

District 75 Student Testing Letter

Dear Families:

As we prepare to reopen school buildings in District 75 on December 10, we wanted to provide an update on school-based student COVID-19 testing for District 75 and District 75 Inclusion Program students. As you may be aware, last month, the New York City Department of Education (DOE) partnered with the City's Department of Health and Mental Hygiene (DOHMH) and the NYC Test and Trace Corps (T2) to begin random, monthly COVID-19 testing of DOE staff members and students in community school districts citywide. To date, more than 100,000 students and staff members have been tested across the city.

This testing—which is quick, easy, and safe—is critical to keeping our students, families, and staff members healthy and our schools open for teaching and learning throughout the 2020–2021 school year. And because testing helps identify positive COVID-19 cases where symptoms are not always present, we are working closely with our partners at DOHMH and T2 to expand our overall capacity to test DOE students and staff members citywide.

This month, we will be expanding our in-school random testing program to include students in District 75 (D75) schools. Staff members at these schools have already been participating in random testing since the program began in October. Testing, which will now be done on a weekly basis, will now also include D75 students. Staff testing will resume on December 10 and student testing in District 75 will begin on December 14. Students in D75 inclusion will participate in their community school district testing program—please see additional information in the FAQ section of this letter.

All students citywide, including students in District 75 schools, are required to participate in in-school testing, unless they have an exemption from testing or in-school testing. Students who do not submit a consent form or an exemption request will be moved to fully remote learning. To keep our school communities healthy and safe, and to ensure our school buildings stay open, we encourage parents/guardians to fill out the testing consent form using a New York City Schools Account (NYCSA) at mystudent.nyc; by printing and signing the form available in 10 languages at schools.nyc.gov/covidtesting by asking your school for a copy.

COVID-19 Testing in School for District 75 Students

Important things to know about how we will test your children:

- We need consent on file for every student. Students may request an exemption due to medical reason or nature of their disability, but exemptions will be limited in their approval and all students must have consent on file.
- No child will be tested if they are uncomfortable or become distressed at any point during the testing process.
- School nurses from your school, who already know your child, will receive special training in order to administer testing to students whose parents have consented. In some cases, there may be an additional on-site provider supporting schools with administering tests. If you would prefer that your child's test is administered by your child's school nurse, please let your school know. School Nurses will conduct the vast majority of student testing in District 75.

- The test will be administered via swab low in the nose, which makes the experience quick and easy for students.
- Finally, you can arrange in advance for the parent coordinator or an assigned designee at your school to call you before and after in-school testing to keep you updated on your child's response to the test.

Test Results and Your Child's Privacy

- When a child is tested at school, information about the testing process, including when families will receive their child's testing results, will be sent home with the child.
- The majority of testing results will be available within 48 hours. If your child tests positive for COVID-19, the testing provider will notify you via a telephone call, and Test & Trace Corps will call to provide your family with resources and support.
- All testing-related data, information, and results obtained in-school or at any of NYC Health + Hospitals' free COVID-19 testing sites—is confidential and protected by strict City, State, and federal laws, including for student data privacy.
- COVID-19 tests are not used for any other purpose than to determine whether your child has COVID-19.

How do I submit consent?

Submitting consent to have your child tested for COVID-19 in school is quick and easy. Even if you have already submitted your consent, we ask you to do so again to ensure your student has the latest consent form on file. There are two easy ways to submit:

1. Fill out the form online using a New York City Schools Account (NYCSA)
 - If you already have a NYCSA account linked to your student(s): Log in, click your student's name, click "Manage Account," and then when a dropdown menu appears, click "Consent Forms." Read the page, and then choose the consent option at the end for your student
 - If you do not already have a NYCSA account: You can create one at mystudent.nyc.gov right away! If you have an account creation code from your school, you can create a full account in just a few minutes, and then provide consent as described above. If you do not have an account creation code from your school, you can still provide your immediate consent by clicking "Manage Consent" under "COVID-19 Testing" and filling out your and your child's information.
2. Print and sign the attached form and bring it to your child's school on the first day they are back in the school building. A printable PDF file is available in ten languages at schools.nyc.gov/covidtesting.

Can my child receive an exemption from weekly random testing?

Exemptions will only be granted in certain limited cases. All requests will be reviewed, but only circumstances that directly impact your child's ability to be tested will be cause for an exemption. Two forms for requesting an exemption will be available at schools.nyc.gov/covidtesting.

- A form for students who need a medical exemption due to a health condition that would make it unsafe to undergo testing (e.g., facial trauma, nasal surgery). This form must be

signed by a physician and you must submit medical documentation from a health care provider.

- A form for students with disabilities who cannot be safely tested in school due to the nature of their disability. Such students will be expected to visit their health care provider or another testing provider for COVID-19 testing upon being randomly selected.

An e-mail address must be entered into the tracking system for tests that are administered in schools. If you have not already done so, please make sure your school has an e-mail address on file for you. If you do not have an e-mail address, please contact your school's parent coordinator as soon as possible for assistance in setting up an email account.

What happens if I don't submit consent?

You must submit consent by the day that your child returns to your school building; this is the due date, and we need all students to participate.

- If your child comes to school on their first day back for in-person instruction without a consent form on file, principals and school staff will contact you to obtain consent.
- After that, students without consent forms on file who have not submitted a request for a medical or disability-based exemption must be moved to fully remote instruction. More information on exemptions will be provided by your child's school principal this week.

What about students enrolled in District 75 Inclusion programs?

Students enrolled in District 75 Inclusion Programs will participate in the same COVID-19 student testing program as their general education peers. Their tests will be administered by external providers. As with all students, students in these programs may also request a medical or disability-based exemption as described above.

Students who receive Special Education Teacher Support Services (SETSS) through the District 75 Inclusion Program are registered in their community district school. School buildings reopen for blended learning students participating in Elementary School Inclusion Programs beginning December 7.

Students in participating in Middle and High School Inclusion Programs will not report back to school buildings until a return date for blended learning in Grade 6-12 schools is established. Until the in-person return date, these students will continue learning remotely along with their general education peers and will receive specially-designed remote instruction from their Inclusion Program SETSS provider. Similarly, students enrolled in the District 75 Integrated Co-Teaching (ICT) Program will return to school buildings beginning on their community district school's scheduled return date. For questions, email D75Inclusion@schools.nyc.gov.

We hope that efforts to accommodate our District 75 students provide the flexibility that families need in order to participate in this important public health initiative. We deeply appreciate your partnership, cooperation, and overall commitment to keeping school communities across the five boroughs safe and healthy. For more information about our in-school random testing protocols, including consent forms and safety guidelines, or about any of the City's 22 free COVID-19 testing sites, visit schools.nyc.gov/covidtesting.

Sincerely,