

# COVID ED TESTING TOOLKIT

## 8.21.2021 RELEASE

Please use this toolkit to help guide you through the initial steps, design, and communication needed to implement the Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE) COVID Testing Program in your district.

**SHAH FAMILY FOUNDATION TOOLKIT:** [www.covidedtesting.com](http://www.covidedtesting.com)

**SHAH FAMILY FOUNDATION EMAIL:** [covidedtesting@shahfoundation.org](mailto:covidedtesting@shahfoundation.org)

**DESE PROGRAM WEBSITE:** <https://www.doe.mass.edu/covid19/testing>

**CIC HEALTH EMAIL:** [school-pool-support@cic-health.com](mailto:school-pool-support@cic-health.com)

PEER TO PEER HUB: [www.covidedtesting.com/peer-to-peer](http://www.covidedtesting.com/peer-to-peer)

### DISCLAIMER:

This is for informational purposes only. Nothing in this packet or the website should be construed as medical advice or legal advice. Please do your own due diligence and consult with your own medical, legal, and other advisors before deciding on a specific test, protocol or initiative that will impact your school. The Shah Family Foundation is not responsible for decisions, actions, or outcomes related to school testing or otherwise resulting from information accessible through this web site.

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## LEARN THE BASICS

### WHAT IS THE VALUE IN COVID SAFETY CHECKS?

1. **Keep Kids and Staff Safe:** catch cases before they spread to other students and staff
2. **Keep our Schools Open:** prevent further time away from in-person learning and friends by knowing whether it's COVID, cold, or flu
3. **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.

Indicator	"Lowest" category no longer exists. It has been merged into one low transmission (blue) category.	Low transmission Blue	Moderate transmission Yellow	Substantial transmission Orange	High transmission Red
Total new cases per 100,000 persons in the past 7 days**		0-9	10-49	50-99	≥100
Percentage of NAATs that are positive in the past 7 days***		<5.0%	5.0%-7.9%	8.0%-9.9%	≥10.0%

### GETTING STARTED AND APPLICATION

1. Apply for the DESE Program
  - a. Submit Application
2. Choose your testing options:
  - a. **Routine COVID Safety Checks**
    - i. In-School Pooling: Reflex Testing Needed
    - ii. In-Lab Pooling: No Reflex Testing Needed
      1. Saliva *or*
      2. Double Nose Swab
  - b. **Symptomatic Testing** (BinaxNOW)
  - c. **Close Contacts / “Test and Stay”** (BinaxNOW)

### OPERATIONS

1. Identify Staffing Needs (CIC Health will provide a Relationship Manager and Program Coordinator, and any additional staffing you request)
2. Determine Testing Design
3. Determine your Masking Protocol
4. Communicate Close Contact / “Test and Stay” Protocol
5. Learn Your Technology Platforms

### COMMUNICATIONS

1. Develop Three Phase Communication Plan
2. Get Consent (paper and electronic)
3. Utilize Parent/Caregiver webpage for Materials

### VACCINATION

1. School Vaccination Drive: Fully funded and staffed, sign up here
2. Engage Parents: Trust the Facts. Get the Vax Campaign
  - a. Share local TV spot pediatrician video (English, Spanish)
  - b. Share short, animated video (available in 10 languages)

## GETTING STARTED AND APPLICATION

### APPLY FOR THE DESE PROGRAM

Any K-12 school can apply. **Sign up here:**

<https://survey.alchemer.com/s3/6473918/SY22-Authorized-School-Application-COVID-19-Testing-Program>

If you choose not to use DESE's program, you can select a different testing vendor and either:

- a) Use your existing ESSER funds to apply it toward your COVID testing program
- b) Apply for reimbursement via FEMA/MEMA
  - a. [Webinar Link and Schedule](#)
  - b. Questions? Contact [disaster.recovery@mass.gov](mailto:disaster.recovery@mass.gov)

