



KELSO SCHOOL DISTRICT

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November 22, 2021

Dear Kelso Families,

For over 14 months, school districts in Washington State have been required to exclude students from school who were identified as close contacts of someone who tested positive for COVID-19. This has resulted in many students missing valuable in-person classroom instruction and additional supports.

Our continued priority remains the health and safety of our staff and students, and, to the greatest extent possible, maximizing in-person learning.

We are excited to announce the Department of Health has approved KSD as a site to implement the [Test to Stay program](#). This program has been launched to keep healthy students in school as much as safely possible. Kelso School District is working with the Deputy Health Officer, Cowlitz County Health & Human Services, and Health Commons and received approval and support.

Previously, unvaccinated students who were designated to be close contacts at school were required to quarantine at home for up to 14 days. This program will allow unvaccinated students who have been identified as close contacts at school to continue to learn in-person at school while monitoring for COVID-19 symptoms.

The Test to Stay protocol is detailed beginning on page 16 of the [Supplemental Considerations to Mitigate COVID-19 Transmission in K-12 Schools](#). COVID-19 testing, combined with other disease prevention strategies, can help our schools detect new cases to prevent outbreaks, reduce the risk of further transmission, and protect students, teachers, and other staff from COVID-19.

Our systems are in place to begin Test to Stay as of today. Please see the next page of this letter for frequently asked questions and protocols.

As always, if you have questions, please email me.

Sincerely,

Mary Beth Tack, Superintendent
Marybeth.tack@kelsosd.org



Test to Stay FAQs

What is Test to Stay?

Test to Stay is a practice comprised of regular testing and contact tracing to allow close contacts to remain in the classroom while maintaining other layered prevention strategies, such as universal masking, to reduce the spread of COVID-19.

Who is eligible?

Test to Stay is optional, and parental consent is required. It is only available for unvaccinated students who have had a close contact at school as identified by contact tracing. Those who are exposed out in the community or at home must quarantine at home and follow the standard quarantine protocol used by the district in coordination with the local public health agency.

What is a close contact?

Someone who was within 6 feet of a COVID-19 positive person for a total of 15 minutes or more within 24 hours during the case's contagious period. In a K–12 indoor/outdoor classroom, the close contact definition excludes students who were at least three feet away from an infectious student when both students were consistently and correctly wearing masks.

What if my child is identified as a close contact but has been vaccinated?

Students who are vaccinated and remain symptom-free do not need to be tested, even if identified as a close contact of someone who has tested positive for COVID-19.

What if my student is identified as a close contact of someone with COVID-19 at school, is unvaccinated, and test positive?

If the student tests positive, the student will be sent home for the identified isolation period, usually 10 days.

What if my student is identified as a close contact of someone with COVID-19 at school, is unvaccinated, and tests negative?

As a part of the Test to Stay program, your student may continue to attend class in a modified quarantine for seven days after exposure, unless they develop symptoms or test positive for COVID-19. If your student continues to be COVID-19-free, they will be tested again 5-7 days after initial exposure. During this 7-day modified quarantine, your student may attend class, but may not participate in athletics or extracurricular activities. On day 8, they will be able to resume normal activities even if test results are not returned.

Test to Stay Protocols

- Students may continue to attend class in a modified quarantine status for 7 days after exposure, if they:
 - Are tested at least twice during the 7 days of quarantine; AND
 - Are asymptomatic; AND
 - Continue to wear a mask; AND
 - Continue to quarantine from (i.e., not participate in) all extracurricular activities at school, including sports, and other activities outside their home (e.g., scouts, music lessons, etc.) for the entirety of their modified quarantine period. This includes group childcare or youth development programs provided before and after school, which should not be attended during modified quarantine.
- Antigen tests, given the ability to obtain results within minutes and the need to identify positive close contacts and isolate in a timely fashion, should be the preferred testing modality.
- Collection of diagnostic specimens for asymptomatic persons during quarantine may occur in schools, healthcare settings, or other locations supervised by school or healthcare personnel. Specimens may be processed at the point-of-care (POC) or in a laboratory. Home tests are NOT accepted.
- If a student does not test positive for COVID-19 during the modified quarantine, students may resume group child care/youth development attendance and extracurricular and community activities after 7 days have passed since their exposure but should still continue to monitor themselves for symptoms for 14 days after their exposure.
- If a student tests positive for COVID-19 at any time, they must isolate at home and follow DOH isolation guidance.
- Students who opt out of testing are not eligible for the modified quarantine, as described above.
- Fully vaccinated students who meet the definition of close contact and remain asymptomatic are not required to quarantine or participate in the DOH Test to Stay Program. However, they should get tested 3-5 days after their exposure date.
- Fully vaccinated students who meet the definition of close contact and develop symptoms should self-isolate and be tested for COVID-19.
- Students who are symptomatic must be evaluated for COVID-19 infection and are not eligible for modified quarantine unless they receive a documented negative viral test after symptom onset. A molecular test is preferred; a negative antigen test or POC molecular test may need to have confirmation with a lab-based PCR test, consistent with CDC recommendations. Home tests are NOT accepted.
- School districts must receive permission from parents/guardians for students to receive school-based testing.
- School districts must coordinate with their LHM and complete a Memorandum of Agreement (MOA).
- Schools should work with their coordinators to determine which testing options are available.