

# Test to Stay (testing for school outbreaks)

The goals of “Test to Stay ”are to allow students and staff to participate in in-person learning as safely as possible while lessening the burden of quarantine and multiple soft closures on students and their families, teachers, and school administrators.

Data from pilot tests of “Test to Stay” in 2 Utah high schools (Kearns High School and Syracuse High School) showed this strategy can successfully identify students and staff who need to isolate or quarantine while also allowing in-person learning to continue for those who test negative. The percent of positive students and staff from these pilot tests was between 1 and 2%.

When a school meets the outbreak thresholds, the local education authority (in consultation with the local health department and considering available testing resources) can decide to either:

- Move all students and staff to virtual or remote learning for at least 10 days, or
- Offer rapid antigen testing for all students and staff



## 10-day virtual or remote learning option

If the 10-day virtual or remote learning option is chosen, the 10-day timeframe should be based on calendar days, not school days. The local health department and the school will determine when to start and end the 10-day virtual learning.



## Rapid antigen testing option

Schools will provide rapid antigen testing for the “Test to Stay” option. Schools will determine when and how to offer the testing to students, teachers, and staff. All test results must be reported to the Utah Department of Health.

Schools need to be familiar with the limitations of antigen testing. These tests work best when someone has symptoms of COVID-19 or it has been 7 days after an exposure to the virus. A negative antigen test result does not mean they won't ever get sick with COVID-19. Precautions like wearing a mask, physical distancing, and following isolation and quarantine guidelines must still be taken. More information on antigen tests can be found at: [https://coronavirus-download.utah.gov/Health/COVID-19-Rapid\\_Antigen\\_Test.pdf](https://coronavirus-download.utah.gov/Health/COVID-19-Rapid_Antigen_Test.pdf).

### Students who are offered rapid antigen testing:

- Must isolate at home if they test **positive**, even if they had symptoms before the test. They may return to in-person learning after they are done with their isolation period.
- May continue in-person learning if they test negative, are not a close contact of a person who tests positive, and do not have any symptoms of COVID-19.
- Who choose not to get tested should move to virtual or remote learning for at least 10 days.



Teachers and staff are expected to continue their normal job duties in-person if they choose not to get tested or test negative. They should isolate at home if they test positive or follow quarantine guidelines if they were exposed to COVID-19.

### Contact tracing will be done for anyone who tests positive.

Students, teachers, or staff who are exposed to a person who tests positive should follow the quarantine guidelines (found on page 20).

- You don't have to quarantine if both you and the person who tested positive were at school and were both wearing masks at the time of the exposure while at school. The person who tested positive needs to isolate for at least 10 days, even if you were both wearing a mask.
- You need to quarantine if you were exposed at school, and either you or the person who tested positive were not wearing masks. You may end quarantine on day 10 without testing, or on day 7 with a negative test result if the test was conducted on day 7 of your quarantine or later.

Schools are expected to notify all close contacts, even if they meet the criteria to not quarantine, and provide instructions on what they should do. Close contacts should be told to watch for symptoms of COVID-19 until it has been 14 days after their exposure and what safety precautions should be taken. If at any time during the 14 days after their exposure a person develops symptoms of COVID-19, he or she should isolate and get tested right away. If the person does not have symptoms, he or she should wait 7 days after they were exposed to get tested.

The “Test to Stay” option has different timeframes for when a person who tests positive should start isolation. If you test positive as part of “Test to Stay,” your isolation begins the day you are tested, not when your symptoms begin. You must isolate even if you don’t get symptoms. Anyone who came into close contact with you for up to 2 days before the day of your test was exposed and should quarantine. This is considered the date of last exposure for the “Test to Stay” option.

## **Who decides if a school will transition from in-person learning to hybrid or remote learning?**

While the Governor, state health department, and local health department each have legal authority to close schools in response to a public health emergency, the local school board will decide if or when a school will move to remote or hybrid learning during the pandemic. The local health department should be consulted in this decision. Many things will be considered in this situation including the:

- Importance of in-person learning to the social, emotional, economic, and academic growth and well-being of students.
- Number of people in the community who are testing positive for COVID-19 (called community spread or community transmission).
- Number of students, teachers, and employees who are testing positive for COVID-19 or who are on quarantine due to an exposure.
- Growth rate of new cases (people who tested positive) in the area.
- Statewide capacity for testing, hospital beds, and ICUs.
- The COVID-19 Transmission Index level the county is currently in.<sup>49</sup>
- Interaction of students, teachers, and employees among other schools in the district.
- Ability to provide virtual learning to students.
- Economic and social hardships on families and students.

### **Who is involved in the decision-making process for schools?**

There are many people and organizations involved in the plans for reopening schools during the pandemic.

- Utah State Board of Education (USBE)
- State and local health departments
- Local education associations (school districts and charter schools are also known as LEAs)
- State and local government officials
- School administrators
- Parents
- Eligible students (students who are 18 years old or students of any age who have taken postsecondary classes)
- Teachers
- Employees who work in the education sector