



Littleton Public Schools
Town of Littleton, MA

COVID-19 Testing Program

Program Overview

9/9/2021



Looking back...



During the 2020-21 school year, the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE) and the Executive Office of Health and Human Services (EOHHS) introduced COVID-19 screening and diagnostic testing in the school setting as an additional mitigation strategy for COVID-19, the first program of its kind nationwide.

Moving forward



EOHHS and DESE made diagnostic and routine (weekly) COVID pooled testing services available at no cost to participating districts and schools through the end of the 2021-22 school year, under a single contract with the testing provider [CIC Health](#).

Pooled Testing or COVID Safety Checks?

**Is it called "routine covid pooled testing"
or "routine covid safety checks"?**

The testing strategy known as “Pooled Testing” is now referred to by DESE as “Routine COVID Pooled Testing” for districts and schools.

DESE conducted focus groups with representative groups of parents/guardians to identify barriers to participation. A key takeaway was that the phrase “pooled testing” did not engender trust – parents were led to believe that their students would be kept out of school. They equated the word “pooled” to “random” which sounded inaccurate and inefficient.

Using the phrase “Routine COVID Safety Checks” produced positive reactions from the focus group.



What is the value in COVID safety checks?



- **Keep Kids and Staff Safe:** catch cases before they spread to other students and staff
- **Keep our Schools Open:** prevent further time away from in-person learning and friends by knowing whether it's COVID, cold, or flu
- **Stop the Spread:** prevent infecting another member of your household or community

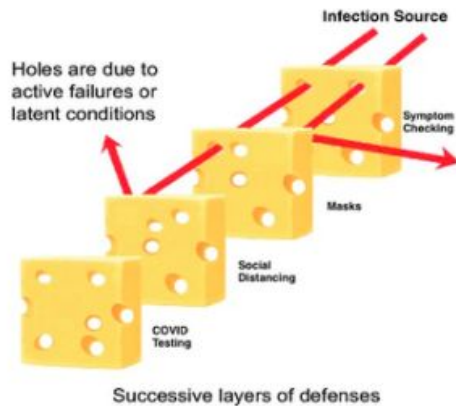
CDC ENDORSEMENT

[CDC's K12 School Operational Strategy](#) endorses the use of Routine COVID Safety Checks for students as an additional layer of safety for schools in Moderate, Substantial and High Transmission areas.

Do we still need to wear masks and distance?

Routine checks do not replace other mitigation measures, such as face masks. Rather, it should be a component of layered mitigation strategies to minimize in-school transmission.

The swiss cheese model shows how COVID testing is another layer of support that helps limit transmission in schools even further.



Source: CIC Health



Nose Swab

Used for: Routine COVID Safety Checks

Our new swab tests are painless, fast, and so easy even a kindergartener can do it. It is not the “brain swab.” It only goes in the lower nostril.

Results: in 24-48 hours

Overseen by: school nurse



BinaxNOW Swab

Used for: Contact Tracing/“Test and Stay”

This is a nose swab in the lower nostril, which is painless, fast, and easy. It is administered by a trained individual.

Results: in 15 minutes

Overseen by: school nurse

Routine COVID Safety Checks Parent Toolkit – Step by Step Process



1

Student Gives Sample
(Swab or Saliva)



2

Return to Class



3

Lab Tests Sample
(24-48 hours)



4

Outreach to any Positive COVID-19 Cases
(isolate and learn remotely)



5

Contact Tracing Starts
("Test and Stay": anyone without symptoms can do a rapid test for 5 days and stay in school to learn)



6

Routine COVID Safety Check Complete!

"TEST AND STAY" PROTOCOL



1

Close Contacts Notified

Anyone who considered "close contact" based on exposure.



2

"Test and Stay"

anyone without symptoms: rapid test daily for 5 days and stay in school to learn



3

Return to Routine COVID Safety Checks

After 5 days

Diagnostic Testing - SYMPTOMATIC

Symptomatic Testing:

(for when individuals present symptoms while at school;

individuals should not go to school if experiencing symptoms while at home):

Shallow nasal swab samples are collected at school using the BinaxNOW rapid antigen test



Diagnostic Testing - TEST & STAY



"Test and Stay"

(close contact testing):

Shallow nasal swab samples are collected at school using the BinaxNOW rapid antigen test or another approved diagnostic test.

