

School-based Testing

Keeping school buildings open depends upon awareness of and immediate action on any COVID-19 concerns in our buildings. To do this, we need students and staff in our buildings to get tested! That's why we're bringing testing directly into schools beginning in October 2020. Our testing partners will come to district schools, every month, and test a randomly selected group of staff and students from grades 1-12. The number of people to be tested will depend on the size of the school, but will consist of 10-20% of a school's population each month, students and staff included. Schools throughout the city will be tested every day for the remainder of the month.

This random testing program is separate and in addition to the State's required weekly testing in Yellow Zone schools. Those schools, as well as the schools currently closed in Red and Orange zones, will not be included in the first cycle of random testing beginning in October. You can view an interactive map of the zones, and look up your address, at the New York State [Covid Zone Finder \(Open external link\)](#). This testing initiative is organized by our partners at NYC Health + Hospitals, the New York City Department of Health and Mental Hygiene (DOHMH), and the NYC Test & Trace Corps. In addition to the random monthly testing, we are also working hard to offer in-school testing later this year for students who are showing symptoms of COVID-19, or are a confirmed close contact of someone in the school who has tested positive. The test is easy, quick, and safe. Instead of the "long swab" that goes in the back of the nose, this test is a short, small swab (like a Q-Tip) that goes just in the front of the nose. Later this school year, it is possible that tests will be administered by collecting a small amount of saliva (spit). The whole test will take about two minutes.

- In order for us to administer a COVID-19 test to your child, we need your consent. We strongly encourage you to sign and return the consent form, below, as soon as you receive it from your school.
- If you have a [NYC Schools Account \(NYCSA\)](#), you can complete the consent form electronically through the web application. If you revoke consent for testing through NYCSA, please notify your child's school as well.

- Don't have a [New York City Schools Account](#)? **Get one today!**
- Read the [letter from Chancellor Carranza](#) about the testing (translations also available).

We want to assure you that if your child is selected for testing but is uncomfortable or unable to be tested, we will not test your child and will work with you to address any concerns so that they can participate in future testing. We are focused on making this a brief, and gentle experience for our students, led by trained testers.

If your child is tested, we will let you know they were tested and when and how you will receive the results, which will typically be provided within 48-72 hours.

Visit the Supplemental Information for [Parents About DOE Agreements With Outside Entities](#) to read answers to a number of questions vendors provided about their privacy and data security practices. The vendors are BioReference Laboratories, Fulgent Genetics, and Somos Healthcare.

Consent Forms

Español

- **Student COVID-19 Testing Consent Form**

Available in

- [Student COVID-19 Testing Consent Form -- English \(Open external link\)](#)
- [Student COVID-19 Testing Consent Form -- Spanish \(Open external link\)](#)
- [Student COVID-19 Testing Consent Form -- Chinese \(Open external link\)](#)
- [Student COVID-19 Testing Consent Form -- Bangla \(Open external link\)](#)
- [Student COVID-19 Testing Consent Form -- Russian \(Open external link\)](#)
- [Student COVID-19 Testing Consent Form -- Urdu \(Open external link\)](#)
- [Student COVID-19 Testing Consent Form -- Arabic \(Open external link\)](#)
- [Student COVID-19 Testing Consent Form -- Haitian \(Open external link\)](#)
- [Student COVID-19 Testing Consent Form -- Korean \(Open external link\)](#)
- [Student COVID-19 Testing Consent Form -- French \(Open external link\)](#)

Staff can use the [Health Screening application \(Open external link\)](#) to quickly and easily give consent to testing, or can use the [consent form](#)

[\(Open external link\)](#) (log in to the InfoHub for access) to print out and return to your school.

Testing Results

Visit the [COVID In-school Testing Results](#) page to get school-based, borough and citywide data on testing.

Frequently Asked Questions

General Information

What is this form?

