



DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA  
OFFICE OF THE STATE SUPERINTENDENT OF

# EDUCATION

## Rapid Antigen Test Frequently Asked Questions for School Leaders

Jan. 5, 2022

### General

#### 1. Why are schools receiving these rapid test kits?

Rapid antigen tests are being distributed to all DC public schools (DCPS) and public charter schools for students and staff to use when they return from the winter break. Last year, there was an uptick in cases as people gathered indoors for extended periods of time and returned from the winter holidays, and the omicron variant of COVID-19 is also causing some concern of increased transmission in the community. These rapid antigen tests are an added safeguard to check that students and staff returning to school after winter break do not have COVID-19.

#### 2. How does a rapid antigen test work?

Rapid antigen tests use a nasal swab and a process to detect if there are COVID-19 viral particles in that sample. The home kits are self-administered and do not need a lab to complete. The results show up on the test card.

#### 3. Do schools need a Clinical Laboratory Improvement Amendments (CLIA) waiver to distribute or administer the antigen tests? (updated)

Generally, a test that has been cleared, approved, or authorized specifically for home use by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) is not regulated under CLIA when that test is self-administered in accordance with the FDA's authorization and authorized labeling. Schools **do not** need a CLIA waiver to distribute these tests or for parents/guardians to swab their own child and report their child's results to the school. Schools **do** need a CLIA waiver if a school staff member or contractor is physically administering the test to the student (i.e., if a school staff member is swabbing the student's nose) and/or reading the test result.

CLIA applicability frequently asked questions can be found [here](#).

#### 4. Can parents/guardians opt out of a nasal-based COVID-19 test that is administered by the school?

In instances where schools are administering nasal-based COVID-19 tests, parents/guardians may use [this form](#) to specifically refuse or withdraw consent for and opt out of any nasal-based COVID-19 test (rapid antigen or PCR) in schools. This form may be used when a nasal tests is administered by a school staff for

any reason including but not limited to asymptomatic testing, symptomatic testing, or any testing requirement as a condition to return to school.

## Test Delivery and Distribution

### 5. Which schools are eligible to receive the test kits?

All public and public charter local education agencies (LEAs), including those that serve exclusively pre-kindergarten or adult education students, are eligible to receive the rapid antigen tests.

### 6. How will the rapid tests be distributed to schools, and how are schools expected to distribute the tests to families?

The antigen tests were delivered to DC Public Schools via the Department of Public Works (DPW) and to public charter LEAs via FedEx. Schools should make plans for families to pick the tests up at the school. Schools should plan for safe distribution of tests by encouraging physical distance (avoiding crowding), requiring face masks, and having hand sanitizer available. If possible, schools should distribute tests outdoors or near entrances with increased air flow or ventilation to avoid families entering too far into the school building.

### 7. When will tests be delivered to schools?

Anticipated delivery of test kits was via FedEx by Jan. 3, 2022.

### 8. Will schools be alerted to when delivery is expected, so that they can make sure someone is present to accept the delivery?

Yes. The Test Delivery Point of Contact provided by the LEA received tracking numbers.

### 9. What happens if a school has already alerted FedEx to hold all deliveries during break?

The Test Delivery Point of Contact provided by the LEA will be responsible for monitoring the delivery of test kits to their campus(es) and will have the tracking number to support communication with FedEx if necessary.

### 10. Will deliveries be made to each campus for multi-campus LEAs?

Yes. Deliveries will be made to individual campuses.

### 11. How is the number of test kits distributed to each LEA calculated?

The number of tests is based on a school's unaudited enrollment and the data submitted via the teacher and staff data count.

### 12. Are schools required to distribute the test kits to their students' families, or can a school administer the tests at school?

Logistics for distribution and administration of testing are at the discretion of the LEA. LEAs may distribute the test kits to families who will administer the tests, or they may administer the tests at school. Regardless of how the LEAs distribute and administer the test kits, they must also provide families with the Return to School Criteria After an Antigen Test handout.

### 13. Can schools request more test kits if needed?

This distribution of antigen tests is a one-time distribution based on a school's enrollment. If families need access to additional testing, they should be directed to the resources on [coronavirus.dc.gov/testing](https://coronavirus.dc.gov/testing).

### 14. Will schools receive extra tests in case there are errors with students taking the tests?

Schools will receive tests based on enrollment. If a school has additional test kits, the school may make them available to individuals who missed taking their initial test.

### 15. Can schools pick up bulk amounts of PCR tests from Test Yourself DC sites for distribution to families?

No. Bulk pick-up from Test Yourself DC sites is not allowed.

## Test Administration and Results

### 16. Can we use the tests to test all students upon arrival to school on the first day after break?

The timing and location of testing are at the discretion of the individual school.

### 17. Can a school require a negative test result to return to school for students and/or staff?

DCPS has announced that it will require all students and staff to produce a negative test result in order to return to school after the winter break. Charter schools with questions about the legality of requiring a negative test result for students or staff to return to school should consult with their own legal counsel.

