



## Test and Stay COVID 19 Update

Updated 10/20/21

Throughout the pandemic, we have all been eager for the time when we have all students back for in person learning. While we are seeing the success of being in person full time this fall, we still have too many students with significant interruptions to their in-person learning due to quarantine. These interruptions not only affect a student's ability to be in school, but also are a significant stressor on families. After careful review of our district COVID data, we are seeing trends that would support a move towards a Test and Stay program that would allow students to avoid quarantine from school if they have a negative COVID test daily during their quarantine period.

Our rationale for making this change is as follows:

1. We want healthy students in school as much as possible. We know that chronic absenteeism (for any reason) leads to an increased likelihood of negative outcomes for students.
2. We want to limit the spread of COVID in our schools and community. We do have spread in our schools, therefore we cannot fully abandon contact tracing efforts without the additional mitigation strategy through testing.
3. Our current mitigation strategies are limiting spread of COVID in our schools
  - a. Only 3% of school close contacts eventually tested positive (in other words, 97% of our close contacts stay healthy).
  - b. For every case related to school spread, we are quarantining 33 students that do not develop COVID.
  - c. Minimal spread in our schools is attributed to normal classroom/school routines with proper mitigation strategies in place. Therefore the risk involved in a test and stay program should be no greater than we are currently experiencing. This is supported by [research](#) related to similar programs.

Beginning Wednesday October 27th, 2021, unvaccinated students identified as close contacts to a **school related positive case** will be able to stay at school for the duration of the quarantine period if they receive a negative test result each school day and remain symptom free. Following CDC and DHS guidance, vaccinated close contacts do not need to quarantine and are encouraged, but not required to test between day 3 and 5 of exposure. Contact tracing will continue to be led by our school nurse team and any close contact who tests positive and/or develops symptoms will be required to isolate. At this time, this protocol does not apply to school sponsored sporting events. Due to the increased risk related to sports exposure, we will require students to quarantine from sporting activities (practices, games, and team events) for the duration of their quarantine period (up to 14 days with an option to return on day 8 if symptom free and have a negative test on day 6 or 7).

Antigen testing will be available to identified close contacts at school each day of the quarantine period through our testing vendor, Accelerated Labs. Written parent permission will be required for a child to test at school.

Parents will have the opportunity to opt out of daily testing, however their child will be required to quarantine for up to 14 days. Students who are tested daily outside of school can remain in person by showing evidence of the negative test each day of the quarantine period. If your child is currently quarantined as a close contact from a school exposure and you wish to have them return under this new protocol, please contact their school nurse to make arrangements.

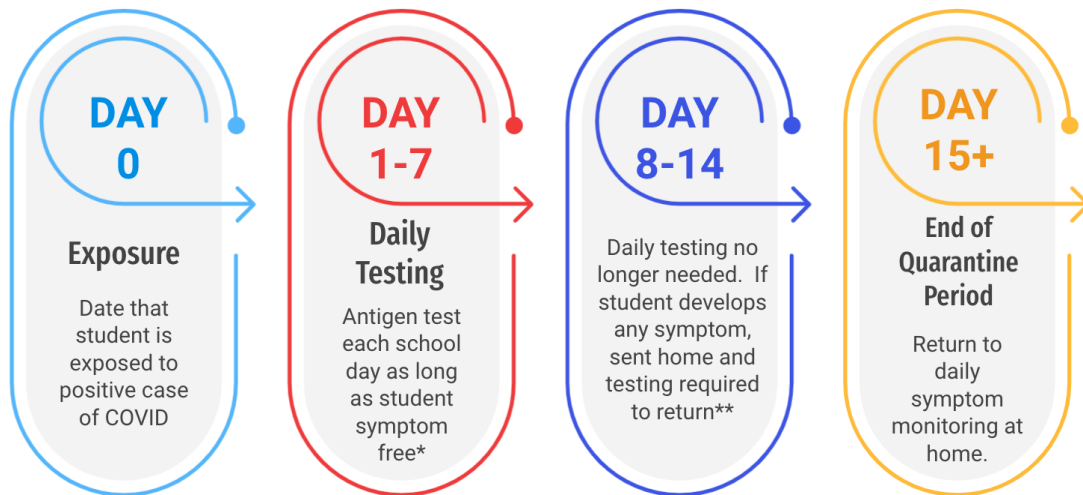
We can provide this option because of the strong mitigation measures in schools. The test and stay option is currently only available for school-based close contacts; however, we will continue to monitor our data to determine if we can add non-school based contacts in the future. We continue to emphasize that vaccination is the best way to protect ourselves and others from developing serious complications from COVID as well as to have uninterrupted participation in school-related activities.

The School District will reserve the option to quarantine students without an option to Test and Stay if there is an outbreak within a classroom, school, or extracurricular group.

The consent form for testing at school was sent to you previously and can be found on the Parent Portal in Skyward and is also attached to this letter. If you have already completed this consent form, you do not need to do so again. You may opt out of daily testing at any time by notifying your child's school health office.

## Test and Stay Timeline

Students who have a daily negative COVID test result are able to continue participating in school activities. Quarantine for activities outside of school is still recommended during the quarantine period. Mitigation measures at school activities, including masks and physical distancing should be in place during quarantine period.



\*Daily antigen testing begins first day following identification as a close contact, which may occur several days after exposure.

\*\*Mitigation strategies including masking in all school settings and physical distancing to the greatest extent possible should be in place.