We are seeking your consent to test your child for COVID-19 infection. The New York City Department of Education (NYC DOE), working with NYC Health + Hospitals and the New York City Department of Health and Mental Hygiene, has partnered with laboratories and other providers to test NYC DOE students, teachers, and staff members for COVID-19 infection.

How often would you test my child?

We are arranging for our laboratory and provider testing partners to come to every school at least once a month to test some of the students and staff. If you consent, your child may be selected for testing on one or more of these occasions. In addition, your child may also be tested throughout the school year (1) in accordance with state and city mandates, such as weekly testing in schools in Yellow Zones, or (2) if they exhibit one or more symptoms of COVID-19, or (3) if they are a close contact of a student, teacher, or staff person with COVID-19 infection.

What is the test?

If you consent, your child will receive a free diagnostic test for the COVID-19 virus. The attached letter provides more information about the types of tests that may be used. Collecting a specimen for testing involves inserting a small swab, similar to a Q-Tip, into the front of the nose and/or collecting saliva (spit).

How will I know if my child tests positive?

If your child has a specimen collected for testing at school, we will send information home with them to let you know. COVID-19 test results will generally be provided within 48-72 hours.

What should I do when I receive my child's test results?

If your child's test results are positive, please contact your child's doctor immediately to review the test results and discuss what you should do next. You should keep your child at home and inform your child's school. If your child's test results are negative, this means that the virus was not detected in your child's specimen. Tests sometimes produce incorrect negative results (called "false negatives") in people who have COVID-19. If your child tests negative but has symptoms of COVID-19, or if you have concerns about your child's exposure to COVID-19, you should call your child's doctor. If you need help finding a doctor, call (844) NYC-4NYC.

Consent from Families

How long is my consent in effect?

Your consent will remain in effect until September 30, 2021. However, you can withdraw consent at any time.

How do I withdraw consent?

Notify your child's school in writing. Your school will designate a contact to receive these communications.

Testing Process

Will all students be tested?

All district school students participating in blended learning in grades 1-12 may be included in the random sample.

Who will be testing my child?

A trained individual will conduct the test. Testing will be provided by, among others, school nurses, City staff, and our partners: SOMOS, Bio Reference Laboratory, and Fulgent Genetics.

How will the testing work?

Once a month, one of these providers will visit your child's school with a randomly selected list of students and staff to be tested that day. The testing provider will set up in a designated area in the school. Staff from the school or the testing team will visit the appropriate classroom to retrieve students from that class who have been selected to be tested that day; those students will be escorted to the testing area, tested quickly, and then escorted back to their classroom.

What test will be used? Is it painful?

The test will use a "short swab" (similar to a Q-tip) that is inserted into the front part of the nose for five to ten seconds. We understand that some students may be nervous about testing, but the test is not painful and should not be uncomfortable for your child. The test should take no more than two minutes from start to finish.

Will all tests be done by a trained tester, or can some students self-administer tests?

Some of the test kits can be self-administered. Self-administered means that you can open the kit and follow the directions for inserting a small swab (like a Q-tip) into the front of both nostrils. In schools with these kits, some older students may be able to self-administer their test if they choose, under the supervision of a testing provider or school staff member.

Are students escorted to the testing area in a group or one-by-one? Will more than one student be waiting in an area to be tested?

Students will be escorted with any members of their class/pod who are also being tested. Social distancing will be maintained at all times. Face coverings will be worn at all times, except for the very short period when a student must remove their covering to allow for collection of the test specimen.

Can parents accompany their children to be tested?

Unfortunately, no. To maintain the classroom pods and reduce the risk of COVID-19 being introduced into the building, parents will not be able to accompany their children during the test. We understand that this may feel scary, particularly for younger children. Our trained staff will ensure the testing is performed swiftly, gently, and in a positive environment for all children.

How long is the testing process expected to take?

The cotton swab is in the nose for five to ten seconds, so the entire process of explaining the test to the child and then swabbing them generally takes only minutes.