### 18. What should I do, if a student's test was negative but the student has symptoms upon arriving at school?

Any student with new or unexplained symptoms of COVID-19 must not attend school. In order to return to school after experiencing symptoms of COVID-19, the student must:

- Not attend school for at least 10 days from when symptoms first appeared;  
OR
- Submit documentation from a healthcare provider of an alternate diagnosis;  
OR
- Receive a negative NAAT (e.g., PCR) test result after the symptoms appeared.

For additional information about returning to school after symptoms of COVID-19, see OSSE's Return to School Matrix, available on the [OSSE COVID-19 Guidance and Resources website](#).

### 19. What should schools instruct families to do if a student has tested positive via the antigen test?

Schools should clearly communicate with families how they should notify the school of a positive test result. Remind families to immediately log the positive test result with DC Health at [coronavirus.dc.gov/overthecounter](https://coronavirus.dc.gov/overthecounter). Students who test positive must not immediately return to

school and must follow the criteria outlined in the [Return to School Matrix](#) for positive COVID-19 test results.

## 20. How can families access PCR testing?

Families can access PCR testing through multiple avenues:

- By picking up and dropping off a free, at-home testing kit at any of the sites listed at [coronavirus.dc.gov/testyourself](https://coronavirus.dc.gov/testyourself);
- By going to a District-operated walk-up site listed on [coronavirus.dc.gov/testing](https://coronavirus.dc.gov/testing); or
- By making an appointment with their healthcare provider.

## 21. How long are negative test results from an antigen test valid?

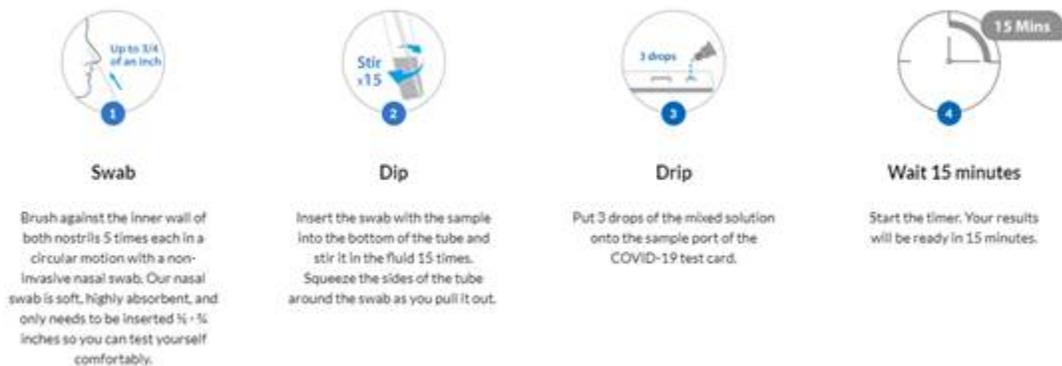
The antigen test is a “moment in time” result. If an individual develops symptoms after taking the test, is identified as a close contact of someone with COVID-19, has a household member who develops symptoms, or travels outside of DC, Maryland, or Virginia, then that test result would no longer be acceptable for the purposes of meeting return to school criteria. In those situations, the person should follow the established protocols for testing and follow-up for each specific scenario. For more information on those protocols, see the Return to School Matrix available on [OSSE’s COVID-19 Guidance and Resources website](#).

## 22. Who should schools contact if they have questions about test administration or test results?

Schools with questions about test administration or test results should contact [OSSE.HealthandSafety@dc.gov](mailto:OSSE.HealthandSafety@dc.gov).

## 23. Where can the school direct families for instructions about how to use the test?

The iHealth antigen test kits are easy to use and follow four simple steps:



Schools can direct families to follow the instructions that come with the test. Families should be sure to review the instructions before you use the test. A video about how to use the test kit is also available at [tinyurl.com/yckm4p9z](https://tinyurl.com/yckm4p9z).

Schools can also direct families to the iHealth COVID-19 Test application, which includes step-by-step written and video instructions on how to self-administer the test and how to administer the test to a child. The application will also provide a location for families to input their test results.

#### 24. How can families show the school their test results?

Families may choose to take a picture of their test result. Families can also present the school with the copy of the emailed test result from the testing manufacturer, iHealth.

### Instructional Day Waiver

#### 25. Are the waiver dates restricted for use only on Jan. 3 and 4?

No. LEAs may request a waiver for extraordinary operational conditions for **TWO** instructional days of school before returning to in-person learning in January 2022 after the winter break. If the LEA is scheduled to return to school on Jan. 4, then the LEA may use the waiver for Jan. 4 and Jan. 5.

#### 26. Can we request a waiver for only one of the two days?

Yes. LEAs may request the waiver for up to two instructional days.

#### 27. Do LEAs that serve only non-compulsory grades (pre-kindergarten and/or adult education) need to submit a waiver if they want to have non-instructional days on Jan. 3-4?

LEAs that serve only non-compulsory grades do not need to submit a waiver, as the requirement for 180 instructional days does not apply to them. However, they should make sure that their calendars are updated for the purposes of attendance data collection.

If you have additional questions, contact [OSSE.HealthandSafety@dc.gov](mailto:OSSE.HealthandSafety@dc.gov).

**For resources and information about the District of Columbia Government's coronavirus (COVID-19) response and recovery efforts, please visit [coronavirus.dc.gov](https://coronavirus.dc.gov).**