

December 20, 2022

Dear Families,

To keep our school communities safe following the winter break, we strongly encourage all students to get tested for COVID-19 regardless of vaccination status, especially after travelling and/or attending large gatherings. Your child can get tested by a health care provider or use the two COVID-19 at-home tests that your child will bring home from school this week.

When should my child take the tests?

- Take the first test at least 48 hours after a gathering or known exposure to COVID-19.
- Take the second test 24-48 hours after the first test.
- Children can continue attending school unless they have symptoms or a positive test.
- Please note, if your child has recovered from a confirmed case of COVID-19 within the last 90 days, they do not need to take a test and should attend school after Winter Recess if they are feeling well.
- If your child develops symptoms, they should stay home and get tested; have them take an at-home test or talk to your provider about testing.

What should I do if my child tests positive on one of the tests?

- Students who test positive for COVID-19 must isolate for at least 5 days following the first day of symptoms (or the day they tested positive, if they had no symptoms). They can return to school on day 6 if they have no symptoms or symptoms are improving, their symptoms do not include shortness of breath or difficulty breathing, and they have not had a fever for at least 24 hours.
- They should wear a mask through day 10 after symptom onset or the positive test date if they had no symptoms. Masks may be removed after day 5 if your child has received two negative rapid tests 48 hours apart. To learn more about length of isolation and steps that should be taken to protect others, see [cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/your-health/isolation.html](https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/your-health/isolation.html).
- Inform the school that your child has tested positive so your school community can be appropriately notified of possible exposure.

Where can I find instructions about the test kit?

- The test kits come with printed instructions that you should follow when administering the test. You can also watch videos in multiple languages on how to use your test kit at schools.nyc.gov/HomeRapidTestKits. For more information about at-home tests, including how to interpret results, see nyc.gov/site/doh/covid/covid-19-testing.page.

As a reminder, staying up-to-date with COVID-19 vaccinations is still the best tool we have to fight COVID-19 and to keep our schools safe for all our students. Children aged 6 months and older are eligible to be vaccinated against COVID-19. If your child is eligible but not yet vaccinated against COVID-19, please take the opportunity to make an appointment at vaccinefinder.nyc.gov or call 311 to find a vaccine site near you. COVID-19 vaccination is free to all New Yorkers, regardless of immigration or insurance

status. We also encourage everyone aged 5 and older to get the updated COVID-19 booster shot if they received their last vaccine dose at least 2 months ago. Please visit [cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/vaccines/stay-up-to-date.html](https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/vaccines/stay-up-to-date.html) for more information on COVID-19 vaccination schedules.

Finally, the fall and winter seasons coincide with an increase in other respiratory viruses such as the flu, otherwise known as influenza ([nyc.gov/site/doh/health/health-topics/flu-seasonal.page](https://www.nyc.gov/site/doh/health/health-topics/flu-seasonal.page)) and RSV ([nyc.gov/site/doh/health/health-topics/respiratory-syncytial-virus.page](https://www.nyc.gov/site/doh/health/health-topics/respiratory-syncytial-virus.page)). As the flu and COVID-19 are both circulating at this time, getting a flu vaccine is more important than ever. Vaccination is the best way to protect against the flu, which can be particularly dangerous for young children, the elderly, and those who are immunocompromised. The flu vaccine will not prevent COVID-19, but it will help decrease the risk of you and your family suffering from severe flu symptoms that may necessitate medical care. You can safely receive the flu vaccine at the same time as all other vaccines, including the vaccine and booster for COVID-19 ([nyc.gov/site/doh/covid/covid-19-vaccines.page](https://www.nyc.gov/site/doh/covid/covid-19-vaccines.page)).

To protect against these and other viruses, and in alignment with the recent health department advisory, we strongly recommend that everyone wear a mask when in a crowded, public indoor space, including at school, practice frequent handwashing, and cover your mouth and nose with a tissue when coughing or sneezing.

We wish you and your child a healthy and restful break.

Sincerely,



Tracy Agerton
Assistant Commissioner
Office of School Health