



The Public Schools of Brookline

Brookline Town Hall
333 Washington Street, 5th Floor
Brookline, Massachusetts 02445
617.713.5127

Tricia Laham

MEd, BSN, RN

Coordinator of School Health
Services

The communication below provides important information from the Public Schools of Brookline. Translated versions are available at the following links:

- *Arabic:* [الرجاء الضغط هنا للترجمة العربية](#).
- *Chinese:* [点击这里查看中文翻译](#).
- *Haitian Creole:* [Klike la a pou tradiksyon kreyòl ayisyen an.](#)
- *Hebrew:* [אנא לחץ כאן לצפייה במסמך בעברית](#)
- *Japanese:* [ここをクリックして日本語の翻訳にアクセスしてください。](#)
- *Korean:* [한국어 번역을 보시려면 여기를 클릭하십시오.](#)
- *Portuguese:* [Clique aqui para a tradução em português.](#)
- *Russian:* [Нажмите здесь, чтобы получить доступ к русскому переводу.](#)
- *Spanish:* [Haga clic aquí para acceder a la traducción al español.](#)
- *Vietnamese:* [Nhấn vào đây để truy cập bản dịch tiếng Việt.](#)

Dear Staff, Parents, and Guardians.

We are writing to share important information about our plans to continue with asymptomatic testing of staff and, as we had previously indicated, to begin to incorporate student testing. We would like to thank all of you for your continued partnership during this unprecedented school year. Together, through mitigation strategies, we continue the work of minimizing the spread of COVID-19 in our schools.

Following our initial program of individual testing for asymptomatic staff, we have worked closely with the Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE) and the Massachusetts Department of Public Health (DPH) to implement a **COVID-19 pooled testing program for asymptomatic students and staff at our schools.**

Pooled testing involves mixing several asymptomatic individuals' test samples together into one "pool" and then testing the pooled sample for COVID-19. This approach increases the number of individuals that can be tested at one time and allows us to regularly test our school community for COVID-19.

The voluntary weekly asymptomatic pooled tests will begin the week of March 1st.

- March 2nd - All interested student-facing **staff**
- March 9th and 11th - All interested **students in grade 9-12** and all student-facing staff
- March 16th and 18th - All interested **students grades 6-12** and all student-facing staff
- March 23rd and 25th - All interested **students PreK-12** and all student-facing staff

This test requires an observed shallow nasal swab for all participating individuals. Schools will receive the pool results within 24-48 hours. If the result of a pool is negative, then all individuals are presumed to not have COVID-19. If the result of a pool is positive, then all individuals in the pool must be retested individually. Because pooled testing does not give individual results, **participating staff or parents will only be notified if individual follow-up testing is required.** Our school will be providing the Abbott BinaxNOW Rapid Antigen Diagnostic Tests for follow-up or "reflex" testing which allows students or staff in a positive pool to be tested as soon as possible and receive individual results in 15 minutes.

Our staff has been thoroughly trained on how to administer pooled testing, as well as the Abbott BinaxNOW Rapid Antigen Diagnostic Tests should they be needed for follow-up testing. A school nurse will contact you if you or your child is part of a positive pool and requires follow-up testing. Once completed, you will be notified of the individual testing results, whether positive or negative positive, and advised on what to do in each scenario.

All participants must be willing and able to commit to following up with the reflex test if they are notified that you or your child was in a positive pool. This reflex test will be administered at a central location, likely the high school. The reflex test will be scheduled and as quickly as results are shared with us. We *anticipate* reflex tests to be done on Wednesdays from 1-5 pm for those who tested on Tuesday and on Friday from 1-5 for those who tested on Thursday. There is a possibility that this reflex test would need to be performed on a Saturday morning if the results from Thursday's pool are not returned within 24 hours.

PSB will report all positive follow-up test results to DPH.

We will send out sign-up and consent information separately, from each individual school in the coming days.

The program offered by DESE is available until March 28th. At the completion of this program, we will review our data and make decisions about the best options for proceeding with voluntary asymptomatic pooled testing.

The Public Schools of Brookline are extremely grateful to our committed staff and families that continue to show great flexibility and resilience as we navigate through this school year. It takes all of us working together to contain the spread of this virus. We are excited to add pooled testing as another mitigation strategy for our school community, as we continue to work together toward the safe return of all students and staff to the school.

Please see the attached Frequently Asked Questions. We will post this FAQ, along with videos and other helpful information on our school health services webpage -

<https://sites.google.com/psbma.org/nurses/home>.

Thank you,

Tricia Laham, MEd, BSN, RN

Coordinator of School Health Services