### CHOOSE YOUR TESTING OPTIONS




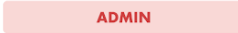


- Routine COVID Safety Check** (pick one method)
  - In-Lab Pooling: No Reflex Testing Needed
    - Saliva – 1ml – 1.5ml of saliva in an individual tube (scanned with QR code). No follow-up reflex testing needed.
    - Double Nose Swab – two swabs taken at the same time eliminates the need for any follow-up reflex testing if a pool is positive
  - In-School Pooling: Reflex Testing Needed
    - Single Swab + BinaxNOW reflex testing for any positive pools
  
- Symptomatic Testing:** BinaxNOW
  
- Contact Tracing/ "Test and Stay":** BinaxNOW
  - If a student does not have symptoms, parents have the option to keep their student learning in school so long as they are tested daily for 5 days from the date of exposure. This reduces remote learning time and gives parents agency while maintaining safety precautions

# OPERATIONS

## IDENTIFY STAFFING NEEDS

CIC Health will provide a Program Coordinator and any additional staffing you request.

























How do I identify my staffing needs? Below is an example of Watertown’s operations and the staff needed to run the program. Depending on your test design (next section), you may need more or fewer staff.

	SAMPLE COLLECTION	
	CALLING POSITIVE POOLS	
	FOLLOW-UP TESTING & CONTACT TRACING	

**ABOUT WATERTOWN PUBLIC SCHOOLS**

5 schools

**2,500** students

SCHOOL	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	TOTAL HR	
<b>FOR THE DISTRICT</b>	28 HRS <span style="font-size: small;">split across 2 lead testing coordinators does not include contact tracing</span>					28	
			3 HRS 	5 HRS 	3 HRS 	11	
						0	
<b>CUNIFF ELEMENTARY</b> <small>250 students</small>		1 HR 	1 HR 			2	
			30 MIN 	30 MIN 		1	
<b>HOSMER ELEMENTARY</b> <small>600 students</small>		2 HRS 	2 HRS 			4	
			1 HR 	1 HR 		2	
<b>LOWELL ELEMENTARY</b> <small>500 students</small>		1.5 HRS 	1.5 HRS 			3	
			1 HR 	1 HR 		3	
<b>WATERTOWN MIDDLE SCHOL</b> <small>700 students</small>		1.5 HRS 	1.5 HRS 			3	
			1 HR 	1 HR 		2	
<b>WATERTOWN HIGH SCHOOL</b> <small>600 students</small>	30 MIN 	30 MIN 				1	
	1 HR 	2 HRS  	1 HR 			4	
<b>WEEKLY</b>	<b>TRAINED</b>	0.5 HRS	6.5 HRS	9 HRS	5 HRS	3 HRS	24 HRS
	<b>ADMIN</b>	1 HR	2 HRS	4.5 HRS	3.5 HRS		11 HRS
	<b>PROG MGMT</b>	28 HRS					28 HRS

### DOUBLE NOSE SWAB

#### WEIGHING YOUR OPTIONS:

- More time intensive to swab an entire school with limited observers
- Could feel more invasive than a saliva sample
- No restrictions on the timing of when you can swab

#### CONSIDERATIONS:

- **GRADES 1 & UNDER & STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES:** staff member swabs
  - Students grade 1 and below and some students with disabilities will have their noses swabbed by a trained staff member.
  - It is recommended that staff doing the swab collection have an N95 or higher respirator, eye protection, gloves, and a gown.
  - Click here to view our [Swab Collection Best Practices for Young Learners and Students with Disabilities](#).
- **GRADES 2-12 & STAFF:** self-swab
  - Adults and students grade 2 and above can swab their own noses under observation by a trained staff member. Staff observing self-collection should wear a surgical mask and maintain six feet of distance.

#### METHOD A: HIGH SCHOOL

**OVERVIEW:** Students tested at front door station as they arrive; tested in random pools

**HOURS:** 8:00am – 8:30am

#### STAFFING NEEDS:

- 1 trained observer monitors swabbing
- 1 additional staff member records names on spreadsheet and matches to tube by scanning barcode

**TESTING RATE:** 180 students can be swabbed in 30 minute morning period

#### STEPS:

1. Staff record name on spreadsheet and scan barcode on tube
2. Student self-swabs under observation and places swab in tube
3. Student sanitizes hands and goes to class

**WHY THIS METHOD?** Watertown used to test high school students at lunch, but they didn't always show up. The testing team found it was more reliable and easier to test students as they arrive in the AM; it also gets samples out the door to the lab earlier in the day. Because high school students don't attend classes in dedicated pods (they mix between classes), the pools do not need to be the same each week. Testing in random pools requires a staff member to scan barcodes to record who is in each pool.

