



Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education

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Jeffrey C. Riley
Commissioner

Date: 09/02/2021

Dear families,

Thank you for your continued support as we kick off the 2021-2022 school year. At Ware Public Schools, keeping your students safe and in school is our top priority. We have learned a great deal over this past year and our current guidance and procedures reflect the most updated recommendations from the CDC and the Massachusetts Department of Public Health.

For the 2021-22 school year, we are offering an extra layer of protection to prevent the spread of COVID-19, our COVID-19 testing program at school. This program has three components: **symptomatic testing** for students who show symptoms of COVID-19 at school, **routine COVID safety checks** to prevent the spread of the virus undetected among students who are not showing symptoms, and **test and stay** for students who may have been exposed while in school but are not showing symptoms. Each of these is a quick, non-invasive nasal swab that is collected under the supervision of a school nurse or trained health provider. Unlike COVID-19 tests of the past, these are not uncomfortable and easy for students to do themselves.

Students only participate with permission from a parent or guardian. It is important to Ware Public Schools that you are fully informed regarding the process and that we can answer any questions that you might have in advance of asking you to sign the consent form. Below we describe each of the three parts of our testing program, how they are conducted, and what they are used for.

Symptomatic testing is used when a student is showing symptoms of COVID-19 during school; students should not come to school if they are feeling sick while at home. Some symptoms of the virus look identical to other illnesses like the cold or flu, and this test tells us whether a symptomatic student has COVID-19 or not. This is a rapid test, and we receive the results of this test within 15 minutes. If a student has minimal symptoms and tests negative, they can remain in school.

Routine COVID safety checks minimize disruption to learning by helping us catch potential spread of the virus before it starts. Each student administers the safety check on a weekly basis. Samples are collected at school in groups of 5-10 individuals. The samples are group together at school. Once the samples get to the lab, all the samples in the group are tested for COVID-19 together. In almost all cases, it will take less than 24 hours to receive safety check results. Students can continue to come to school while awaiting safety check results; they do not need to

quarantine while awaiting results. If a safety check test is positive, the students in the group will take individual rapid tests to determine which student(s) in the group produced the positive test.

Test and stay allows students who have had close contact with a person who tested positive for COVID-19 while at school to stay in school if the student is not showing symptoms. Instead of needing to quarantine and miss school, these students will take a daily rapid test while they remain in school as long as they are not symptomatic. Students participate in test and stay for at least five days after they may have been exposed.

If a student tests positive for COVID-19, they must quarantine at home for the CDC-recommended ten days since symptoms appeared or ten days since the positive test before returning to school. The student must also be without a fever for 24 hours.

Although students who are vaccinated are much less likely to spread or contract the virus, it is important for us to create an inclusive environment for both vaccinated and unvaccinated students.

To participate in the program, you must sign the consent form on behalf of your student. There is no charge for participating. To learn more about our COVID-19 testing program, please visit www.covidedtesting.com . If you have additional questions regarding the program, please contact Jennifer Knight at jknight@ware.k12.ma.us or 413-967-6236.

It is our hope that these measures will work together to keep our schools safe and your student in school. Thanks again for your support during this challenging time. We look forward to welcoming your students back to the classroom.

STAFF/ADULT CONSENT FORM FOR OPTIONAL COVID-19 TESTING**TO BE COMPLETED BY INDIVIDUAL CONSENTING FOR THEMSELVES****INDIVIDUAL Information**

You will not be notified of routine COVID-19 safety check (previously referred to as “pooled test”) results, but you will be notified of individual test results either via phone or email.

- *If you have tested positive for COVID-19 in the past 90 days, you should not yet participate in COVID-19 testing to avoid false positives.*
- *Unvaccinated individuals are strongly encouraged to participate in Routine COVID Safety Checks.*
- *Vaccinated individuals may participate in Routine COVID Safety Checks.*

Print Name:			
Cell/Mobile #: <i>Note: results will be texted to this cell #</i>			
Email Address:			
Date of Birth: <i>(MM/DD/YYYY)</i>			
Address:	City:	Zip Code:	
Race (pick one):	<input type="checkbox"/> American Indian/Alaskan Native <input type="checkbox"/> Asian <input type="checkbox"/> Black/African American <input type="checkbox"/> Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander <input type="checkbox"/> White <input type="checkbox"/> Other <input type="checkbox"/> Prefer not to say		
Ethnicity (pick one):	<input type="checkbox"/> Hispanic or Latinx <input type="checkbox"/> Not Hispanic or Latinx <input type="checkbox"/> Prefer not to say	Gender:	<input type="checkbox"/> Male <input type="checkbox"/> Transgender <input type="checkbox"/> Female <input type="checkbox"/> Prefer not to say
Consent Opt Out	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes , I provide consent to participate in COVID-19 testing (<i>please read and sign form below</i>) <input type="checkbox"/> No , I do not provide consent to participate in COVID-19 testing. (<i>No further action needed</i>)		

CONSENT

By completing and submitting this form, I confirm that I am the appropriate individual to provide consent and:

