

COVID Updates

As of 12/29/21

Test to Stay (TTS)	<p><i>Test to Stay must be implemented consistently by schools throughout the county and be sanctioned by the county Department of Health. The county Department of Health is under no obligation to adopt Test to Stay</i></p> <p><i>(Reference: NYSDOH Test to Stay Memo 12.23.21)</i></p>
Test Out of Quarantine (students and staff)	<p><i>If a Local Department of Health chooses to allow this practice in their jurisdiction, it must align with CDC recommendations, which are currently as follows (emphasis added): When diagnostic testing resources are sufficient and available, then quarantine can end after Day 7 if a diagnostic specimen tests negative and if no symptoms were reported during daily monitoring. The specimen may be collected and tested within 48 hours before the time of planned quarantine discontinuation (e.g., in 4 anticipation of testing delays), but quarantine cannot be discontinued earlier than after Day 7.</i></p> <p><i>(Reference: NYSDOH Test to Stay Memo 12.23.21)</i></p>
Changes to Quarantine (Return to Work)	<p><i>In limited circumstances where there is a critical staffing shortage, employers may allow a person to return to work after day 5 of their isolation period (where day zero is defined as either date of symptom onset if symptomatic, or date of collection of first positive test if asymptomatic) if they meet all the following criteria:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">● <i>The individual is a healthcare worker or other critical workforce member (including PK-12 school staff).</i>● <i>The individual is fully vaccinated (e.g., completed 1 dose of Janssen or 2 doses of an mRNA vaccine at least 2 weeks before the day they become symptomatic or, if asymptomatic, the day of collection of the first positive specimen). Complete information about who can be Advisory on Shortening Isolation Period for Certain Fully Vaccinated Healthcare Workers and Other Critical Workforce 2 considered fully vaccinated (e.g., certain individuals vaccinated overseas or vaccinated as part of clinical trials) can be found at Interim Clinical Considerations for Use of COVID-19 Vaccines Currently Approved or Authorized in the United States.</i>● <i>The individual is asymptomatic, or, if they had mild symptoms, when they return to work, they must:</i><ul style="list-style-type: none">● <i>Not have a fever for at least 72 hours without fever-reducing medication</i>● <i>Have resolution of symptoms or, if still with residual symptoms, then all are improving</i>● <i>Not have rhinorrhea (runny nose) o Have no more than minimal, non-productive cough (i.e., not disruptive to work and does not stop the person from wearing their mask continuously, not coughing up phlegm)</i>● <i>The individual can consistently and correctly wear a well-fitting face mask, a higher-level mask such as a KN95, or a</i>

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	<p><i>fit-tested N95 respirator while at work. The mask should fit with no air gaps around the edges.</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><i>• In other settings, face masks should be well-fitting, disposable, non-woven masks. Other face coverings including cloth masks are not allowed except as part of double masking with a disposable mask underneath.</i><i>• Individuals who are moderately to severely immunocompromised are not eligible to return to work under this guidance</i> <p><i>• Individuals working under this policy must continue to stay at home, take precautions to avoid household transmission, and observe other required elements of isolation while not at work until the end of the 10-day period.</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><i>• Testing is not required.</i><i>• Workers participating in this program should be instructed that</i><ol style="list-style-type: none"><i>1. They should practice social distancing from coworkers at all times except when job duties do not permit such distancing.</i><i>2. If they must remove their respirator or well-fitting facemask, for example, to eat or drink, they should separate themselves from others.</i><i>3. They should self-monitor for symptoms and seek re-evaluation from occupational health or their personal healthcare provider if symptoms recur or worsen.</i> <p><i>(Reference: NYSDOH Return to Work Isolation memo 12.24.21)</i></p>
Mask Breaks	<p><i>The emergency regulations under 10 NYCRR 2.60 and the Commissioner’s Determination on Indoor Face Masking Pursuant to 10 NYCRR 2.60 do not include “mask breaks.” This is in accordance with CDC guidance recommending universal masking in schools to keep children in school and let them be closer together without risking close contact exposure and quarantines. Members of the school community do not need to wear masks when eating, drinking, singing, or playing a wind instrument. When masks are removed for these purposes, individuals must be spaced six feet apart. This may mean that meals cannot be eaten in classrooms that have been arranged to accommodate shorter distances between students during instruction time. In general, people do not need to wear masks when they are outdoors (e.g., participating in outdoor play, recess, and physical education activities). CDC recommends those who are not fully vaccinated wear a mask in crowded outdoor settings or during activities that involve sustained close contact with others. (Reference: NYSDOH Test to Stay Memo 12.23.21)</i></p>
Use of Rapid Antigen Tests	<p><i>NYSDOH is amending its guidance to allow all such persons (i.e., those who develop COVID19 symptoms and have no known exposure to someone with COVID-19) to participate in school activities</i></p>

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	<p><i>following a negative NAAT or antigen test result, regardless of vaccination status. In addition to a negative NAAT or antigen test, symptomatic individuals must be well enough to participate in school, not have rhinorrhea (runny nose) or cough severe enough to make mask wear difficult or unhygienic, be fever-free for 24 hours without use of fever reducing medication and meet other school or district requirements to return to school after a non-COVID illness. The following requirements remain in place:</i></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"><i>1. There is no exemption to the antigen or NAAT testing requirement for symptomatic vaccinated people.</i><i>2. Individuals with symptoms that are attributable to pre-existing medical conditions (e.g., migraines, allergies) and are not new or worsening do not require school exclusion or testing.</i><i>3. If the healthcare provider makes a diagnosis of a confirmed non-COVID-19 acute illness (e.g., laboratory-confirmed influenza or strep-throat) AND COVID-19 is not suspected, then a note signed by the healthcare provider explaining the alternate diagnosis may be provided to allow a student, teacher, or staff member to participate in school without COVID-19 testing. Such individuals may participate in school according to the usual school and medical guidelines for the diagnosis.</i> <p><i>Note: This is an option for a person with limited symptoms (ex: only a runny nose). The test must be given by a medical provider or other trained professional. (Reference: NYSDOH Revised Testing and Quarantine Memo 12.3.21)</i></p>
Rapid Test Distribution from NYS	<p><i>NYS will distribute rapid tests to BOCES for distribution to component districts on/about January 3rd. The intent of the distribution is to provide families with rapid tests. NYS has not issued a test to return mandate nor has NYS outlined requirements for distribution (ex. backpacking home or making tests available at distribution events) or established a protocol for reporting results to schools and/or ECLARS. (Reference: Webinars on 12.27.21 and 12.28.21)</i></p>