

## MCCPTA SIMPLIFIED VERSION

of the MCPS 9.21.21 Community Message (with a few updates of anticipated changes coming)

MCPS has updated COVID-19 testing and procedures for quarantining students. With availability of rapid (antigen) testing now available in all schools, Montgomery County Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) has outlined **an alternate approach to minimize quarantines of close contacts**<sup>1</sup> when there is NOT a *positive* Covid-19 test result. With this [new approach](#), *often*, close contacts do not need to quarantine. Please see further details below.

	<b>Student/Household Impact</b>	<b>Close Contact Impact</b>
<b>Symptomatic</b> student's rapid (antigen) test is <b>NEGATIVE</b>	RECOMMENDED -- student should have PCR test to verify negative result <sup>2</sup>	Close contacts are not required to quarantine while student is awaiting PCR results (If PCR is negative, no action; if positive, follow process below)
<b>Symptomatic</b> student is <b>NOT TESTED</b> (and has no alternate diagnosis)	Student (and any other school-age unvaccinated household members) may return to school after 10 days AND no fever for at least 24 hours AND improvement of all other symptoms	Close contacts are not required to quarantine <b>UNLESS</b> the symptomatic student has a known exposure to COVID-19 positive case
<b>Symptomatic</b> student's rapid (antigen) test is <b>POSITIVE</b>	Student (and any other school-age unvaccinated household members) may return to school after 10 days AND no fever for at least 24 hours AND improvement of all other symptoms	Unvaccinated close contacts must quarantine and may return to school after 10 days, if no symptoms occur <sup>3</sup>  Vaccinated close contacts do not need to quarantine unless symptoms occur (at which point, close contact should be tested)
<b>Asymptomatic</b> student tests <b>POSITIVE</b> during random screening testing	Student (and any other school-age unvaccinated household members) may return to school after 10 days AND no fever for at least 24 hours AND improvement of all other symptoms	Unvaccinated close contacts must quarantine and may return to school after 10 days, if no symptoms occur <sup>4</sup>  Vaccinated close contacts do not need to quarantine, unless symptoms occur (at which point, close contact should be tested)

<sup>1</sup> Close Contact – While properly masked, student was within 3 feet of Covid+ student for 15 or more minutes in a 24-hour period OR unmasked, was within 6 feet of Covid+ student for 15 or more minutes during a 24-hour period

<sup>2</sup> DHHS has indicated PCR tests *will soon be available*. NOTE: Students who have tested positive for COVID-19 in last 90 days are NOT recommended to undergo PCR testing after a negative rapid result as this will detect prior exposure.

<sup>3</sup> Montgomery County DHHS, MCPS and MDH are collaborating on “Test to Stay” protocols aiming to minimize students being out of classroom. MCPS approach will be updated as information comes available.

<sup>4</sup> *ibid*

## Frequently Asked Questions about Testing Protocols:

### 1) Are rapid tests available in all schools?

Yes. All schools received rapid (antigen) tests on September 13, 2021. These tests are used when a student exhibits COVID-19 symptoms and school health staff determine that a rapid test should be administered. School health staff use low nasal swabs on the symptomatic student and the results are available within 15-20 minutes.

### 2) Is parental/guardian consent required for testing?

Yes. Families can “Say YES to the Test” and [fill out the consent form](#), available in [multiple languages online](#). Families may also request paper copies from their school. If a student is exhibiting COVID-19 symptoms and there is no consent form on file, parents will be called to give their **verbal consent** and school health staff send home a consent form and provide additional information about the test results.

### 3) If we filled out the consent for the screening test (before rapid testing was implemented), do we have to also consent for the rapid testing?

No. If families have already said “Yes to the Test” and submitted a consent form for the COVID-19 **screening tests**, no further action is required. Consent for both the screening tests and rapid tests have been consolidated and MCPS will accept consent forms received for the random screening program as consent for rapid (antigen) testing.

### 4) Are random screening tests only for PreK-6 or will 7-12 be included?

COVID-19 screening tests for groups of students began in Grade PreK-6 and will be expanded to all other grades in the upcoming weeks. These are weekly tests of a random sample of students and require the consent of a parent/guardian. The same consent form is now used for both the screening tests and rapid tests so families only need to sign one form for each child. Parents of students in grades 7-12 will be asked to sign consent forms.

### 5) Will MCPS be implementing testing strategies (as other school systems have adopted) to keep kids in school?

DHHS is working now with MCPS, with input from the Maryland Department of Health, to implement strategies to keep kids in school that have been identified as close contacts. This approach requires students to test routinely and negative test results allows students to remain in person at school. MCPS will continue to follow the guidance of our local DHHS health experts.