

Coronavirus Testing Program— FAQs for administrators

Q: How do I create and implement a coronavirus testing program for my school?

A: If planned and managed effectively with the right partners, testing programs can be easy to implement, scalable, and cost-effective. We designed a simple and comprehensive testing program based on recommendations from the nation’s leading coronavirus testing experts at the CDC and the Rockefeller Foundation so that you don’t have to create your own program from scratch. We’ll be there to help guide you—starting with the onboarding process and through any questions that come up when the program is in action.

Q: What type of coronavirus test will we use?

A: PCR testing technology, which is considered the “gold standard” and most accurate type of test by COVID-19 testing experts.

Q: How does the actual coronavirus testing process work?

A: We provide schools with short nasal swabs that make it easy and more comfortable for students to collect their own samples. With supervision, students will be able to quickly swab their own noses and place their swab in a test tube. Teachers and staff can then easily place the tubes into provided shipping packaging, and arrange for the package to be picked up for transport to labs, where the samples will be tested. Test results are ready within 12–48 hours of sample collection. Schools can choose whether they would like teachers, school staff, and families to receive results via text or email—or if the school would like to manage communication of test results on their own.

Q: Do teachers and school staff need to touch students’ swabs?

A: No, teachers and staff should not have to touch students’ swabs. Students place their swabs into the provided collection tubes; teachers and staff only open and close the tubes. If students need additional assistance, we provide instructional how-to videos and “how to collect your sample” posters.

Q: What is pooled testing? Why is it used?

A: We use pooled testing, which combines up to six samples into a tube for a single test, to make testing more efficient and affordable. If a pool comes back negative, it indicates that no one in the pool has coronavirus. On the other hand, if a pool comes back positive, it indicates that at least one person in the pool has coronavirus. Pooled testing allows for accurate results and identification of positive pools for a lower cost than individual testing.

Q: What happens when a pool's result comes back positive?

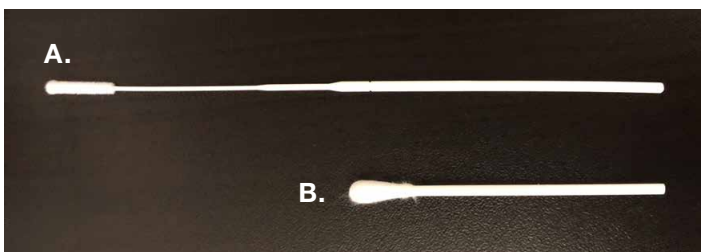
A: If a pool is positive, schools can act immediately to ensure that the people in the pool return home or stay at home until they receive a negative result from a follow-up test.

Q: Why are pools made up of only six people?

A: Testing up to six samples at once allows us to reduce the cost of testing without limiting accuracy. Our pool size is large enough to be cost-effective and small enough that a positive pool may not result in class disruption.

Q: I've heard that nasal swabbing is uncomfortable and scary—is that true?

A: Our nasal swabs are short and easy to use. They're about the size of your everyday cotton swab and don't need to be inserted deeply into the nose. We selected a short and more comfortable swab for our testing program. The swabbing process is so simple that kids can do it themselves.



A. Longer swabs that some other testing companies use. **B.** Shorter, more comfortable swabs used in our testing process.

References

1. Screening K-12 Students for Symptoms of COVID-19: Limitations and Considerations | CDC
2. K-12-NTAP_FINAL.pdf (rockefellerfoundation.org)

Find out more at

[thermofisher.com/safeschools](https://www.thermofisher.com/safeschools)

Q: Why do we need to test everyone? Shouldn't we just test those who have symptoms?

A: Bringing kids back into schools and maintaining a healthy classroom is our top priority, which is why we recommend testing everyone. According to the CDC, children are more likely than adults to be asymptomatic, meaning they don't show signs of sickness when infected with coronavirus.¹ Given this, kids who appear healthy can still spread the virus to their teachers and peers, so they all need regular testing. In addition, at the time of any given test, students, teachers, or staff may be presymptomatic, meaning that they've recently been infected and have not yet developed symptoms—but still could be contagious. The best way to avoid undetected infections and stop the spread of the virus early is to test everyone, and to do so on a frequent basis.

Q: How often do we need to test students, teachers, and staff for coronavirus?

A: The Rockefeller Foundation's public health experts recommend that K–12 schools test students for coronavirus once per week, with testing for teachers and staff up to twice weekly.² We can work with you to develop a testing schedule that works best for your needs.

Q: What if we can't hire new staff for coronavirus testing?

A: Our testing program was designed to minimize the need for new staffing resources or clinical professionals. Existing staff and teachers can access training materials and support that enable them to oversee testing. In cases where schools need additional support, we can work with you to develop a plan that fits your needs.

Q: If teachers and school staff are vaccinated, do they still need to be tested?

A: It depends on the requirements of the district, but 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.

Q: How do I sign my district or school up?

A: It's easy—start by filling out this **form**.