

# K-12 COVID Testing Program

*To help ensure a safe and healthy learning environment, your child's school is partnering with **LSU Health Shreveport** to provide voluntary COVID-19 testing for the 2021-2022 school year.*

## **LSUHS will:**

- Provide a registration link for *Color*, the online platform for registration and test results, to school administration to distribute to parents/guardians.
- Visit your child's school each week to swab participant noses for COVID-19 tests. The swab must only go  $\frac{3}{4}$  of an inch into each nostril, no more invasive than picking your nose. Students and staff will be taught to self-swab their nose, under LSUHS supervision, to collect test sample.

## **SCHOOLS will:**

- Collaborate with LSUHS to determine a good day, time, and place for weekly testing.
- Send parents/guardian the registration link.

## **PARENTS/GUARDIANS choosing for their student to participate in the program will:**

- Register their student for the program through the *Color* registration link where consent for weekly testing, participation in the incentive program, and for test results to be delivered by email and/or text message.
- School staff and students 18 and older choosing to participate must also register and provide consent through the *Color* registration link.

## **LOUISIANA DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH (LDH) will:**

- Provide monetary incentive for participating in the program by giving staff and students \$25 for the first test and \$10 for each additional test. Incentives will be loaded onto a debit card or online debit account. LDH intends to have the online payments begin by midterm.



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### FAQS FOR PARENTS/GUARDIANS

#### 1. Why is COVID-19 testing being done at my school?

Testing helps us to catch any cases of COVID-19 before they become outbreaks. In almost half of COVID cases, the individual does not experience symptoms but can still spread COVID-19, which is why testing everyone regularly helps to prevent spread and keep our schools open safely.

Making it easy for our students, families, and staff to get tested helps our schools safely and confidently continue in-person learning. Testing helps us more easily detect the virus and take quick action to keep it from spreading.

#### 2. How does the school testing program work?

The Louisiana Department of Health and Department of Education are providing access to COVID-19 tests at no cost to all public, private, and charter schools that choose to participate. Each week a trained healthcare team will visit to conduct the testing program. A single team can test an entire class in just minutes using our process and testing can take place in the classroom, at a designated location with a mobile testing cart, or in a central location such as an outdoor area or gym. The samples will be couriered to the laboratory and tested using PCR technology with results available via text or email within 24 hours. Any individual with a positive result will be contacted by our team about next steps.

#### 3. What type of test is being used for the school testing program?

The Louisiana Department of Health will provide PCR tests, also called molecular tests. The PCR tests detect genetic material of the virus using a lab technique called polymerase chain reaction (PCR). PCR tests can detect smaller amounts of virus than antigen tests and thus indicate a positive result sooner in the virus's development. These tests will be administered either from a lower anterior nasal (just inside the nostril) swab.

#### 4. Who will be tested?

Testing is available for your child(ren), their teachers, and on-campus staff. Testing is optional. The Louisiana Department of Health will never conduct any testing without consent from you. Your school will work directly with you to obtain consent within the first two weeks of the beginning of the school year or within two weeks of the school opting in to the testing program.

#### 5. Do my child have to participate?

No. Participation is a choice, and while we hope everyone in our community chooses to contribute to this effort to keep our schools safe, health, and open, we will respect every family's decision, and no child will be made to feel stigmatized or singled-out for not participating.

#### 6. If my child doesn't have symptoms, why bother testing them?

Individuals can be completely free of COVID-19 symptoms (or asymptomatic), but still capable of transmitting COVID-19 to others. By participating in pool testing you are helping protect others in the school who may be more vulnerable, and you are helping to limit asymptomatic spread and keep our schools open.

#### 7. Is there a cost to participate?

No, there is no cost to individuals to participate.

#### 8. Will it be disruptive to school?

The sample collection will be short and occur only once a week. The time invested in a weekly sample collection process will help protect against far more disruptive school closures that could result from asymptomatic spread.



[ldh.la.gov/schooltesting](https://ldh.la.gov/schooltesting)

### 9. Are there incentives to participate in testing?

Yes! The Louisiana Department of Health will administer and provide reloadable virtual payments or physical cards to participants. Participants receive \$25 for the first test and \$10 for each additional test.

### 10. If I have received a COVID-19 vaccine can I still participate?

We recommend that everyone be tested. While vaccinated people have a much lower risk of being infected, it is still possible, and testing helps identify those cases.

