



CHAUTAUQUA COUNTY
DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES
DIVISION OF PUBLIC HEALTH

PAUL M. WENDEL, JR.
County Executive

CHRISTINE SCHUYLER
Director of Health & Human Services
(Commissioner of Social Services/Public Health Director)

Chautauqua County Health Department
COVID-19 Test to Stay Protocol

Updated January 24, 2022

Pursuant to its authority under New York Public Health Law and related regulations, and in connection with the New York State Department of Health memorandum concerning Revised Updated Testing and Quarantine Supplemental Information to the "Interim NYSDOH Guidance for Classroom Instruction in P-12 Schools During the 2021-2022 Academic Year," dated December 23, 2021, the Chautauqua County Health Department has determined that schools in Chautauqua County may implement "Test to Stay" (TTS) in compliance with the local requirements set forth below.

This communication is intended to set forth the policy of the Chautauqua County Health Department and expectations for schools in the implementation of TTS throughout Chautauqua County. Schools should review the NYSDOH guidance closely and consult their counsel for legal advice.

Summary:

Test to Stay (TTS) is a modified, test-based protocol for asymptomatic Pre K-12 students and staff who have been identified as close contacts to someone with COVID-19. TTS allows eligible quarantined individuals to attend in-school instruction if they receive a negative COVID-19 viral test (e.g. rapid antigen, PCR) a minimum of two times during the five-day period following exposure, unless recognition of the exposure is delayed or weekends or school breaks intervene. One of the tests must occur on day five. When not attending in-school instruction, quarantined students and staff must remain at the location specified in their quarantine order. In-school instruction does not include extracurricular activities, such as sports. If no other close contact exposures are identified, students are released from quarantine upon successful completion of the TTS protocol. Students who continue to test negative through day 5 (after exposure to a confirmed positive case) will be formally released from quarantine on day 6, but should continue to wear a properly-fitting mask through day 10.

Eligibility:

To participate in TTS, the student/staff must have been identified as needing to quarantine by the Chautauqua County Health Department and/or the school contact tracing team and the following criteria must be met.

- The close contact exposure(s) must have occurred in the school setting and while both the person with COVID-19 (index patient) and exposed person were consistently and properly masked.
- The student/staff must not have or develop any signs or symptoms of COVID-19 at any time since their close contact exposure(s).
- Parents of participating students whose household contacts have signs or symptoms of COVID-19 should not send their child to school and instead contact the school nurse.
- Correctly wear well-fitting masks in school at all times, other than when eating or drinking. When these individuals cannot be masked, they must maintain **6 feet** of distance from other individuals (including meal times).
- Closely adhere to all COVID-19 mitigation measures recommended by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention that have been adopted by the school.

- The exposed person is tested with an FDA authorized/approved COVID-19 viral test a minimum of two times during the five-day period following exposure, unless recognition of the exposure is delayed or weekends or school breaks intervene. One of the tests must occur on day five. If day five falls on a weekend or school holiday, the test should be performed the next school day. The test can be administered at home by a responsible adult or at school by an appropriately trained school employee or healthcare provider and a negative result must be received prior to reporting to class. On days when school instruction is not taking place, testing is not required. Once the student/staff is released from quarantine, testing is no longer required.
 - If the qualifying close contact exposure becomes known during the school day, they must receive a negative test result before departing school.
 - If the qualifying close contact exposure becomes known outside the school day, the student/staff must receive a negative test result before boarding a school bus or other form of group/public transportation (e.g. car pool) the next school day. Parents/guardians may also choose to drive the student to school for their initial test.

- The staff member or parent/guardian of student must agree to do the following to be eligible for participation in TTS:
 - Conduct active monitoring (explicitly asking the student/staff about signs and symptoms of COVID-19 each day before and after school). Parents/staff will be provided with CDC’s list of possible signs and symptoms of COVID-19.
 - Quarantined individuals shall refrain from attending school if any signs or symptoms of COVID-19 develop.
 - Parents will promptly pick up the participating student from school, and staff members will immediately leave school, should they test positive or develop signs or symptoms of COVID-19 during school instruction.
 - Students/staff will quarantine at the location specified in their quarantine order when not attending in-school instruction.

- Schools may accept home test results, may offer tests in the nursing office, or can accept results from a laboratory permitted by the New York State Department of Health.
 - If a student/staff tests positive with a home test, the result should be reported to the school nurse. A parent/staff or a school nurse may document the result by completing the form on the CCHD website (chqgov.com).
 - Parents/staff should present proof of a negative test to the school by means approved by the district.
 - The Chautauqua County Health Department recommends that parents should be advised to:
 - write the name of the student/staff and time of the test on the test itself,
 - take a picture of the test at the appropriate interval (typically 15 minutes after beginning the test), and then
 - text the picture to a school phone number designated to receive the texts.
 - Schools could also choose to test students/staff before the school day begins whose parents are unable to for various reasons.
 - Tests administered in the school will need to be reported to the Health Department as they fall under the Health Department’s LSL.
 - No child can ride the bus who has not had a negative test prior to the start of the school day.

Test to Play Addendum (added 1/24/22)

Students participating in Test to Stay may choose to also “test to play” for sports and extracurricular activities if they test negative for COVID-19 on every day that they are participating in the extracurricular activity.

Requirements for Schools

Schools must:

- have signed and submitted the agreement to provide COVID-19 testing to students and staff under the Chautauqua County Health Department's Limited Service Laboratory Permit for COVID-19 antigen testing from New York State Department of Health.
- possess an adequate supply of rapid antigen test kits.
- report positive and negative results for tests conducted at the school to the Chautauqua County Health Department by email to cchdtesting@chggov.com.
- obtain permission from the parent/guardian of students to participate in the protocol.
- provide parents/guardians with CDC's list of possible signs and symptoms of COVID-19.
- assess participating students/staff for signs and symptoms of COVID-19 upon arrival at school each day. If a student/staff presents with signs or symptoms, they must immediately be isolated, and arrangements made to head home.
- be able to test participating students/staff prior to their reporting to the first class of the day if not accepting home tests. Ideally, participating students would report to the nurse's office, or other appropriate location, immediately upon arrival. The location should be separate from where non-participating students may congregate. Additionally, if a parent is unable to test a child or provide documentation of a negative test, the school may conduct the test as described above.
- document the individual's name, testing location, specimen collection date, type of test, and test result for tests performed on students/staff who are tested elsewhere and are able to show proof of the negative COVID-19 viral test result to the school upon arrival that day.
- be able to immediately isolate any student/staff that tests positive and ensure appropriate transportation from school.
- be able to monitor participating students/staff for consistent and correct mask use throughout the school instructional day, including during bus transportation. Monitoring could include, but not be limited to, random spot checks or reviews of video taken during bus transportation.
- be responsible for tracking which students/staff are participating in Test to Stay, and that negative test results are reported to the school on a daily basis.