

# **High School Extracurricular Activities COVID-19 Testing FAQ**

*Updated November 23, 2020*

## **Are high school students and school staff who participate in extracurricular activities required to have a COVID-19 test?**

Yes. Beginning on November 30, 2020, each participant in a high school extracurricular activity, including a practice or competition, must receive a diagnostic test approved by the United States Food and Drug Administration to determine current COVID-19 infection at least once every 14 days. Additionally, immediately prior to participating in the athletic or extracurricular activity, each participant must confirm that the participant has completed any quarantine or isolation period required by the COVID-19 School Manual provided by the Utah Department of Health (the "Department") and is not experiencing any symptom of COVID-19.

## **Does the Utah Department of Health have the authority to require this testing?**

Yes. The State Legislature has given the Utah Department of Health a mandate to control the causes of epidemic, infectious, and communicable diseases and their causes affecting public health, and has authorized the Executive Director of the Department to issue public health orders to enforce that mandate. See Utah Code §§ 26-1-10, 26-1-30, and 26-6-3. Required testing is part of the Department's efforts to control COVID-19 and the threat it poses to public health.

## **Why are high school students who participate in athletic or extracurricular activities being required to have a COVID test?**

Extracurricular activities are often inherently higher risk activities for the spread of COVID-19. By requiring testing of symptomatic and asymptomatic participants, and then isolating participants who test positive, the likelihood of spread decreases. Additionally, regular scheduled testing may promote risk-reduction behavior, including mask wearing and physical distancing, which should also decrease transmission. Decreasing COVID-19 spread in this age group may also help protect other more vulnerable age groups. Goals of this testing include: 1) Decrease transmission; 2) Enable students and staff to participate in high school safely; and 3) Enable students and staff to participate in high school extracurricular activities safely.

## **Can teachers and school staff who are not associated with athletic or extracurricular activities have the option to be tested?**

The Public Health Order requires testing for those who participate in athletic or extracurricular activities. However, schools may also opt to offer optional testing to teachers or other staff who do not participate in these activities. Additionally, teachers and staff can find testing sites at [coronavirus.utah.gov](https://coronavirus.utah.gov).

## **Which extracurricular activities are included?**

An extracurricular activity means a high school activity, course, or program that is not directly related to delivering instruction; is not a curricular or co-curricular activity as defined by Utah Code § 53G-7-501; is provided, sponsored, or supported by a school outside of the regular school day; and is held in-person.

Examples of extracurricular activities include the following, even if the activity is also part of a class: basketball, wrestling, drill team, swimming, cheer, theater (e.g. high school musicals), pep band, and clubs.

Extracurricular activities do not include a co-curricular activity that is a one-time performance or demonstration of skills acquired as part of a class provided during the regular school day (e.g., an after school annual choir concert, end-of-course dance recital, or science fair).

An elementary, middle, or high school that sponsors an activity, course, or program not included in the definition of extracurricular activities above shall comply with the event host restrictions in the health order.

## **How does this affect junior high students, including ninth grade students?**

The testing requirements in the Public Health Order are specific to athletic and extracurricular activities hosted by high schools. Ninth grade students participating in athletic or extracurricular activities at the high school are required to test. For activities at the elementary and junior high level, each participant must confirm that they have completed any quarantine or isolation periods required by the local health department and are not experiencing any symptom of COVID-19. Mitigation strategies should be employed, such as physical distancing. For all K-12 schools, the mask mandate is still in place.

### **What specific test will be administered?**

Schools will be administering the BinaxNOW rapid antigen test, which will be provided to the schools at no cost. To perform the test, a nasal swab specimen is collected from the patient by a cotton swab, taking a sample from both sides of the nose. The test is minimally invasive. Test results are interpreted visually at 15 minutes. The type of test may change, depending on test availability.

Tests could also be conducted by healthcare providers or at community testing sites; in such cases, results need to be reported to designated school officials.

### **Who will perform the testing?**

Testing at each school will be overseen by the school's designated COVID-19 point of contact. Personnel administering the tests do not need to be medical professionals. School and other staff participating in testing may include Certified Athletic Trainers, other activity staff, school nurses, other school staff, local/state medical reserve corps, PTA, or other staff/volunteers. Where needed, and if funding is available, additional staff could be hired to help with testing. Districts and charter schools should consider applying for reimbursement through the Utah Grants Management System.

