An adult must collect the swab for students ages five (5) through fourteen (14). Most tests will be administered by the parent/guardian who is bringing their child to school to participate in the rapid antigen test (Test to Stay). Otherwise, the rapid antigen test (Test to Stay) will be administered by school personnel.

9. Who will be sent home from school?

All symptomatic students and staff will be sent home. Those who have a positive rapid antigen test will be sent home.

10. In general, what will the rapid antigen test (Test to Stay) process look like?

Parents/guardians may bring their child (identified as a close contact) to school on a school day (at a time identified by the principal) to have the rapid antigen test performed. The child's nose will be swabbed and the results will be given in 15-20 minutes.

If negative, the child may attend school that day. The parents/guardians may bring the child to school the next school day to receive a rapid antigen test until seven (7) days have elapsed from the date of last exposure to the case. If you have any questions about this, please ask your school nurse.

If positive, the child must return home and stay home following the VT DOH quarantine guidance.

11. Is there more information on the school Response COVID-19 Testing programs?

Yes. Please click here to view the AOE's [2021-22 Vermont School COVID-19 Testing Program FAQ](#).

Please click here to view infographics on the AOE's [School COVID-19 Testing Protocol](#).

If you have further questions, please call your school nurse or principal.

Thank you for your continued support and flexibility as we navigate through this pandemic together.

Sincerely,

Barbara Anne Komons-Montroll
Superintendent