## METHOD B: MIDDLE SCHOOL

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**OVERVIEW:** Students tested at mask break, tests grouped by classroom

**HOURS:** 10:00am – 11:00am

**STAFFING NEEDS:**

- 1 trained observer monitors swabbing

**TESTING RATE:** Swabbing takes a matter of seconds per student X number of classrooms

**STEPS:**

1. Students line up by class
2. Student self-swabs under observation and places swab in tube
3. Student sanitizes hands and goes outdoors for a mask break

**WHY THIS METHOD?** Middle-schoolers attend class in dedicated pods, so their test groups should stay the same each week. Most middle-school students can swab their own noses. The testing team found it was most efficient to have students self-swab at a testing station on their way out the door for a mask break. This way the testing didn't interfere with instructional time and could be conducted outside.

## METHOD C: ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

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**OVERVIEW:** Students tested in school hallway; tests grouped by classroom (pre-labeled by classroom)

**HOURS:** 9:00am – 11:00am

**STAFFING NEEDS:**

- 1 trained staff member travels corridors with a cart, stopping outside each classroom

**TESTING RATE:** 3-5 minutes per classroom

**STEPS:**

1. Cart arrives outside of classroom. Students signed up for testing come into the hallway and line up
2. One by one, students self-swab under observation and place swab in tube. Grades 2+ self-swab; grades K-1 may require assistance.
3. Student sanitizes hands and goes to class

**WHY THIS METHOD?** Elementary school students are grouped by learning pod, so groups should stay the same each week. In addition, many students at this level need assistance swabbing themselves. Watertown found that it was quickest and easiest to have nurses travel the corridors with a testing cart, stopping by each classroom for 3-5 minutes to take samples.

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## SALIVA

**WEIGHING YOUR OPTIONS:**

- Easy for any grade level or staff to do it
- Requires timing considerations (30 minutes post eating; 2 hours post mouth wash)
- Less of a burden on staffing design as all students could easily do this when they show up in the morning, scan the QR code and drop it in a classroom box for pickup

**ADDITIONAL CONSIDERATIONS:**

- Consider scheduling sample collection for first thing in the morning.
  - Individuals should not eat, drink, smoke, vape or brush teeth within 30 minutes of providing saliva samples.
  - They should not use mouthwash within 2 hours of sample collection.
- For older kids and adults, generating saliva can be a messy and at times embarrassing process. Make sure you have a semi-private spot for individuals to collect their saliva samples.
- The following may help increase saliva production:



- Gently rubbing the outside of cheeks
- Making chewing motions with mouth
- Smelling or imagining sour foods such as lemons
- Thinking about favorite foods

**DETERMINE YOUR MASKING PROTOCOL**

Choose which masking protocol is right for your school. You may want to consider if you are in a substantial or high transmission community and how much of the school’s community is considered a vulnerable population and/or unvaccinated.

**CDC GUIDANCE:** Universal masking is advised for both vaccinated and unvaccinated individuals in substantial or high transmission communities

**DPH GUIDANCE:**

- **WHO NEEDS TO MASK?**
  - **Unvaccinated:** All students, staff, and visitors should mask indoors
  - **Vaccinated:** All students and staff have the option to wear a mask indoors
  - **Everyone:** masks must be worn on school buses and in school health offices
- **EXCEPTIONS:**
  - **Individual Exemptions:** Medical conditions or behavioral needs
  - **Outdoors:** Masks are not necessary
  - **Lunchtime:** Masks may be removed while eating indoors

**COMMUNICATE CLOSE CONTACT/ “TEST AND STAY” PROTOCOL**

Close contacts have the option to:

- a) **Quarantine at Home** (remote learning) during the 10-day period or while you await a negative test result on day 5 after exposure; or
- b) **Test and Stay** (in-school learning) by testing daily for 5 days after date of exposure




**LEARN YOUR TECHNOLOGY PLATFORMS**

Depending on the testing options you’ve selected for your district, there are a few different user management systems. If you have questions or want to explore continuing with a different platform (e.g., Project Beacon), talk to CIC-Health about what platform is best for your district.

