



# COVID-19 Testing in Oregon's Schools

## FAQs *(Updated 3/1/2021)*

**Q1: What is the purpose of the COVID-19 testing program in Oregon's school?**

A1: The purpose of the statewide testing program is to provide rapid COVID-19 testing to students and staff who develop symptoms consistent with COVID-19.

**Q2: Can schools use the BinaxNOW test kits to conduct regular/monthly schoolwide testing for COVID-19 (i.e. surveillance)?**

A2: No. The BinaxNOW tests may only be used in accordance with the School Testing Guidance from OHA/ODE. These tests may **not** be used for surveillance testing of students or staff without symptoms or exposure.

**Q3: The BinaxNOW website details the use of the Navica smartphone App. Are schools required to use the app for testing?**

A3: OHA does not recommend use of the NAVICA smartphone App as it does not satisfy the reporting requirements for COVID-19.

**Q4: Module 2 video states 8 drops of reagent, module 4 states 6 drops, and the OHA document says 6 drops. Are we supposed to do 6 drops?**

A4: 6 drops of reagent should be used when conducting **testing**. 8 drops of reagent should be used when conducting **quality control**.

**Q5: Can my school have more than one School Testing Administrator?**

A5: Yes! Schools should designate a back-up school testing administrator in the event of absence of the primary testing administrator. This also allows for widespread coverage for schools with large student enrollment.

**Q6: How long does it take to receive the BinaxNOW test kits?**

A6: 7-10 business days after the registration form is submitted.

**Q7: If a student does not have a consent form signed, but starts to show symptoms and you call the parent/guardian to inform them of their student's symptoms and they provide verbal permission/consent to perform the test, are you able to give the test?**

**A7:** No. Written consent must be on file *prior* to administering the BinaxNOW test. The OHA testing guidance strongly recommends distributing the consent forms to parent(s)/guardian(s) before launching school testing.

**Q8: If a school is required to offer testing due to advisory metrics, can you please clarify how often the tests must be administered....and who must take the test (all students, all staff, etc.) How often should students or staff who are presenting symptoms be tested?**

**A8:** The testing program is **not** serial or surveillance testing. It is only designed for students and staff who develop symptoms consistent with COVID-19 while on campus or students and staff in exposed school cohorts (e.g., classrooms) when recommended by the local public health authority. The testing program is required in schools that reside in counties that exceed the metrics. Testing should not be conducted regularly.

**Q9: What happens if our school runs out of BinaxNOW tests and needs to order more?**

**A9:** When your school has twenty (20) remaining BinaxNOW tests, the school should submit an email to [schooltesting.covid@dhsosha.state.or.us](mailto:schooltesting.covid@dhsosha.state.or.us) to request new test kits. OHA will review your request and respond within 24 hours.

**Q10: Is consent required prior to testing? If so, can a student provide verbal consent?**

**A10:** OHA requires written consent for all students under the age of 18 receiving the BinaxNOW test. FERPA mandates parental consent up to the age of 18 in educational settings.

**Q11: Can a parent opt-out of the student(s) receiving the BinaxNOW COVID test?**

**A11:** Yes. A parent may choose not to provide consent for COVID-19 testing.

**Q12: If a student tests positive, should schools test the entire cohort that same day?**

**A12:** No. When a student or staff member is diagnosed with COVID-19, their cohorts (e.g., classroom, reading group, chess club) may be considered exposed and required to quarantine. Every positive test result should be reported directly to the local public health authority immediately so that they may determine which members of the cohort are considered exposed, and if testing of exposed students/staff is recommended. Local public health can also provide appropriate follow-up with the family and link the family to quarantine and isolation support when needed.

**Q13: What is the protocol for disposing the BinaxNOW test after a student or staff has been tested?**

**A13:** All components of the test kit may be discarded into a trash can. Additional information about the proper disposal of medical waste exposed to COVID-19 may be found here:

<https://www.oregon.gov/deq/FilterDocs/COVID19MedicalWasteFS.pdf>

- The decision to dispose of used BinaxNOW tests was made after consulting state rules and in collaboration with state experts at OHA and DEQ. We have had, and will continue to have, a scientific and legal justification for every component of the K-12 School Testing Guidance.
- The used reagent of the BinaxNOW tests are not considered a hazardous substance. All unused BinaxNOW kits and reagents should be returned to OHA at the conclusion of the K-12 school testing program.
- The used swab of the BinaxNOW test kit is not considered an infectious sample or culture. See this DEQ factsheet for information on disposal of medical waste exposed to COVID-19:  
<https://www.oregon.gov/deq/FilterDocs/COVID19MedicalWasteFS.pdf>
- Note: Abbott Laboratories sells the BinaxNOW rapid tests as an at-home option, with instructions to throw the used tests away in the trash.
- All used test cards and swabs can be discarded in the usual garbage can, along with used PPE.

**Q14: My school is in a county that exceeds its metrics and is required to offer testing. How long does my school have to implement the BinaxNOW testing program?**

**A14:** Schools required to offer access to this program will have two weeks to register, train for, and administer the program when or if metrics change in their county in a way that makes this program a requirement.

**Q15: We are operating K-12 in hybrid programming. If we are above 200 but below 350, are we required to test our symptomatic middle and high school students and staff, but not elementary?**

**A15:** This program is required for schools operating grades 6-12 while in the Transition (Orange) column of the advisory metrics. While the metrics are advisory for determining instructional model, the testing program must also be offered if you are expanding grades while in the Transition (Orange) or Distance Learning (Red) columns.