- A. I authorize collection and testing of a sample from for COVID-19 at school, whether for an individual test (e.g. individual antigen or PCR test) or for a routine COVID safety check (pooled test). By signing this form, I am consenting to any of the following testing methods for me. I understand that my school will determine which testing methods are offered to me and will inform me of the services the school is administering prior to the start of, or any change to, the school’s COVID-19 testing program. More detail about test types is provided in Appendix A.
- i. Individual testing on symptomatic individuals: for when individuals present symptoms while at school
 - ii. Individual testing on close contacts (Test and Stay): for asymptomatic close contacts to be tested daily for at least five (5) days from the first day of exposure, with individuals testing negative being allowed to remain at school
 - iii. Routine COVID-19 safety check (previously referred to as “pooled testing”): for routine testing by collecting a group of samples and performing on test on the group, for efficiency, with individual testing happening either on the same individual samples at the lab or on new samples from the individuals in the group.
- B. I understand that all sample types will be non-invasive, short nasal swabs or saliva samples.
- C. I understand that a routine COVID-19 safety check (previously referred to as as pooled testing) may yield individual results, and that my individual results within a safety check may not be shared with me. However, I understand and agree that my personal health information and personally identifiable information from education records may be entered into the testing provider’s technology platform to assist with tracking safety check testing and identifying individuals in need of individual follow-up testing.

- D. I understand that I will be notified about the results of any individual test for COVID-19 performed on me.
- E. I understand that there is the potential for a false positive or false negative COVID-19 test result, no matter the kind of testing being performed. Given the potential for a false negative, I understand that I should continue to follow all COVID-19 safety guidance, and follow school protocols for isolating and testing in the event I develop symptoms of COVID-19.
- F. I understand that staff administering all COVID-19 testing have received training on safe and proper test administration. I agree that neither the test administrator nor the Ware Public Schools, nor any of its trustees, officers, employees, or organization sponsors are liable for any accident or injuries that may occur from participation in the COVID-19 testing program.
- G. I understand that I **must** stay home if feeling unwell. I acknowledge that a positive **individual** test result is an indication that I must stay home from school, self-isolate, and continue wearing a mask or face covering as directed in an effort to avoid infecting others.
- H. I understand the school system is not acting as my medical provider, this testing does not replace treatment by my medical provider, and I assume complete and full responsibility to take appropriate action with regards to my test results. I agree I will seek medical advice, care and treatment from my medical provider if I have questions or concerns, or if my condition worsens. I understand I am financially responsible for any care I receive from my healthcare provider.
- I. I understand that COVID-19 testing may create protected health information (PHI) and other personally identifiable information, and such information will only be accessed, used, and disclosed in accordance with HIPAA and applicable law. Pursuant to 45 CFR 164.524(c)(3), I authorize and direct the testing provider to transmit such PHI to my school, the Massachusetts Department of Public Health, the Massachusetts Executive Office of Health and Human Services, and the testing laboratory. I further understand that PHI may be disclosed to the Executive Office of Health and Human Services and any other party, as authorized under HIPAA.
- J. I understand that participation in COVID-19 testing may require the school to disclose my identity, demographic, and contact information from education records to the testing provider and may require the school to disclose my identity, demographic, and contact information from education records to the Massachusetts Department of Public Health. Pursuant to FERPA, 34 CFR 99.30, I authorize my school to disclose such personally identifiable information (PII) as is required for me to participate in COVID-19 testing.
- K. I understand that authorizing these COVID-19 tests for me is optional and that I can refuse to give this authorization, in which case, I will not be tested.
- L. I understand that I can change my mind and cancel this permission at any time, but that such cancellation is forward-looking only, and will not affect information previously released. To cancel this permission for COVID-19 testing, I need to contact Jennifer Knight at jknight@ware.k12.ma.us.
- M. I authorize the testing provider and/or the Massachusetts Department of Public Health to monitor aspects of the COVID-19 virus, such as tracking viral mutations, by analyzing positive sample(s) for epidemiological and public health purposes. Results of such analyses will not be personally identifiable nor create personally identifiable information.

I, the undersigned, have been informed about the COVID-19 test purpose, procedures, possible benefits and risks, and I have received a copy of this Informed Consent. I have been given the opportunity to ask questions before I sign, and I have been told that I can ask additional questions at any time. I voluntarily agree to this testing for COVID-19.

Signature of Individual Consenting:		Date:
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APPENDIX A: POSSIBLE TEST TYPES

By signing this form, I am consenting to any of the following testing methods. I understand that my school will determine which testing methods are offered to me and will inform me of the services the school is administering prior to the start of, or any change to, the school's COVID-19 testing program.

Individual Testing:

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 an approved diagnostic test.

"Test and Stay" (close contact testing): Shallow nasal swab samples are collected at school using an approved diagnostic test. Tests are administered daily from the first day of exposure for at least five (5) days, with individuals testing negative being allowed to remain at school.

Routine COVID Safety Check:

Please note, we are now using the terminology "routine COVID safety checks" to describe what we previously called "pooled tests." Follow-Up tests are individual diagnostic tests that identify the positive individual(s) in a positive COVID safety check.

Safety Check and School-Based Follow-Up Testing: Shallow nasal swab samples are collected at school and put into a single tube (maximum of 10 samples per tube). If or in case a group tests positive, individual Follow-Up testing with a second sample collection occurs at the school with rapid and/or individual PCR testing, as necessary.

Safety Check and Lab-Based Follow-Up Testing: Saliva or shallow nasal swab samples are collected and kept separate before being grouped at the lab. If a group tests positive, individual Follow-Up testing occurs at the lab, without a second sample collection.