	<b>Saliva</b>	<b>Swab</b>
<i>Consent</i>	CIC-Health	CIC-Health
<i>Learning Manual</i>	CIC-Health	CIC-Health
<i>Routine Safety Checks</i>	Veritas	Crush the Curve
<i>Close Contacts (BinaxNOW)</i>	Crush the Curve	Crush the Curve
<i>Symptomatic (BinaxNOW)</i>	Crush the Curve	Crush the Curve

**COMMUNICATIONS**

**DEVELOP THREE PHASE COMMUNICATION PLAN**

<b>POOLED TESTING LAUNCH DAY: _____</b>	
	<b>Scheduled</b>
<b>Phase 1: Before Launch</b>	
 <b>2 weeks before launch day</b>	
Host webinar for school leaders, teachers, and staff	
Host webinar for parents and caregivers	
Create webpage / send detailed email with program basics	
Identify program champions within your district or program	
<b>Phase 2: Launching the Program</b>	
 <b>1 week before launch day &amp; first week of launch</b>	
Send introductory email communications to families & staff	
Post on social media platforms	
Principals/Directors send school or site-specific communications	
<b>Phase 3: After Launch</b>	
 <b>1 week after launch day &amp; moving forward</b>	
Send or post a communication 1-2 times per week to update on program, share results, and increase participation	
2 weeks post launch: host another webinar for school community	
Organize phone campaign to increase program participation	

## GET CONSENT

We've found districts are most successful when they offer consent in both paper form and electronically.

CIC-Health has created its own platform for collecting consent electronically, and will integrate into any of their approved testing platforms (e.g., Crush the Curve), taking any administrative burden off districts.

- DESE Paper Copies (translated): [Click Here](#)
- Electronic Consent: [CIC Health will provide this for you]

## INCREASING PARTICIPATION

Signing students, staff and educators up is an ongoing process.

1. Include information and consent form in your "Back to School Packet"
2. Utilize the above Three Phase Communication Plan to strategize your message sharing
3. Utilize our Parent/Caregiver page for quick 1-page resources and videos for families:  
[www.covidedtesting.com/parents-caregivers](http://www.covidedtesting.com/parents-caregivers)

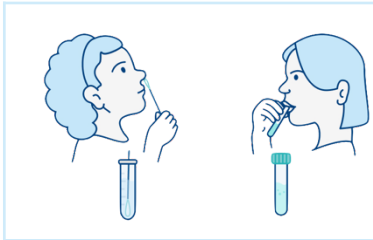
## UTILIZE PARENT/CAREGIVER WEBPAGE FOR MATERIALS

The following pages contain 1-pagers that may be helpful in sharing with your parents through your school leaders and/or through your nurses (e.g., at Back-to-School night)

**WEBSITE:** [www.covidedtesting.com/parents-caregivers](http://www.covidedtesting.com/parents-caregivers)

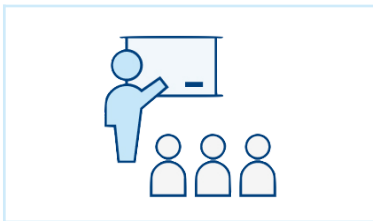
# ROUTINE COVID SAFETY CHECKS

## PARENT TOOLKIT – STEP BY STEP PROCESS



1

**Student Gives Sample**  
(Swab or Saliva)



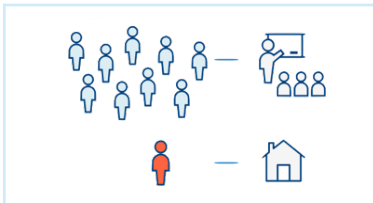
2

**Return to Class**



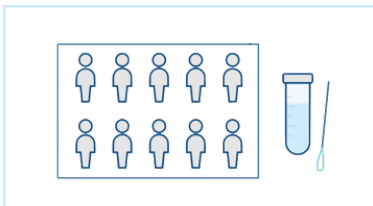
3

**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!**

## ROUTINE COVID SAFETY CHECK PARENT TOOLKIT – FAQ

### WHY ARE ROUTINE COVID SAFETY CHECKS IMPORTANT?

1. **KEEP KIDS AND STAFF SAFE:** catch cases before they spread to other students and staff
2. **KEEP OUR SCHOOLS OPEN:** prevent further time away from in-person learning and friends by knowing whether it's COVID, cold, or flu
3. **STOP THE SPREAD:** prevent infecting another member of your household or community