How long will my child be out of class?

The testing will not take long. We do not expect any child to be out of class for more than 15-30 minutes total from the time that they are picked up at their classroom until they are escorted back to class.

My child is not comfortable communicating in English. Will interpreters be available to explain the process to students who are multilingual learners? If so, how will this be arranged?

Every testing partner will have policies and procedures for how they provide services to individuals in their preferred language. Please communicate with your principal in advance if you have specific concerns.

What if my child cannot be tested due to their documented disability?

If your child has a documented disability and testing would impair your child's mental or physical health due to that disability, please contact your school to discuss how to proceed.

If I get my child tested elsewhere, can I share those results and be released from in-school mandatory testing?

No. To have an accurate understanding of each school population, testing for this program must be performed on a single day, in the school building, and by one provider. If your child is tested at an outside location and they test positive you must keep your child home and report that test to your principal. However, no outside test can be counted in the monthly survey.

How often will my child be tested?

Testing will occur at each school once per month. Your child will not be tested more than once per month unless they are displaying symptoms of COVID-19 or have close contact with someone who is confirmed positive for COVID-19. Some children may be chosen for monthly testing more than once during the school year.

When/how will I know if my child has been chosen for testing?

You will be notified by your school about two days before your school is scheduled to be tested. By consenting, your child may be included in the random sample for the testing day. If your child is tested, you will be notified after school that day.

How can I help prepare my child for the test (especially for younger children)?

You should talk to your child about testing. We encourage you to tell them that the doctors, nurses, and other health professionals at school need to make sure they are healthy, so they are going to do a test for the virus by rubbing a small cotton swab inside the front part of their nose. Remind your child that it's okay that the school performs this test and that it's quick, safe, and gentle.

Are staff being tested?

Yes, we are asking all staff and students in school buildings to participate in the testing program.

Test Results

When will results be available?

Results will be available within 48-72 hours after the sample is taken.

When will I receive my child's results?

In most instances, parents/guardians will receive results no more than 48 hours after the specimen arrives at the laboratory. You will be able to log into an online portal to access your child's results. If your child tests positive, you will also receive a call from the provider who completed the testing.

What happens if my child tests positive?

You should keep your child home from school and contact their physician. Additionally, the Test & Trace Corps will contact your family to provide resources, connections to care if you require support, and to discuss how to keep your child and other household members safe. The school will also be notified to ensure steps are taken to protect other members of the school community. The Test & Trace Corps will provide your family with resources and will monitor your family for symptoms for 10 to 14 days.

Will overall results from testing across a school be shared with the school community?

Yes, but names or any other identifying information of the children or staff who test positive will not be released. You can see the statistical results for testing in your child's school on our [Testing Program Results](#) page.

Will the DOE/City ensure that my child's personal information remains confidential?

Any information related to in-school testing is confidential and protected under the New York City Health Code and other local, state, and federal laws. We will store information securely, and only DOE and city staff will have access to test results by name and other personal information.

What happens to the testing specimen?

The process works exactly the same as if you went to your regular doctor and had a blood test or a COVID-19 test—all information and any collected specimens are handled exactly the same way. The laboratory partners we work with use specimens for no other purpose than COVID-19 testing, and each specimen is destroyed as soon as a COVID-19 clinical result is successfully issued. In all cases, our partners operate under strict privacy and confidentiality protocols.

Where and how will test results be stored?

Results will be sent to two places: to the State and City Departments of Health, where all communicable disease results are sent; and to the Test & Trace Corps and associated City staff to facilitate closing of classrooms or school buildings and to support contact tracing as necessary to ensure we protect all students, staff, and family members. These entities operate under strict privacy and confidentiality protocols.

Priority Testing Outside of Schools

Get [information and locations](#) for testing at 22 Health and Hospital (H+H) testing sites during the 2020-2021 school year. Testing is being prioritized for all students and staff.