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COVID-19 Testing in Oregon's K–12 Schools

The Oregon Department of Education (ODE), in collaboration with Oregon Health Authority (OHA), has published [Ready Schools, Safe Learners Resiliency Framework for the 2021-2022 School Year](#). The vast majority of health and safety measures to reduce the risk of COVID-19 transmission in Oregon's K-12 schools are advisory, and are offered to schools to support successful full-time, in-person instruction for the 2021-22 school year.

To further mitigate the risk of COVID-19 transmission in Oregon's K-12 schools, OHA will support three opt-in COVID-19 testing programs available to all public and private schools in Oregon.

When used alongside other mitigation strategies, such as vaccination, face coverings and physical distancing, testing offers an additional layer of protection to help keep kids in school and identify case of COVID-19 before they cause outbreaks.

Diagnostic Testing for K-12 Students and Staff

This program is intended to test symptomatic and exposed students and school staff only.

Diagnostic testing is testing for individuals with symptoms of COVID-19 or those who have been exposed to COVID-19 through close contact with a case. The CDC recommends that all K-12 schools in Oregon offering in-person instruction offer free, on-site COVID-19 diagnostic testing such as that available through the [COVID-19 Testing in Oregon's K-12 Schools Program](#). Testing will help to quickly identify COVID-19 cases in K-12 schools, interrupt viral spread through households and in classrooms, reduce the risk for students and staff returning to in-person instruction, and may be used to **shorten the length of quarantine** for exposed individuals who test negative when recommended by the local public health authority.

For some students, COVID-19 testing in K-12 schools may represent their only access to a diagnostic COVID-19 test and the importance of this access cannot be overstated. Because both students and staff spend many hours at school on a typical day, it is possible that they may develop new symptoms such as fever or cough while at school. In addition, 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 testing may be recommended by the local public health authority.

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For questions about this program, or to register, please contact schooltesting.covid@dhsoha.state.or.us.

Screening Testing for Unvaccinated K-12 Teachers/Staff

Screening testing is testing for individuals without symptoms of COVID-19 or exposure to COVID-19. Because COVID-19 vaccines are very effective in reducing the risk of infection, the CDC recommends screening only in unvaccinated individuals. Oregon Health Authority (OHA) offers free COVID-19 screening testing to all unvaccinated K-12 teachers and staff to help reduce the spread of COVID-19 in schools. **This program offers free at-home weekly screening testing by mail to any unvaccinated public or private K-12 teacher or staff member, including volunteers.** Vaccination status will not be verified and all interested K-12 teachers and staff are welcome to enroll.

Participation is voluntary, and participants can opt-out at any time. If you register for this program, a COVID-19 test kit will be mailed directly to your home each week. The at-home COVID-19 test is performed by gently swabbing just inside the nose. The swab is then returned to the laboratory by mail and results are returned to participants within days. **Participation in the program and all results are confidential**, however, positive COVID-19 results must be reported to the local public health authority for case investigation and contact tracing.

To register for this screening testing program, [please complete the enrollment form](#). Following enrollment, you will be sent an email by our laboratory partner, Willamette Valley Toxicology, to complete the registration process.

This screening testing program will be offered through 2021-2022 academic year.

Screening Testing for K-12 Students

Screening testing is testing for individuals without symptoms of COVID-19 or exposure to COVID-19. Because COVID-19 vaccines are very effective in reducing the risk of infection, the CDC recommends screening only in unvaccinated individuals. Oregon Health Authority (OHA) will offer free screening testing for COVID-19 to all Oregon K-12 students during the 2021-2022 academic year. Participating schools will have the option to offer students weekly screening for classroom cohorts (e.g., a second-grade classroom), extracurricular cohorts (e.g., a chess club or football team), or both. Schools may choose to verify vaccination status, but this is not required, and all interested K-12 schools are welcome to enroll.

Participation will be voluntary, and schools and families can opt-out at any time. The program will be administered by regional laboratory partners and details will vary by region.

Participation in the program and all results are confidential, however, positive COVID-19 results must be reported to the local public health authority for case investigation and contact tracing.

Interested districts and schools may use [this form](#) to sign up to receive more information in August about participating in this optional program.

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For questions about this program, please contact COVIDScreening.Schools@dhsoha.state.or.us.

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@dhsoha.state.or.us

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