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A NEW WAY FORWARD

Test to Stay Program

Schools are an essential part of community infrastructure and in-person instruction for PreK-12 students is a priority. The purpose of this document is to provide guidance on an *optional* modified strategy for managing COVID-19 exposures in the school setting. [CDC guidelines](#) and the Kentucky Department of Public Health (8/2021) emphasize the implementation of layered prevention strategies to protect students, teachers, and staff, which includes isolation of persons who test positive for COVID-19, as well as tracing of their close contacts and quarantine of unvaccinated contacts. JCPS currently has a layered approach to COVID-19 mitigation, including a universal mask mandate and a voluntary testing program during the day and across the city after school hours.

This document, based on the Kentucky Department for Public Health document *Supplemental Guidance for a “Test to Stay” Modified Quarantine Plan* (September 15, 2021) outlines plans for a “Test to Stay” strategy to allow unvaccinated students and staff to continue with in-person instruction/work with repeated negative COVID-19 testing. Participation in this program will require the completion of the consent form for both students and employees. **Only individuals who are close contacts and ordered to be quarantined by a health professional would be eligible to participate in the Test to Stay Program. Those who have tested positive must remain isolated as instructed by a healthcare provider.**

Our goals for this voluntary program are:

- to ensure as many students and staff have in-person schooling/work as possible.
- to provide a safer learning environment for students and staff.
- to minimize absences due to quarantining for students and staff

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- to lessen the burden of quarantine on students and their families, teachers and school administrators
- to share data with the local health department

Participating in the Test to Stay Program

Based on guidance from the Kentucky Department for Public Health document *Supplemental Guidance for a "Test to Stay" Modified Quarantine Plan* (September 15, 2021), to be eligible for the voluntary Test to Stay program the individual must:

- be a student (PreK-12) or employee in JCPS.
- **be entirely asymptomatic**, without any signs or [symptoms of COVID-19](#).
- **wear a mask indoors** when at school/work for the entirety of the program, even if all test results are negative.

A student/employee who lives with someone who is positive for COVID-19 and cannot quarantine away from the positive case is a risk for spreading COVID-19 according to CDC and, therefore, is not eligible for participation in the Test to Stay Program.

If a person has tested positive for COVID-19, they are not eligible for the Test to Stay program.

If an individual chooses **not** to participate in the Test to Stay Program, quarantining is still required. [Quarantine may be discontinued:](#)

- after day 7 if the individual is symptom-free and receives a negative COVID-19 test 5 days or later after the last date of exposure to the case; **or**
- after day 10 without testing if the individual is symptom-free; **or**
- when health providers determine the individual is safe to be around others.

Fully-vaccinated persons do not need to quarantine following an exposure to a person diagnosed with COVID-19 if he/she is not experiencing symptoms, but are recommended to be tested 3-5 days after an exposure. If testing occurs at the school, follow the guidance outlined below. Fully vaccinated is defined as: 14 or more days have passed since receipt of the Janssen (J&J) vaccine or the second dose of Pfizer or Moderna vaccine.

People who have a verified positive test for COVID-19 in the past 90 days, and have recovered, do not need to quarantine if they've been exposed to another positive case,

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unless they are experiencing symptoms and have been ordered to quarantine by a health professional.

Test to Stay Protocol

Persons who meet all the eligibility criteria for the Test to Stay program outlined above and who have chosen to participate should observe the following protocol.

- Testing is required the night before a school/work day. For example, on a typical week, the student/employee would need to test Sunday through Thursday night to attend school/work the next day. Friday night is not required because students don't attend school on Saturday. Testing should be performed daily through Day 7 after an exposure. If day 7 is on a weekend or holiday, a test must be completed the day prior to the return to school. Quarantining can stop on Day 8 if all results are negative.
- Testing that will be conducted as a part of the Test to Stay program, will be offered at middle and high schools and other selected locations after school, free of charge. **Sites will be open Sunday through Thursday from 3:00 p.m. to 7:00 p.m., or 3:30 p.m. to 7:30 p.m., and others from 4:30 p.m. to 8:30 p.m.** Times may be amended later based on needs. This is a separate program from the testing that happens during the school day.
- Testing must occur daily and the results will be made available to the student/employee the same day as the test. The school will be notified of student results and the employee will share results with the supervisor who will retain a copy.
- A negative result must be received before the individual attends school/work, participates in school activities, or rides the bus.
- A student or employee may also get a test from another medical source at their own expense. The test should be an FDA-approved rapid antigen test to identify [current SARS-CoV-2 infection](#) and be performed by a licensed healthcare provider or appropriately trained personnel. Students or employees who get a test from another medical source must provide negative results to their school or work location before each school/work day.

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- Testing is recommended to be performed a minimum of 24 hours apart.
- Schools will track the results using a district-provided portal specifically designed for the Test to Stay program.
- Individuals who are participating in the Test to Stay Program will have their results reviewed by the school/work site daily. Individuals who have been quarantined but have not completed daily testing or who have a positive test result, will be immediately sent home from the school or work location.