

Frequently Asked Questions

What are the benefits of pooled testing?

Pooled testing participants will not need to quarantine for 10 days when identified as a close contact as long as they remain asymptomatic and test negative on a rapid test.

The district also is able to obtain information about prevalence of the virus within our school community.

Are staff and students required to participate in pooled testing?

No. This is a voluntary program which requires consent from a child's parent or legal guardian. Students who do not participate in pooled testing and are not fully vaccinated will be required to quarantine for 10 days if considered a close contact to a positive COVID-19 case.

How often will my child be tested?

One day per week. Each child will be given a nasal swab and will put the swab inside each nostril. All swabs will be placed inside one testing tube container.

How long does pooled testing take?

Approximately 10-15 minutes per classroom. Realistically it could be completed sooner once a regular routine is established.

How long are the nasal swabs?

They are short nasal swabs that go just a half an inch into the nostril, similar to cotton swabs. If students have trouble performing the swabbing, the school nurse or other trained staff member can help.

What happens after swabs are placed in the testing tube?

The tube will be sent to a lab. In about 48 hours, the school nurse will see the results of the test.

What happens if the pooled test is negative?

If the tube, or “pool,” is negative, nothing needs to be done. The class will continue to be tested on a weekly basis.

What happens if the pooled test is positive?

If a tube is positive, each person in that group must have another test. The school nurse will do a rapid BinaxNOW test at school for each individual.

Each student that has a negative BinaxNOW test can return to class.

Any student who has a positive BinaxNOW test result must stay in the isolation area of the nurse’s office and their parent/guardian will be notified. The parent/guardian must come to school to pick up their child.

How will pooled testing be funded?

The pooled testing program is funded by the Maine Department of Education and is free to students and staff who participate.