### **Who will pay for this testing?**

Utah has allocated a portion of its federal CARES funding to facilitate this testing program. School districts and charter schools are highly encouraged to claim reimbursement for costs incurred due to testing through the Utah Grants Management system.

### **What PPE is required to perform the testing and who will provide it?**

The following PPE and supply items are needed for testing and will be provided by Utah state government, as needed:

- Examination gloves (dispose after testing)
- Surgical or N95/KN95 masks (dispose after testing)
- Surgical gowns (dispose after testing)
- Face shields (sanitize after testing and reuse)
- Hand sanitizer

- Sanitizing wipes or spray
- Biohazard waste disposal bags

Please note that used test kits are biohazard waste. Schools are responsible for disposing of biohazard waste. This could be handled by local arrangement, such as a weekly disposal trip to the local health department or a local hospital.

### **What training is available to schools?**

In-person training will take place at regional locations. Districts and charter schools will be notified of local training opportunities by the Utah Department of Health. Trainers may include UDOH Mobile Testing Teams, school nurses, local health department personnel, and healthcare providers. Training materials include [online training videos](#) (only training modules 1 through 4 are applicable) and BinaxNOW training materials, which will be provided.

<https://www.globalpointofcare.abbott/en/support/product-installation-training/navica-brand/navica-binaxnow-ag-training.html>

### **Where will the testing be performed?**

In many instances, testing will be performed on-site at the school. Some school districts and charter schools may contract with an outside entity, such as a medical clinic or local higher education institution, to have the testing performed elsewhere.

### **How often will this testing be required?**

Beginning on November 30, 2020 each participant in a high school extracurricular activity, including a practice or competition, must receive a diagnostic test approved by the United States Food and Drug Administration to determine current COVID-19 infection at least once every 14 days (i.e., every two weeks).

### **What happens when a participant tests positive?**

When any participant tests positive, the protocols outlined in the COVID-19 School Manual (<https://coronavirus.utah.gov/education/school-manual/>) should be followed. These protocol topics include isolation, contact tracing, and quarantine.

BinaxNOW tests are not as specific or sensitive as PCR tests. Nonetheless, BinaxNOW tests can identify those who are infected and can encourage risk-reduction behaviors.

Individuals who wish to receive a follow-up PCR test should do so within 48 hours of the BinaxNOW test. Follow-up PCR testing is recommended for unexpected BinaxNOW results (see Utah COVID-19 School Manual).

### **What is a CLIA waiver and how can schools obtain one?**

LEAs need a Clinical Laboratory Improvement Amendments (CLIA) waiver to perform these tests. If a CLIA waiver is not already in place, an entity (e.g. school district) can obtain one by submitting an application form to [labimprovement@utah.gov](mailto:labimprovement@utah.gov). Each site (e.g., school) can perform testing under the CLIA waiver held by its organizational entity (e.g., school district). In other words, each school does not need its own CLIA waiver; a school district–level waiver for each school/testing site in the district will suffice. Each charter school and private school will need to obtain its own CLIA waiver. Each CLIA waiver costs \$180 per two-year period. Instructions for how to complete a CLIA waiver application will be provided. Schools may be able to arrange for testing by arrangement with an entity that already has a CLIA waiver (e.g., local health department or hospital).

### **How will test results be reported and stored?**

COVID-19 test results (both positive and negative) need to be reported to the Utah Department of Health. Schools can use a web-based platform called RedCap to register testing program participants and report test results. Instructions for how to use RedCap will be provided to district and charter schools. Other reporting systems are also acceptable, including the UDOH reporting portal. Regardless of the reporting system, the diagnostic testing facility name should be marked with PTI plus the name of the school testing site; for example, “PTI-Orem High School”. “PTI” stands for prioritized testing initiative.

### **How will this testing be compliant with FERPA?**

LEAs may request families sign a FERPA waiver for their student to participate in school-based COVID 19 testing. LEAs can enter into an agreement with the UDOH to ensure FERPA safeguards are provided for any participating student and data maintained in the UDOH RedCap system.

### **How will parental consent be collected?**

Parents must give consent for their minor child to be tested. This can be done via RedCap or established school mechanisms. This consent may be able to be obtained one time to cover the entire period of the athletic season or extracurricular activity. Schools are responsible for seeking and keeping records of parental consent.

**What if a student or staff member decides to not be tested?**

A student or staff member may elect to not be tested. However, this choice would preclude the individual from participating in athletic or extracurricular activities sponsored by the high school at this time.