

COVID-19 Testing in K-12 Schools

The Rhode Island Department of Health recommends COVID-19 testing for students in K-12 schools.

- Students can have COVID-19 without any symptoms but can still spread the infection to other students.
- Testing in K-12 schools can identify students who are infected and need to isolate at home to protect other students from getting COVID-19.

In-school testing is fast and easy.

- COVID-19 tests in schools are done with nasal swabs. Nasal swabs are gentle and not painful.
- Students in middle school and high school can swab themselves if they want to.

Sign your child up for testing if COVID-19 tests are offered at their school.

- Contact your child's school or district to find out if COVID-19 testing is available. If testing is available, you can complete a consent form to allow your child to participate in testing. Students 16 and older do not need a signed consent form to get tested at school.
- COVID-19 testing at schools is free. There is no cost to participate in COVID-19 testing at school and you do not need to have insurance.

Learn more about the COVID-19 tests used in K-12 schools. Contact your child's school or district to find out what kind of testing is available.



RAPID TESTING

Some schools use the BinaxNOW rapid test. Results are ready within 15 minutes. This type of test is processed at the school, so positive cases are found as soon as possible. Students who do not have any symptoms but test positive on a rapid test will get a PCR test to confirm the results of the rapid test.



PCR TESTING

The PCR test is sent to a lab to process. Results are usually ready in one or two days. PCR testing is available at some in-school testing events and at all State-run K-12 testing sites.



POOLED TESTING

Pooled testing means multiple PCR test samples are mixed together as a batch or pool. The pooled sample is then tested in a lab for COVID-19. If the entire pool tests positive, a second PCR test is given to everyone who had their first sample in the pool. This can be a faster and easier way to regularly test large groups of asymptomatic people.