Friday, February 19, 2021

Dear Parents,

The Helix School District is planning for the Oregon Department of Education (ODE) required on-site COVID-19 testing in our K-12 schools. According to ODE and Oregon Health Authority (OHA), a K-12 school operating in-person for students in a county that does not meet the Ready Schools, Safe Learners (RSSL) general metrics must provide on-site COVID-19 testing beginning March 1, 2021.

The testing is only for symptomatic and exposed students and staff; for example, if a person develops symptoms at school or when a cohort has been exposed. The testing will use the Abbott BinaxNOW rapid point-of-care antigen test, which takes 15 minutes to return a result. The tests are free, confidential and will be administered by a trained person at the school, who does not need to be a medical professional. The test is self-administered and amounts to a shallow nasal swab in each nostril by the person being tested. Also, a student **must** have a written consent form on file prior to testing, for a test to be administered. While there is no opt-out form, by not completing a consent form for your student, the school cannot test the student.

One thing remains the same – if a student has COVID symptoms, they will be sent home from school regardless if they are tested or not.

According to the Oregon Department of Education (ODE) COVID-19 Exclusion Summary Guidance for K-12 Schools:

* If a person **tests negative** for COVID-19, they may return to school after symptoms improve AND fever free for 24 hours AND have NOT had contact with a COVID-19 case in past 14 days.

* If a person is **not tested or tests positive** for COVID-19, they must stay home for at least 10 days since symptoms started AND 24 hours fever free AND symptoms improved.

For more information about exclusions, please refer to the **COVID *"Can my student go to school today"* Flow Chart** mailed to all parents during the first week of February.

If you have questions/concerns regarding COVID testing, please contact the Helix School District Office at (541) 457-2175.

Sincerely,

Darrick Cope
Superintendent
Helix School District