



**NEW Asymptomatic COVID-19
Testing Protocols
For
Students, Teachers and Staff

March, 2021**

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Introduction

Dear Elmsford UFSD Community:

As part of our commitment to prioritize the health and safety of our students, teachers and staff, the Elmsford UFSD is expanding our coronavirus (COVID-19) testing protocols.

In addition to symptomatic testing available through medical personnel, today we are announcing new asymptomatic COVID-19 testing protocols for students, teachers and staff participating in our IN-PERSON program.

The program will begin April 14, 2021, and tests are being administered to in-person students, teachers and staff at no cost. Tests are provided by the Westchester County Department of Health.

In-School Testing for Students

Elmsford UFSD will manage on-site testing of students who attend classroom programming at their schools. Students may receive a PCR nasal swab test, administered by Elmsford UFSD medical staff, approximately once per month.

Testing for In-Person School Teachers and Staff

Elmsford UFSD teachers and staff supporting in-person programming can receive no cost rapid testing once per month.

With this regular asymptomatic testing protocol, students, teachers, and staff will receive their documented test results within 15 minutes of being tested. The results will also be sent directly to the Westchester County Department of Health to inform public health data. For patient privacy, results are not available via phone. Should an individual develop COVID-19 symptoms at any time, they should immediately self-quarantine and contact their medical provider per Department of Health protocols. It is also advised that you notify your immediate supervisor to insure the safety of others.

Other Testing Options for Elmsford UFSD Students, Teachers and Staff

Every school building within the district has school-based health and safety protocols in place, such as temperature checks at arrival, symptom screening attestations prior to entering the building, symptom screenings during the day as needed, and health isolation rooms in each

building. Schools will continue to provide on-site rapid testing for symptomatic individuals. Follow-up confirmatory PCR testing will be required should a student receive a negative test result but is symptomatic.

School teachers and staff who develop symptoms during the workday, may receive a rapid test on site and will need to follow up with a PCR test before returning to work. Students and families with symptoms are encouraged to get tested through their own health provider so that when the test results come back, the patient is already connected to the health-care they need. If an individual needs a COVID-19 test and they do not have a provider, they can visit an Urgent Care or Emergency Room.

If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to reach out to us at the following email addresses:

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Sincerely,

Marc P. Baiocco

Marc P. Baiocco, Ed.D.
Superintendent of Schools

Importance of Testing

It is crucial that action continues to be taken to break the chains of transmission of the virus and safeguard the health of the students, teachers and staff wherever face-to-face education occurs.

Our buildings will have received an initial delivery of test kits to support asymptomatic testing from the start of the spring term.

Up to one-third of people who have coronavirus are asymptomatic. By rapidly identifying and containing any asymptomatic cases, we can reduce the spread of transmission. Testing does not replace existing protective measures such as handwashing and wearing masks, and settings will continue to follow the system of controls.

It is not mandated to have been tested to attend any of our buildings. Testing is voluntary and no child or young person will be tested unless informed parent consent has been given by the appropriate person and the child or young person is willing to be tested. If assisted swabbing is required, the willingness and feasibility to swab should be reviewed and risk-assessed every time before swabbing. Further guidance is available in the informed consent to testing section.

However, we strongly encourage all children and young people who are receiving face-to-face education to have the test, whenever it is possible to do so, to help identify asymptomatic positive cases and support self-isolation to break the chain of transmission.

Testing is similarly voluntary for members of staff and they are encouraged to participate.

Background

The Coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic has been extremely challenging for many families of children and young people. Supporting them is a priority for the Elmsford UFSD and their well-being remains central to our response.

We recognize that settings in our buildings are diverse and there will be a wide range of challenges in delivering effective testing to our pupils.

The testing is **ONLY** for people without coronavirus (COVID-19). Those with symptoms should follow guidance for households with possible or confirmed coronavirus (COVID-19) infection.

Working with Children and Young People And their Parents

We recognize that swabbing may cause significant concerns for some children and young people. Some of these concerns may be alleviated by discussing them with the child or young person and their family, agreeing on strategies to help reduce anxiety and putting in place any reasonable adjustments (if the individual has a disability). There may be, for example, a set of simple, practical steps that the nurses and parents can co-produce to smooth the testing process.

With careful and sensitive management, we are confident that the asymptomatic testing program can be rolled out to most children and young people. However, where this is not the case, it is crucial that there is no disadvantage to their education.

Testing technology is developing all the time. We are continuing to work proactively on other approaches to testing for children and young people who are unable to tolerate a nasal swab.

