

Test to Stay in School

Frequently Asked Questions



1. What is the Test to Stay in School program?

Test to Stay in School is a new program offered in the Fayette County Public Schools that was developed in collaboration with the Kentucky Department of Health, Lexington-Fayette County Health Department, and the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). The concept is predicated on data that shows most students who test positive for COVID-19 contract the virus in settings not related to school. This program, as its name implies, allows students to take periodic tests in order to remain in school and learning in person, which we have seen is what is best for students.

2. I thought people could already test out of quarantine?

We do have a program that allows students to shorten the quarantine period by getting tested on the fifth, sixth, or seventh day after exposure and returning to school on the eighth day if their test is negative. That program requires that students remain at home and out of the school setting for seven days.

3. How is this different?

Under this program, students identified for quarantine who are not experiencing symptoms of COVID-19 will be tested at school on Mondays, Wednesdays, and Fridays up to seven days after they were exposed. If they test negative, they may proceed to class. If they test positive, they will need to return home and isolate.

4. If families choose the Test to Stay in School option, are their children still quarantined?

Yes. These students are still in quarantine. That means they should not go anywhere except to school to be tested in order to attend class and home for at least seven days to help stop the spread of the virus in the community.

5. This is for students and staff, correct?

No. This program is only for students. Adults are eligible for vaccines, while most students are not. Adults who are identified as close contacts and are not vaccinated will need to quarantine at home, using their available leave time.

6. Will families need to provide an insurance card or pay for the tests?

No. The tests are being provided to schools through a grant with the state. Although families must give consent for testing, they will not be asked for insurance or billing information.



7. How will this work?

Students who are identified as a close contact to someone who tests positive will receive information about the program and a consent form to return to the school. During their quarantine period they will come to the testing location (generally the gym or cafeteria of the school) on Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays and wait for testing. The tests that are being used are rapid PCR tests that will take 30-45 minutes to process. Once the results are known, students who test negative will proceed to class. Those who test positive will be sent home and will need to isolate for the duration of their contagious period. Students will not need to be tested on Tuesdays and Thursdays.

8. Will teachers need to track the students in their classes?

No. We have resources at the school that will take care of tracking all necessary information.

9. How will this impact the spread of the virus?

The CDC, Kentucky Department of Health, and Lexington-Fayette County Health Department have been tracking cases for 18 months now and have concluded that the risk of exposure at school is fairly low. Most student cases come from a positive case in their family or social network, not in their classroom.

10. If my child has to quarantine because someone in our household has tested positive for COVID-19, can they participate in the Test to Stay at School program?

No. Most students who contract COVID-19 do so after being exposed in their home environment, so students who are exposed to a household member with COVID-19 will continue to be quarantined by the Lexington-Fayette County Health Department for 10-20 days depending on the circumstance.

11. Will the district also consider “test to play” for sports teams and extra-curricular activities?

Our focus is on maximizing instructional time. Students at participating schools who are exposed to COVID-19 for any school related reason—including participation in athletic and extra-curricular activities—have the option to participate in the Test to Stay in School program and may attend school and continue those activities if they remain asymptomatic and test negative. However, testing will not be set up separately for sports teams and after school activities.

12. With this program in place, can we go back to the way things were before COVID?

No. We will still need to ensure proper mask wearing, keep students in cohorts, maintain seating charts, and track student movement throughout the building for contact tracing purposes. This program only reduces the number of instructional days missed because it allows students to remain at school, provided they do not have symptoms of COVID-19 and test negative every other day during their quarantine period.



13. What if a family decides not to enter the Test to Stay in School program and then changes their minds?

Families have to decide which of the three quarantine protocols they want their child to follow when they are notified that their child is being placed into quarantine because of a school-related exposure. That choice is binding.

14. What about weekends and holidays?

Since testing is not available for this program on weekends or holidays, students will quarantine at home and get tested on the next available testing day.

15. What if students are late to school?

We have an alternative testing method for students who arrive after morning testing is complete. These will only be used in rare circumstances and only to keep the student at school. Special consideration will be given to students impacted by bus cancellations.

16. What happens if a student misses one of their days of testing?

Any student that does not participate in each of the required testing days is no longer eligible for the Test to Stay in School program. They will either “Quarantine at Home” or participate in the “Test to Shorten” option.

17. What if a student in the Test to Stay in School program starts having symptoms of COVID-19?

Any student who is not feeling well must stay home and not return to school until they have completed the quarantine protocols for students with symptoms of COVID-19.

