

Public Schools of Brookline  
**Test and Stay Protocol for close contacts at school**

**Purpose**

To minimize disruption to learning, individuals named as close contacts in the school setting can opt in to a Test and Stay program. This utilizes the BinaxNOW rapid antigen test administered daily from the first day of exposure for up to seven days. The test and stay protocol has been shown to be generally equivalent to quarantine for school-based contacts, and is a safe alternative to at-home isolation

**Protocol**

Trained school health staff and/or CIC support staff will conduct COVID-19 rapid antigen testing using the BinaxNOW test kits on individuals eligible for Test and Stay.

**Definition of in-school close contact:**

Close contacts are defined as individuals who have been within 6 feet of a COVID-19 positive individual while indoors, during the infectious period (starts 48 hours before symptom onset or specimen collection date if asymptomatic and ends when case completes isolation period) for at least 15 minutes cumulatively during a 24-hour period, even if both individuals are masked and/or fully vaccinated.

**Who is exempt from Test and Stay?**

Close contacts who are exempt from testing and quarantine response protocols:

- **Asymptomatic, fully vaccinated close contacts:** Individuals who are asymptomatic and fully vaccinated are exempt from testing and quarantine response protocols.
- **Classroom close contacts:** An individual who is exposed to a COVID-19 positive individual in the classroom while both individuals were masked, so long as the individuals were spaced at least 3 feet apart and the close contact is asymptomatic.
- **Bus close contacts:** Individuals on buses must be masked according to federal requirements. As such, asymptomatic individuals who are masked on buses when windows are open.
- **Close contacts who have had COVID-19 within the past 90 days (who are recovered and asymptomatic)**

**Who is eligible for Test and Stay?**

Close contacts who are not exempt from testing and quarantine response protocols (see above) may choose to participate in the Test and Stay program in lieu of traditional quarantine. Close contacts are eligible for Test and Stay if:

- They are asymptomatic and do not develop symptoms during the 14-day period after exposure; and
- They have a completed testing consent on file; and
- The exposure happened at school. This includes classroom contacts who were less than 3 feet from a positive case (regardless of masking) and classroom contacts who were between 3 and 6 feet from a positive case but where one or both individuals were not masked.

**Please note:** Individuals who refuse or are unable to be tested must follow traditional quarantine procedures. Families will be notified in these circumstances.

## **Symptomatic close contacts**

If a close contact has symptoms at the time they are designated a close contact or develops symptoms during the Test and Stay period or the 14 days following initial exposure, they must isolate at home with the following options for return to school:

Option 1 - Return to school after they:

- Have received a negative PCR test; and
- Have improvement in symptoms; and
- Have been without fever for at least 24 hours without the use of fever-reducing medications

Option 2 - Return to school after they:

- Have isolated for at least 10 days from symptom onset; and
- Have improvement in symptoms; and
- Have been without fever for at least 24 hours without the use of fever-reducing medications

**Timing of Test:** Exact time TBD collaboratively with the school nurse and CIC staff.

**Testing Location:** On school site, exact location TBD.

**Duration of Test and Stay protocol: 7 days from the date of exposure.** If the student's 7th day after exposure falls on a non-school day (weekend or holiday), the student will be tested on the morning of their return to school, unless the student was tested for participation in a school based extracurricular activity. On the 8th day a student will exit the Test and Stay protocol, assuming all tests were negative and they remain asymptomatic.

For school-sponsored events and sports that take place on non-school days, testing is necessary on those days for close contacts in the Test and Stay program to participate. If these close contacts do not consent to testing, or if testing is not available, individuals may not participate.

**Documentation:** Will be done by CIC staff and/or the school nurse.

**Notification of positive cases:** timely communication to the individual and/or parent/guardian about test results and follow-up guidance will be provided.

All close contacts will be directly notified and families will be notified if the student will be in the Test and Stay Program. District information related to positive cases may be found on the District Dashboard.

**School Attendance:** Any close contacts in the Test and Stay Program or who are exempt from quarantine (fully vaccinated individuals, 3-6 feet masked contacts, etc.) are eligible to remain in school provided they:

- Remain asymptomatic

- Wear masks at all times, except when eating or drinking, during which time, to the extent feasible, they should maintain a minimum of 3 feet distance from others
- Take a rapid antigen test each school day and receive a negative result. *When the 7 days from date of exposure includes weekends or holidays the individual should quarantine over the weekend/holiday. If they remain asymptomatic, they should be tested promptly upon return to school.*
- Conduct active monitoring for symptoms through day 14 after exposure, and self-isolate at home if symptoms develop.

Individuals participating in the Test and Stay program must still quarantine outside of school settings.

References:

[DESE/DPH Protocols for Responding to COVID-19 Scenarios - SY 2021-22, Dated August 13, 2021.](#)

[DESE/DPH Frequently Asked Questions, Dated August 20, 2021.](#)

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