**Q16: Do you have suggestions for choosing the best location for the student or staff to do the self-swab collection?**

**A16:** Choose an area that has ample space that allows the testing administrator to observe the self-swab from a safe distance, and also allows for privacy. The area should be well-ventilated. Facilities without HVAC systems could designate an area with an open window (refer to section 2j “Cleaning, Disinfection, and Ventilation” in [Ready Schools, Safe Learners](#) for additional ventilation guidance). If your facility

has a convenient outdoor area (with overhead protection from rain if needed), this can also be considered.

**Q17: Where can I obtain the Spanish Language consent form and forms to speak with parents about their student's positive or negative test result?**

A17: The Spanish Language version of the forms are available here:

Registration form:

<https://sharedsystems.dhsoha.state.or.us/DHSForms/Served/ls3560A.pdf>

Consent form:

<https://sharedsystems.dhsoha.state.or.us/DHSForms/Served/ls3560B.pdf>

Positive result notification:

<https://sharedsystems.dhsoha.state.or.us/DHSForms/Served/ls3560C.pdf>

Negative result notification:

<https://sharedsystems.dhsoha.state.or.us/DHSForms/Served/ls3560D.pdf>

**Q18: How should our school share the BinaxNOW antigen test result? Should we give the results to the student as soon as the test is completed, or wait until the parent/guardian arrives to pick up the ill student?**

A18: The test result (positive, negative, or indeterminant) should be shared with the parent or guardian when they arrive to pick up the student. Do not share the test results with the student until the parent or guardian arrives, to ensure the student has the appropriate emotional support as needed. Refer to section 7 "Mental, Social, and Emotional Health," in the [Ready Schools, Safe Learners](#) guidance.

**Q19: If the testing administrator leaves the room briefly while waiting for the 15 minute antigen test to finish, should all PPE be removed before exiting the room?**

A19: Yes. In order to decrease the risks of (1) testing administrator exposure and (2) cross-contamination of the environment, all PPE should be considered contaminated and removed prior to leaving the testing area. This includes disposable gloves, single-use medical grade mask, and eye protection. Please refer to the [testing guidance document](#) for more guidance on putting on and removing PPE.

**Q20. Can you provide more guidance on how our school can use the BinaxNOW antigen tests for testing students and staff in an exposed cohort?**

A20. If a COVID-19 case is identified in your school, your local public health authority (LPHA) will assist in determining if there are exposed students or staff. These exposed individuals will require quarantine. The BinaxNOW antigen tests can be used in two different ways for exposed individuals:

### **Shortening the 14-day quarantine period:**

In collaboration with your LPHA, your school may consider using the BinaxNOW antigen tests for asymptomatic exposed persons in order to decrease the length of quarantine. An example is a "drive up" testing session, where exposed students and staff do self-collection swabs while seated in their cars, to decrease exposures in the school setting. The testing should be done 5-7 days after their last exposure to the COVID-19 case. If the test is negative, then a shorter quarantine period may be considered. Any "drive up" testing events should be planned in collaboration with your LPHA.

### **Identifying asymptomatic spread in your school:**

Schools may offer the BinaxNOW antigen tests to exposed students and staff. This will help to determine if exposed individuals have developed asymptomatic infection after the school exposure. The goal of testing in this situation is not to shorten quarantine, but to improve COVID-19 testing access to exposed persons. A school can offer antigen testing to asymptomatic exposed individuals, ideally 7-10 days after their exposure. Schools should also schedule "drive up" testing sessions for this strategy, to decrease exposures in the school setting. If the test is positive, the school should report the new COVID-19 case to public health, and the person should be sent home to start their isolation. If the test is negative, the person should still be sent home to complete their quarantine.

Exposed persons who are symptomatic with COVID-19 symptoms *should not* return to school for testing, and should be referred to a healthcare provider for testing.

#### **Q21: I received an "indeterminate" result after conducting the test. Should I conduct the test again?**

**A21:** If the BinaxNOW test gives an INDETERMINATE result, repeat the test with a new card. If INDETERMINATE again, do not repeat a 3rd time. Do not use any additional cards from the box, and contact OHA. Request a new BinaxNOW antigen test kit. OHA will ship a new kit to your school.

#### **Q22: Can sports teams begin practice if the schools have not received the BinaxNOW test kits?**

**A22:** K-12 sports teams may begin practice and playing, if the school is registered for the testing program - they do not need to wait for testing kits. Onsite testing at sports practice and games **is** required. OSAA requires schools to have someone present during practice and active games to administer the test to symptomatic athletes. It is recommended that the Athletic Trainer serve in this role as the School Testing Administrator for onsite testing to the sports team and complete all requisite training.

**Q23: Are we encouraging students/staff who are quarantined to come back on campus to be tested?**

**A23:** When a school cohort has been exposed to a case of COVID-19 and quarantined; testing on day 5 through 7 following exposure may be used to facilitate early release from quarantine after day 7 when recommended by the local public health authority.

After speaking with the LPHA, the School Testing Administrator may supervise the student's self-collection of the nasal swab outdoors, and transport the specimen inside to perform the actual test. The outdoor collection should happen via a) the student's car through the window with the parent/guardian present, b) a covered school breezeway, c) a location that is safe and not in traffic, nor located in an area where construction is occurring. The specimen collection should also occur in an area where no precipitation (rain, snow, sleet, etc.) is present.

After completing the test, the results should be given with the parent present. Follow the guidance as recommended depending on the results of the test.

**Document accessibility:** For individuals with disabilities or individuals who speak a language other than English, OHA can provide information in alternate formats such as translations, large print, or braille. Contact the Health Information Center at 1-971-673-2411, 711 TTY or [COVID19.LanguageAccess@dhsosha.state.or.us](mailto:COVID19.LanguageAccess@dhsosha.state.or.us).