

AOS 47
Airline, Dedham and Orrington School Departments



Dear Parents, Guardians & Staff

October 1, 2021

This letter is being sent to give an update on [Pooled Testing](#) for AOS 47. Pool testing is one of the mitigation strategies we will be utilizing to reduce any need for quarantining and other disruptive measures up to and including shutting schools down due to a significant increase in Covid-19 cases. The Maine CDC has a set of [frequently asked questions](#) and answers about Pooled testing.

We are looking to begin Pooled Testing in the month of October. We are utilizing State funding to purchase the tests and hire a coordinator to efficiently implement and run our pooled testing program. The applications have been filled out and sent in with our necessary supplies already starting to land. Consent for Pooled Testing will be sent home to families who wish to have their students participate. Participating in this voluntary Pooled testing program may ONLY occur with parental consent. A building specific sign up link will be sent out separately for those who wish to participate in this program.

Quick Pooled Testing Facts

- Parents need to give permission for a student to participate in Pooled Testing.
- How it works: With Parental Consent, students in a common homeroom perform their own, quick nasal swab once a week and place the swab in a sealed container. All the samples from each room then go to a lab for testing with results returned in 24-48 hours. If there are no COVID positives in the room or “pool” then the students will just continue on and be tested the following week. If there is a positive then each individual in the classroom pool is tested separately at school as a follow up. A student who tests positive would quarantine, but others in the pool would not have to quarantine even if they are a close contact.

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- We want to include everyone who is willing to participate, even those who are vaccinated. Vaccinated people are still protected from serious illness, but with the Delta variant they could potentially be carrying a communicable viral load.
 - All staff are also invited to participate, including those who are vaccinated
 - Results of the testing will go to our nurse as a trained health professional, but those results are confidential

Currently students aged 5 to 11 cannot be vaccinated, but that will likely be offered at some point. AOS 47 will continue to offer voluntary vaccine clinics for staff and students of those families who would like to have their children vaccinated. Our only goal is the health and well-being of our community as we look to keep our schools open.

Sincerely,

James Stoneton II
Superintendent of Schools

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