Tests are administered daily from the first day of exposure for at least five (5) days.

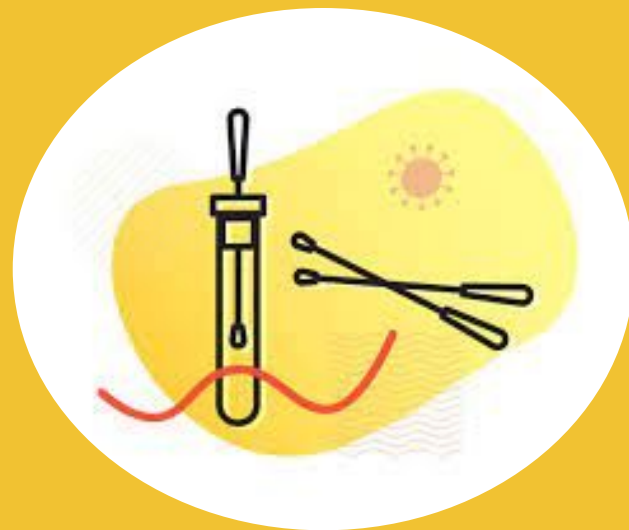
CIC Health staff will be able to assist in determining when an individual has completed the maximum number of testing days.

Routine COVID Pooled Testing (COVID Safety Checks)

Routine COVID Pooled Testing and Lab-Based Follow-Up Testing – *two sample collection:*

two samples are collected at school, after which both specimens are transported to the laboratory; If a pool is positive, individual Follow-Up testing occurs at the lab using the second sample originally collected.

- o Samples are collected through a nasal swab
- o Samples must be collected at school. Students may collect through observed self-collection
- o Samples are processed at the Broad Institute
- o A maximum of ten samples are included in each pool





Providing Consent

Q.

Are the consent forms for the SY21-22 DESE testing program the same as the ones used for SY20-21?

A.

No. The consent forms for SY21-22 are different, and all individuals will need to re-consent to testing for the upcoming school year. The new consent form allows for schools/districts to acquire consent for all three modes of testing – symptomatic, test and stay, and routine COVID pooled testing – through one form.



Providing Consent

Q.

Can consent be acquired at any time, or only at the beginning of the school year?

A.

Consent may be acquired at any point in the school year.



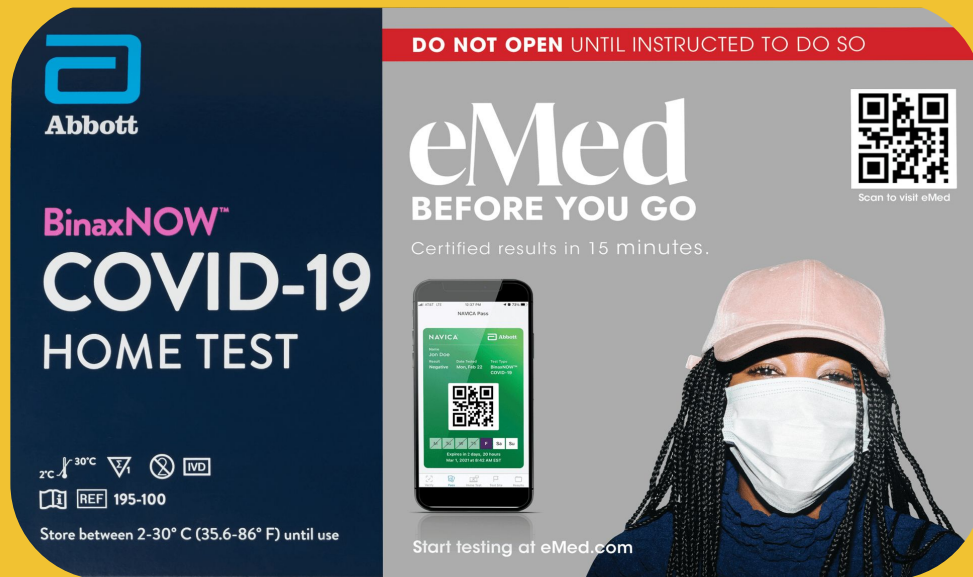
eMed

Q.