### WHAT IS IT?

- **SWAB:** a short, non-invasive nasal swab in the lower nostril of the nose. This is NOT the long, invasive swab. It's child-tested, and it is so easy even a kindergartener can do it!
- **SALIVA:** a small saliva sample that is spit into an individual tube

### WHO OVERSEES THE PROCESS?

The school nurse oversees the process in a school. Your district has chosen if they are doing a nose swab or a saliva sample. If swabbing, additional trained individuals may help observe a student swabbing their nose and those who need support. This minimizes disruptions to learning time. If providing saliva, this can be done at home or at school (your school will tell you what to do)

### WILL IT BE ACCURATE?

Yes! Many parents have this question. For both swabs and saliva, schools have successfully implemented it with kindergarteners and pre-K. The new tests make it fast and simple. There is an adult observer present to support students.

### IS THERE A VIDEO THAT I CAN WATCH TO SEE A COVID SAFETY CHECK IN ACTION?

Yes! Here are three videos you can watch if using the swabbing method:

- **Boston Public Schools** ([English](#) | [Español](#) | [العربية](#) | [Cabo-Verdiano](#) | [中文](#) | [Français](#) | [Kreyòl Ayisyen](#) | [Português](#) | [Soomaali](#) | [Tiếng Việt](#))
- [BPS COVID Testing for Elementary School](#)
- [How to Swab - by a Second Grader](#)

### HOW FREQUENT ARE ROUTINE SAFETY CHECKS?

In most schools, everyone will test once per week.

### WHAT HAPPENS WITH THE RESULTS?

Results will take 24-48 hours. You will not be notified if your child is negative. No news is good news. You will only be notified if there is a positive case.

### WHO PARTICIPATES?

Everyone should participate! Both unvaccinated and vaccinated staff and students are highly encouraged to sign up. The more who sign up, the safer our students and staff will be.

# CLOSE CONTACT PROTOCOL

## QUARANTINE VS. “TEST AND STAY”

If your student is exposed to COVID-19 and is a close contact, your student will need to be monitored and tested. Below are the two options, which impact your student’s learning environment differently:

### “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

### QUARANTINE PROTOCOL



1

#### Close Contacts Notified

Anyone who considered “close contact” based on exposure.



2

#### Learn Remotely

10 days



# 3

## Return to In-School Learning

No symptoms

### VACCINATION

**SCHOOL VACCINATION DRIVE:** Funded and fully staffed. [Sign up here](#)

**ENGAGE PARENTS:** Trust the Facts. Get the Vax Campaign

- Share local TV spot pediatrician video ([English](#), [Spanish](#))
- Share short, animated video ([available in 10 languages](#))

### ADDITIONAL FAMILY RESOURCES

Have questions about family resources? Contact Sarah McKitterick ([sarah@shahfoundation.org](mailto:sarah@shahfoundation.org))

### GOT P-EBT? GET SNAP!

- Many students who got P-EBT could also be eligible for more monthly food money with SNAP.
- Now that P-EBT is likely ending, please encourage your families to get SNAP.

**LEARN MORE** at [MAp-EBT.org](http://MAp-EBT.org) for outreach materials in 11 languages.

### CHILD TAX CREDIT

Access to More Money with Tax Credits.

- If families haven't filed taxes in the last few years, they may be missing out on thousands of dollars in federal payments (including **\$250-\$300 per child per month** with the Child Tax Credit).
- Families can file taxes to get the money, even if they have no or very low income.

**LEARN MORE** and find outreach materials in 11 languages at [FindYourFunds.org](http://FindYourFunds.org).