



Gallatin County School District  
Test to Stay Strategy for Students/Staff

The GCSO, in partnership with Wild Health Labs, is implementing a **voluntary** test to stay program allowing unvaccinated students and staff exposed to a COVID-19 positive person *in the school setting* to continue in-person learning with repeated negative COVID-19 testing. Students participating in the program must continue to quarantine for all extracurricular activities. In-person instruction includes riding the bus or carpooling to/from school.

**Test to Stay eligibility criteria**

- Test to Stay will only be used on asymptomatic non-vaccinated individuals identified as close contact to a COVID-19 positive case within the school setting
- All individuals &/or the parent/guardian of students identified as close contact to a COVID-19 case in the school setting will be notified of their exposure
- The test will be performed by a trained Wild Health Labs staff member, a licensed healthcare provider, or other properly trained unlicensed person.
  - o Capable students able to perform the nasal swab independently may do so with supervision.
- A FDA-approved rapid antigen test will be done at no cost to the individual after consent from the appropriate person or parent/guardian.
  - o Students age 18 or older can give consent for themselves
  - o Written Consent will be given through returning consent form to school.
    - **Consenting before the need for testing arises will greatly improve the effectiveness of this program**
    - **Opting out of the program is available at any time by contacting the school nurse.**
- Unvaccinated students, teachers, or staff who are identified as close contacts who were exposed within the school setting will be instructed to either:
  - o Self-quarantine away from school following CDC and Three Rivers Health Dept guidelines
  - OR
  - o Participate in the Test to Stay program.
- To be eligible for the Test to Stay program, the individual must:
  - o Be entirely asymptomatic, **without any signs or symptoms of COVID-19**
  - o Wear a mask indoors when at school for the entirety of the program, even if all test results are negative.
  - o **Have been exposed to the person with COVID-19 at school only.** This strategy applies to *in-school-related exposures only* and is not applicable to exposures that occur outside of school, during extra-curricular events or in the community (e.g., in a household).
  - o **Quarantine when not at school.** When not at school, the exposed individual must stay home and refrain from all extracurricular activities, including sports and other activities in the community setting.

o If the test to stay program is not agreed to, quarantine guidelines for exposure will be followed and **Quarantine may be discontinued if**

- After day 7 if the individual is symptom-free and receives a negative COVID-19 test 5 days or later after the last date of exposure to the case; or
- After day 10 without testing if the individual is symptom-free

### **Test to Stay Protocol**

The following protocol will be implemented for persons who meet all the eligibility criteria for the Test to Stay program outlined above and who have consented to participate:

- Testing will occur at school and will be initiated as soon as possible after the identified exposure and all subsequent days following the exposure, except for weekends or other days school is not in session, through day 5 after the identified exposure.
- Knowing there may be some delays in identifying exposures and non-school days existing in some exposure timelines, at minimum two days of testing must be done for testing to be discontinued after day 7 of exposure
- Testing will occur at the start of the day
- Negative results will be received before the individual participates further in the school environment
  - o Schools will develop a plan to accommodate students who are tested and awaiting test results
- If a test result is positive, the individual will be sent home to isolate immediately
  - o Positive test results will be reported Three Rivers Health Dept
- Individuals who refuse to complete the daily testing will be immediately sent home from school to quarantine and follow the standard quarantine procedures outlined above.

Schools are an essential part of community infrastructure and in-person instruction for K-12 students is a priority for the GCSD. We will continue to follow state and local Health Department guidance and put strategies in place to mitigate the loss of in-person learning. The Test to Stay program is another approach to keep students and staff in school. We appreciate your participation in this Test to Stay program and urge you to consent. As always, we respect your decision and appreciate your ongoing support and participation as we strive to accomplish our goal to maintain in-person learning days this school year.