



## Smithfield School Department

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**Judith Paolucci, Ph. D.**  
*Superintendent*

**Sara Monaco, Ed. D.**  
*Assistant Superintendent*

Date: January 3rd, 2022

Dear families,

At Smithfield Public Schools, keeping your students safe, healthy, and learning in school is our top priority. In the past year, we have learned that wearing masks, routine testing, screening students and staff, ventilation, and physical distancing help make schools a safe place for students and staff. We are continuously updating our guidance and procedures to reflect the most up to date recommendations from the Rhode Island Department of Health and Rhode Island Department of Education.

Starting January 3rd, 2022, we are adding an extra layer of protection to prevent the spread of COVID-19 called the Test to Stay Pilot Program (TTS). TTS is a new quarantine protocol being piloted in Rhode Island. TTS aims to provide students with an option to stay in school after being identified as a close contact and supporting them to gain the intellectual and psychosocial benefits of in-person learning. The TTS concept is based on data that show that schools are safe due to layered prevention strategies and that most students who test positive for COVID-19 get infected from exposure in settings not related to school. The protocol allows students and staff who don't have symptoms when identified as a close contact to take daily tests instead of quarantine at home.

Students who have consented will be advised to start the TTS quarantine protocol if they are identified as a close contact of someone at school. During their seven-day quarantine period, students will be tested each morning. They must be transported to school by a parent or guardian who needs to stay within 5 minutes of the school until testing is complete. When they arrive at school each day, they'll come to the designated TTS location and wait for testing. The tests that will be used are rapid antigen tests which take about 15 minutes to process. Rapid antigen tests are quick and non-invasive. A nasal swab is used for the test, and the process will be supervised by a school nurse or trained health provider.

Students who receive a negative test result will be allowed to go to class. Students who receive a positive test result must be picked up immediately and are sent home to isolate pending the result of a PCR test, which takes 24-48 hours. If the PCR test result is positive, the student will continue to isolate and follow all protocols for individuals who have tested positive for COVID-19. If the PCR test is negative, the student will be released from isolation and allowed to return to school.

If you would like your child to participate in TTS, you must sign and return the consent form to your child's school. Students cannot participate without a signed consent on file. There is no charge for participating. If you have additional questions regarding the program, please contact Melissa Moroni, Smithfield Covid Response Coordinator at [mmoroni@smithfield-ps.org](mailto:mmoroni@smithfield-ps.org) or 401.349.4243.

It is our hope that TTS, along with the other safety measures we continue to have in place, will keep our schools safe and will allow students to stay in school. Thanks again for your support during this challenging time.

Sincerely,  
Melissa Moroni, RN  
Covid Response Coordinator, Smithfield Public Schools