The Staff, Children and Young People Who are Eligible for Testing

1. Children and young people randomly chosen to test with informed parental consent; children will be chosen from Cohorts A and B or AB who are in-person students
2. Teachers who are randomly chosen
3. Staff employed by the district who are randomly chosen
4. Support staff employed by the district who are randomly chosen (including therapists)
5. Those involved in cleaning testing sites
6. Coaches who work with Elmsford UFSD students.

Approach to Testing

Assisted swabbing will be done by Elmsford UFSD school nurses, Elmsford UFSD school physician, and, if necessary nurses employed by the Putnam/Northern Westchester BOCES.

Those assisting with swabs will wear appropriate personal protective equipment (PPE).

Testing Protocol

1. Upon receipt of informed parental consent, appointments will be made for rapid testing by school nurses. You will not be able to receive a test without an appointment.
2. On day and time of appointment you will be directed to Grady Elementary school cafeteria entrance. You will drive up to the cafeteria entrance. **DO NOT LEAVE YOUR CAR.**
3. If you are not driving, you are to walk up to the Hamilton cafeteria. You must maintain social distancing.
4. You and your child **MUST** be wearing a mask.
5. One of our medical personnel will greet you.
6. Your child will receive a nasal swab.
7. If driving, you will be directed to a parking space to await the results of the test. If walk-up, you will be directed to a waiting area for your results. Masks must be put back on as soon as test is completed (walkers).
8. You will receive a copy of those results and a copy will be sent to the Department of Health.
9. If test result is positive, your child will not be permitted to attend school until a PCR test result is returned with a negative result.
10. All results, at the end of the testing will be turned over to Jo-Anne Dobbins for submission to Department of Health.

Testing Teams

Testing teams will consist of:

1. Clerical member of team to do paperwork: check registration and identify patient. Assign test number and check expiration date on kit.
2. Medical personnel to check test number, identify patient, administer nasal swab and prepare testing reagent. Provide test to analyzer.
3. Clerical member of team to check test number, analyze results and record data.
4. Clerical member to identify patient, check test number, return result to parent with either directions to attend class or return to health care provider for further evaluation.

Informed Consent to Testing

Testing is voluntary, but those who are eligible for tests are strongly encouraged to participate to reduce the risk of transmission within our schools.

The person giving the consent (parent or legal guardian or the young person is 18 or older) needs to have a sound understanding of the risks and benefits of testing. The Elmsford UFSD is responsible for communicating the purpose of the testing.

Even if the child or young person or the parent or legal guardian has given consent, if the individual at any point is not willing to participate in testing then that choice should be respected.

Young people aged 18 or over do not need parental or legal guardian consent provided they are able to make the decision for themselves. However, the school will need to decide whether the young person can reasonably provide informed consent themselves. Young people should be given the opportunity to express their views and preferences to the extent that they are able. The consent should record how the decision on consent was made.

It is important that the willingness of the child or young person and the risk posed to them and the staff assisting with the test is always considered. The medical personnel should exercise due care and judgement and, in appropriate circumstances, may choose not to test a child or young person, even when consent has been given. Elmsford UFSD will not make it a requirement to have been tested in order to attend.

For a child or young person in local authority care, such as foster children, unaccompanied youth, individuals would need to agree to be tested, where age appropriate. Where parental consent is required this would need to be secured through the child or young person's case manager unless existing arrangements are in place which cover this.

Managing the Anxiety of Students

Schools know the children and young people in their buildings and will be able to put in place an approach that helps reduce any anxiety as much as possible. They will also need to consider whether there are reasonable adjustments that they would need to make in which the tests were conducted for disabled children and young people while maintaining the integrity of the testing process.

Where a concern exists about the anxiety level of a child or young person, it will often be helpful to talk the issues through with them and their parents.

Areas staff may wish to consider

1. How can staff help ensure that the child or young person know what is involved and the reasons for it? What methods of communication work best for them?
2. How can parents help their child know what testing will involve and what advice can they provide to the school s to what might work best?
3. Would it be helpful to have someone from the staff who has a good relationship with the child or young person to be present during the testing?
4. Would it be helpful for the child or young person to be familiarized with the site to be used for testing and how it will be set up?
5. How can the site being used for testing be made as calm an environment as possible (walkers).
6. Will it help to offer the child or young person a relaxing activity or refreshments to help make it as positive an experience as possible (walkers).
7. If the child or young person stims to relieve their anxiety, then will it be help to allow them to have their stimming toy with them throughout the test? (car or walker).

Transport

Where a child or young person, teacher, or staff member has tested positive for coronavirus (COVID-19), they need to be sent home. The teacher or staff member will need to leave the school campus immediately. Parents who have driven their child or young person for testing, will need to take the child home. Parents who have walked their child to school for testing will need to leave the school building immediately.