

COVID-19 RAPID TESTING AND QUARANTINE GUIDELINES

Maryland's Largest School District

MONTGOMERY COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOLS

Expanding Opportunity and Unleashing Potential

Free rapid (antigen) tests* are given to students who exhibit one or more COVID-19 symptoms (fever of 100.4 or >, sore throat, cough, difficulty breathing, diarrhea, vomiting, new onset of severe headache, new onset of loss of taste or smell). These steps only apply to students who exhibit COVID-19 symptoms during the school day.

	ACTIONS FOR STUDENT/HOUSEHOLD	RETURN TO SCHOOL	ACTIONS FOR CLOSE CONTACTS**
<p>COVID-19 SYMPTOMS</p> <p>+</p> <p>POSITIVE RAPID TEST</p>	<p>Student and any school-age unvaccinated household members go home.</p>	<p>10-day isolation period</p> <p>AND</p> <p>COVID-19 return criteria met</p>	<p>If unvaccinated: Quarantine for 10 days, self-monitor for 14 days.</p> <p>If vaccinated: Remain in school. If symptoms occur, get tested.</p>
<p>COVID-19 SYMPTOMS</p> <p>-</p> <p>NEGATIVE RAPID TEST</p>	<p>Student goes home with recommendation to get PCR test*** to verify negative result.</p>	<p>Negative PCR test OR Alternate diagnosis</p> <p>AND</p> <p>COVID-19 return criteria met</p>	<p>Remain in school pending PCR results: NEGATIVE: Remain in school. POSITIVE: 10-day quarantine.</p> <p>If vaccinated and asymptomatic: Remain in school. If symptoms occur, get tested.</p>
<p>COVID-19 SYMPTOMS</p> <p>X</p> <p>NO RAPID TEST</p>	<p>If unvaccinated: Goes home with recommendation to get PCR test.</p> <p>If vaccinated: Goes home with recommendation to get PCR test.</p>	<p>Quarantine for 10 days</p> <p>OR</p> <p>Negative PCR test OR Alternate diagnosis</p> <p>AND</p> <p>COVID-19 return criteria met</p>	<p>If unvaccinated: Remain in school unless student with symptoms had a known exposure.</p> <p>If vaccinated: Remain in school, regardless of known exposure.</p>

COVID-19 return criteria No fever for 24 hours without fever-reducing medication and improving symptoms.

*Parents must provide written or verbal consent for testing.

**Close contact: When a classmate was less than 3 feet of the student with confirmed COVID-19 while inside classroom or less than 6 feet of the student while at lunch/recess for a total of at least 15 minutes over a 24-hour period (for example, three individual 5-minute exposures for a total of 15 minutes).

***PCR test: School health staff will provide information on locations that offer PCR testing. When they become available, PCR tests will be given in school.

Note: These guidelines are based on guidance from the Montgomery County Department of Health and Human Services, the Maryland State Department of Health, and the Maryland State Department of Education.

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

What COVID-19 testing is available for students?

MCPS uses two types of tests for students in all schools: screening tests and rapid (antigen) tests. Both tests are free, safe, and painless. School health staff take a sample from the front part of the student's nose using a swab.

When is a student given the screening test?

Screening tests are given weekly to a random sample of students who do not have COVID symptoms. The tests can detect and limit the spread of the virus. Parents receive results in a few days. These tests are currently used in grades PreK-6 and will be available in all grades in the coming weeks.

When is a rapid (antigen) test given?

Rapid tests are in all schools. They are given when a student has COVID-19 symptoms and school health staff determine that a rapid test is necessary. Staff will know the results in about 20 minutes. Because of their quick results, these tests can help to reduce the number of classmates who must quarantine because they were in close contact to the student.

Why is a COVID-19 PCR test sometimes recommended after a rapid test is given?

There is an increased chance of false negative results with the rapid (antigen) test, meaning that the test says a person does not have the virus but they actually do. It is recommended that students take the more accurate PCR test to confirm the negative rapid result. Positive rapid tests are very accurate, so PCR tests are not recommended.

Does the parent/guardian have to give permission for testing in school?

Yes, both tests require the consent of the parent/guardian. One form is used for both tests and it is available in multiple languages. Families can fill out the form online or request paper copies from their school.

What happens if school health staff want to give the rapid test to a student with symptoms but there is no consent form on file?

Staff will call the parent/guardian who can give their verbal consent to the test. A consent form and information about the test will be given to the family.

If parents/guardians previously filled out a consent form for the screening test, do they have to fill out another form for the rapid test?

No. MCPS will accept this form as consent for the rapid test, as well.

Does each child in a family need a separate consent form?

Yes. Parents/guardians should complete a consent form for each child in the family.