### 11. How long does the consent last and can I revoke it if I do not want to continue?

Consent is provided for the duration of this year's program, and families can revoke consent at any time.

### 12. When and where will my child be tested?

We'll test during the school day, in the school building.

### 13. Who will administer my child's test?

A trained healthcare team with LSUHS will visit weekly at a regularly scheduled time to quickly swab each student, teacher, and staff member. Each team member must go through a rigorous background check and successfully complete a training program specific to school-based testing.

### 14. How will I be informed of my child's test results?

Parents and guardians will be informed about their child's COVID-19 test results, whether positive or negative, as well as the recommended next steps by text or email. We will directly give students over the age of 18, or anyone who gives their own consent to be tested, their own results and next steps.

### 15. Who else will see my child's test results?

Results and collected information are HIPAA-protected and only disclosed to the following parties.

- Individual, parent, or guardian
- School administrators
- LSUHS Laboratories (certified laboratory)
- Color Genomics (software platform)
- Public Health Authorities (as required by law)

### 16. How can family members of a student get a test at our school?

Testing of family members will be available during the upcoming year at certain athletic and special events.

### 17. What happens if someone in my child's classroom tests positive?

School will conduct contact tracing, following school guidelines.

### 18. What happens if my child tests positive?

LDH and school administration will partner to ensure contact tracing takes place and school guidelines are followed.

### 19. What is coronavirus or COVID-19?

Coronaviruses are a large family of viruses, some causing illness in people and others that circulate among animals, including camels, cats and bats. Rarely, animal coronaviruses can evolve and infect people and then spread between people.

### 20. How does COVID-19 spread?

COVID-19 is spread in three main ways:

- Breathing in air when close to an infected person who is exhaling small droplets and particles that contain the virus.
- Having these small droplets and particles that contain virus land on the eyes, nose, or mouth, especially through splashes and sprays like a cough or sneeze.
- Touching eyes, nose, or mouth with hands that have the virus on them.



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## 21. What are the symptoms of COVID-19?

Symptoms of COVID-19 include fever or chills, loss of smell or taste, cough, sore throat, shortness of breath or difficulty breathing, fatigue muscle or body aches, light-headedness or dizziness, headache, congestion or runny nose, nausea or vomiting, and diarrhea. This list does include all possible symptoms.

## 22. My child already had COVID-19. Should they still be tested?

The CDC recommends that those who tested positive for COVID-19 should not re-test routinely for 90 days after recovering from your symptoms. You may continue to test positive for three months or more without being contagious to others. For this reason, you should only be tested if you develop new symptoms of possible COVID-19 within 90 days of having COVID-19.

Individuals can become susceptible to reinfection approximately 90 days following the onset of infection. For this reason, students who are past the 90 days should be tested.

## 23. How is my child supposed to collect the sample themselves?

The Louisiana Department of Health will ensure trained professionals administer the tests. If your child feels comfortable learning to self-collect, LSUHS testing staff will teach them how to perform the test and supervise them doing so.

## 24. How long does it take to get results?

Test results will be received and reviewed within 24 hours of sample collection to ensure subsequent results and safety/precautionary measures are effective.

## 25. What do I need to do for my child to be in the testing program?

You can register your child for the program through the link provided to you by your school. Any child under 18, must be registered by a parent/guardian.

## 26. Does my child need to quarantine while waiting for their testing results?

No. Your child or other family members do not need to quarantine or miss family, sports or school activities while waiting for the weekly test result to come back. If your child starts to feel sick and has COVID-19 symptoms (fever, cough, etc.), then they should stay home.

## 27. What can I do to keep from getting COVID-19?

There are a few things you can do to help protect yourself from COVID-19, see the CDC guidelines, which include:

- Wear a mask when you are in public
- Stay 6 feet away from others
- Get vaccinated
- Avoid crowds and poorly ventilated spaces
- Wash your hands often
- Clean and disinfect high touch surfaces daily

Unlike other COVID-19 tests, the sample collection swabbing will just be in the very lower part of the nose, and is not painful.

## 28. Will my classmates know if I test positive?

No, positive test results will only be disclosed to the Louisiana Department of Health and your school if you/your parent have completed the HIPAA and consent forms.