

## GUIDANCE FOR SCHOOLS ON RAPID ANTIGEN TESTING Oct. 20, 2020

### **What test is the Texas Education Agency (TEA) offering?**

ISDs are being offered a 15-minute antigen test that is authorized for use within 7 days of symptom onset. While faster than PCR tests, antigen tests have a higher chance of missing an active infection. More information can be found [here](#) from U.S. Health & Human Services.

Specimens may be self-collected under supervision of a trained health care provider, reducing the need for Personal Protective Equipment (PPE). Test must be run by trained personnel according to manufacturer specifications, with appropriate quality controls, documentation of results and reporting to patients and public health.

### **Will our facility need a CLIA waiver?**

Yes. A qualified laboratory may extend its existing CLIA certificate to cover your school. Further details will be forthcoming from TEA and/or Texas Health & Human Services Commission (HHSC).

### **Will tests need a doctor's order?**

No, Texas law permits direct access to laboratory testing by consumers.

### **When should school-based testing be used?**

*In order of priority:*

1. People in a school setting who show signs or symptoms consistent with COVID-19 while at school.
2. Asymptomatic close contacts, 5-8 days after their last exposure, either at a medical provider, [free City site](#) or at the school by appointment. Consider providing drive-up testing in the school parking lot.
3. A sample of asymptomatic individuals who are not close contacts. This is an off-label use of the antigen test. To increase accuracy, test only when community prevalence levels are moderate or high, and repeatedly retest the same individuals: weekly when the Bexar County [School Risk Level Indicator](#) is Yellow, and twice a week when the indicator is Red. Non-teaching staff, teachers and regular temps/contractors should be prioritized over students (including athletes) in any sampling strategy, and older students (ages 10 and up) should be prioritized over younger students.
4. All staff and students, using a [PCR test](#) that is authorized for testing in asymptomatic individuals: monthly when the Bexar County [School Risk Level Indicator](#) is Green, weekly when Yellow, and twice a week when Red.

### **When is testing is not recommended?**

Do not retest individuals who have tested positive and do not have symptoms for COVID-19 for up to 3 months from their last positive test. Some individuals test persistently positive due to residual virus material but are unlikely to be infectious.



Testing should be offered on a voluntary basis. It is unethical and illegal to test someone who does not want to be tested, including students whose parents or guardians do not want them tested. See “Interim Considerations for Testing for K-12 School Administrators and Public Health Officials,” Centers for Disease Control & Prevention, issued Oct. 13 and accessible [here](#).

### What PPE is required?

A [fit-tested](#) N95 mask (1 fresh mask each shift), eye protection, disposable gown and gloves

### What elements should our SOP include?

- Policy for parental consent and student consent/assent
- Quality control process. This [CDC manual](#) for CLIA-waived testing has useful information and sample logs. (Note information on p. 8 about off-label use of waived tests; initial off-label antigen tests can be confirmed with PCR to verify proficiency and test performance. The patient should be quarantined while awaiting PCR result.)
- Facility considerations: Private space for testing, spaces for doffing and donning
- Manufacturer instructions for specimen collection and test procedure ([here](#))
- Cleaning and disinfection, biohazard waste disposal
- Documentation and reporting requirements. Report all COVID-19 diagnostic and screening test results to the individual who was tested (consider how to provide a copy of result if patient is unable to use manufacturer’s app), and report all positive *and negative* results to health departments in accordance with laboratory reporting requirements of the Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) Act, [here](#). Note that 24 data elements must be reported for each test.
- Training/competency assessment. Manufacturer product support and training videos are [here](#).
- Other key considerations are listed by CDC in *Table 3* [here](#). CDC notes, “Not every school system will have the resources or training ... to conduct school-based antigen testing.” If testing is performed by school nurses, they **must** be provided with additional support, including staffing, PPE (minimum 2-week supply) and administrative support to meet extensive laboratory reporting requirements.

### How should individuals with positive and negative results be managed?

1. Symptomatic individuals
  - **Positive:** Isolate until [CDC criteria](#) are met for release.
  - **Negative:** Continue to self-isolate for **10** days unless cleared by a medical provider, such as through a negative PCR test or alternative diagnosis.
2. Asymptomatic close contacts
  - **Positive:** Isolate until [CDC criteria](#) are met for release.
  - **Negative:** Continue to self-quarantine for **14** days until end of incubation period.
3. Asymptomatic individuals who are NOT close contacts
  - **Positive:** Isolate until [CDC criteria](#) are met for release
  - **Negative:** May attend work/school.