Can the eMed at-home BinaxNOW tests be used for Test and Stay?

A.

EMed tests may be utilized only if an individual who is currently in the Test and Stay protocol is participating in an athletic or extracurricular activity on a weekend or non-school day.



Additional FAQs

Q. Can schools/districts change testing modes during the school year?

A. Yes. A school/district may choose to add or subtract a testing mode at any point during the school year by coordinating with their program coordinator at CIC Health.

Q. Can public school districts mandate COVID-19 testing?

A. No, participation in testing is optional and parents/guardians must provide informed consent to participate in the program.

2021-2022

Protocols
for Responding to COVID-19 Scenarios
DESE/DPH

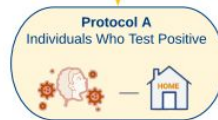


Protocol A

Protocol A: Individual Tests Positive for COVID-19



GO HOME



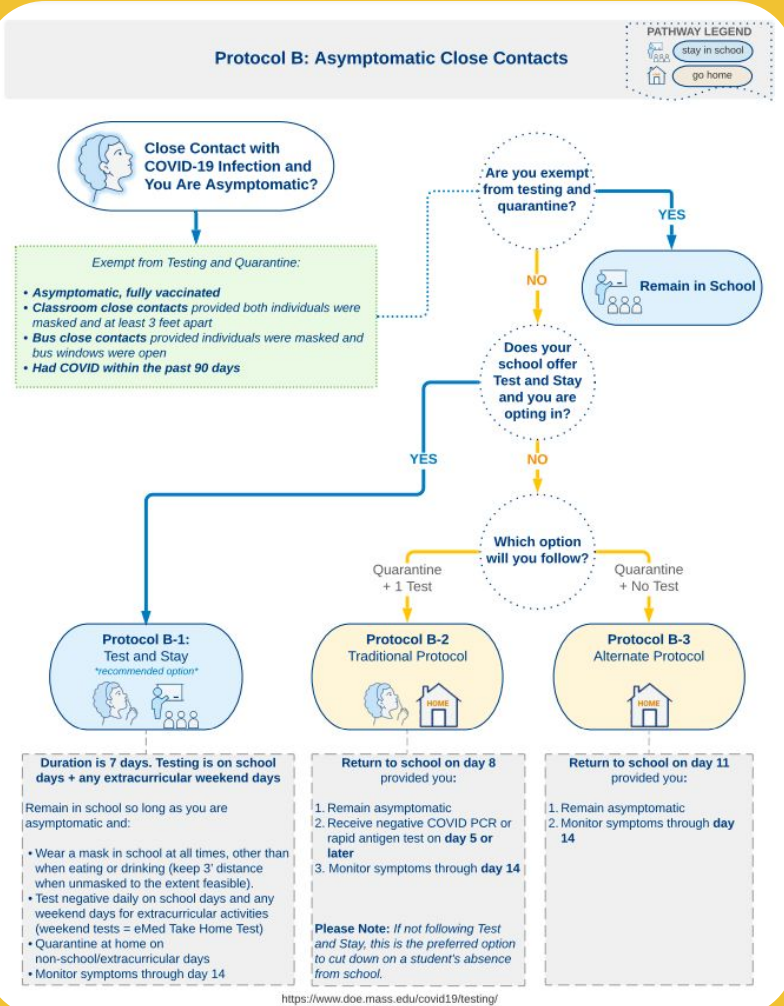
Return to school on day 11 and once:

1. Symptoms improve
2. Fever-free without fever-reducing medicine for 24 hours

Please Note:

- The 10-day period starts with onset of symptoms or after positive PCR or antigen test if individual is asymptomatic.
 - If individual tests positive as part of a pooled test, the 10-day period begins the day the pooled test returned a positive result.
- Individuals who do not meet these criteria after 10 days should receive clearance from either public health authority contract tracers (the local board of health of Community Tracing Collaborative) or school health professionals before returning to school.
- Return to school should be based on time and symptoms resolution. It is not recommended that individuals take another COVID test prior to return.

Protocol B



Protocol C

