

# Test to Stay Guidance

This document provides recommendations from the Utah Department of Health to local health departments and local education agencies (LEAs) on how to implement Test to Stay.

The goals of Test to Stay are to allow students and staff to participate in in-person learning as safely as possible while lessening the burden of quarantine on students and their families, teachers, and school administrators. It was first implemented in K-12 schools in Utah on January 4, 2021.



## What is required by law?

[Senate Bill 107](#) requires schools to do a Test to Stay event when:

- Schools with 1,500 or more students have 2% of their students test positive for COVID-19 within the previous 14 days.
- Schools with fewer than 1,500 students have 30 students test positive for COVID-19 within the previous 14 days.

When a school meets the Test to Stay thresholds, the LEAs in consultation with the local health department will work together to offer testing for all students. LEAs may request assistance from the UDOH for testing supplies, mobile testing units, and other support. School staff are not required to participate but can do so if they choose.



## Schools will determine when and how to offer COVID-19 testing to students.

When a school meets the thresholds outlined in [Senate Bill 107](#), the LEA in consultation with the local health department will determine when and how to offer COVID-19 testing for all students.

## Who should participate in Test to Stay?

All students who attended at least some school in-person within the previous 14 days should participate in Test to Stay.

- Students who are on isolation when the Test to Stay event is held don't have to participate.
- Students who are quarantining at home when the Test to Stay event is held don't have to participate. However, these students should be encouraged to get tested on their own because they have had a recent exposure to COVID-19. These students should finish their quarantine, even if their test result is negative.
- Students who are doing full-time remote or online learning don't have to participate in Test to Stay. However, students should participate if they attended at least some in-person instruction at the school within the last 14 days, even if they are enrolled in a remote or online learning program.
- School staff are not required to participate in Test to Stay but can do so if they choose. They are expected to continue their normal job duties in-person if they choose not to get tested or test negative. They should isolate at home if they test positive or follow quarantine guidelines if they were exposed to COVID-19.



**Students who miss the testing event at the school may get tested at a testing provider of their choice.** This testing should be done within the same 2-days as the school Test to Stay event. There are many free testing locations across the state, listed at <https://coronavirus.utah.gov/utah-covid-19-testing-locations>. Students should show proof of the test result to the school. This documentation should include the student's name, testing location, date of the test, type of test, and test result. At home PCR or antigen test results should not be allowed.

**There may be situations where students with special healthcare needs may be unable to participate in testing because of physical, mental, or behavioral limitations.**

Parents should work with their child's healthcare provider and the school to see if accommodations are possible in these situations, such as using a saliva PCR test instead of a nasal swab test. In rare circumstances, a student who is unable to participate in the Test to Stay event, or is unable to use a different type of test, may be allowed to attend school. Parents of children with special healthcare needs should make this request to the school. Parents may wish to talk with their child's healthcare provider, the school nurse, or local health department when making this decision. Parents and the school should consider the following circumstances when deciding if a student returns to in-person learning without being tested:



- If strict prevention measures can be taken, including mask wearing by the student, teachers, and the student's other classmates.
- The student's IEP or 504 plan services would be significantly disrupted if the student was moved to remote or virtual learning.
- The student attends school in a self-contained unit, away from the general student population.

**Schools must get parental permission prior to testing.**

Before a COVID-19 test is administered to a student, the school must get written permission from the student's parent or guardian. Schools should clearly state on the permission document whether parents are giving permission to test a student for the duration of the school year, or if the student's testing is for a specific event (for example, Test to Stay protocols). This helps the school move quickly to hold a testing event if the outbreak threshold is met and prevent disruptions to in-classroom learning. Schools may choose to get permission from parents during each term instead of one time for the entire school year, but should not ask for permission more than once every term. A parent may revoke permission for their student's participation in testing events at any time during the school year by notifying the school in writing.



**All test results must be reported to the Utah Department of Health.<sup>1</sup>**

COVID-19 is reportable by law, under Utah Code Annotated § 26-6-1 et seq., the Utah Communicable Disease Control Act, and Utah Administrative Code R386-702 Communicable Disease Rule, to the Utah Department of Health or the local health department in the health district where the individual lives. This means a person's COVID-19 test results must be reported to public health by the provider or testing location where the person was tested.

<sup>1</sup> <https://le.utah.gov/xcode/Title26/Chapter6/26-6-S6.html>

## Actions to be taken based on the person's test results.

### All students and staff

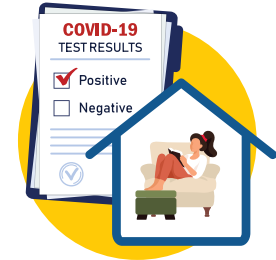
The Utah Department of Health recommends all students who test negative and continue attending in-person instruction wear masks while at school for 10 days after a Test to Stay event. Staff should also wear masks at school for 10 days following Test to Stay events.



### Test positive

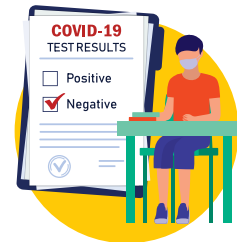
Students who test positive must [isolate](#) at home. They may return to in-person learning after they are done with their isolation period.

- The Test to Stay option has different timeframes for when a person who tests positive should start isolation. If you test positive as part of Test to Stay, your isolation begins the day you are tested, not when your symptoms begin. You must isolate at home even if you don't get symptoms.



### Test negative

Students may continue in-person learning if they **test negative** and do not have any symptoms of COVID-19.



### Did not participate

State law requires a negative test to return to in person learning. Students **who did not participate** should quarantine at home for 5 days. They may return to in-person learning after 5 days or as soon as they get a negative test result.



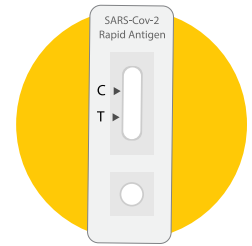
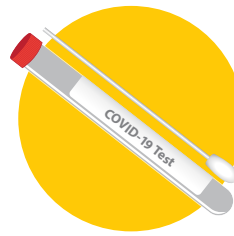
### Exposure to someone who tests positive

Contact tracing should be done for anyone who is **exposed to someone who tests positive** at a Test to Stay event.

- Students or school staff who are exposed to a person who tests positive at the Test to Stay event should follow [quarantine guidelines](#). The local health department will determine the dates close contacts were exposed and when quarantine begins. Parents and school staff who have questions about how COVID-19 will be handled in their school or at extracurricular activities should contact their [local health department](#) or school for more information.
- All close contacts should be notified and provided with instructions on what they should do. Close contacts should be told to watch for symptoms of COVID-19 until it has been 10 days after their exposure and what safety precautions should be taken. If at any time during the 10 days after their exposure a person develops symptoms of COVID-19, regardless of their vaccination status, he or she should isolate and get tested right away.

## Rapid antigen or PCR testing may be offered.

Depending on available testing resources, schools may offer rapid antigen tests, PCR tests, or both at Test to Stay events.



## Help available for testing events.

The Utah Department of Health provides training resources for schools on how to complete a testing event at <https://coronavirus.utah.gov/school-training>. At the request of LEAs, the Utah Department of Health also helps conduct testing events:

- Entire testing event (pre-registration, testing, and reporting). The school only needs to provide the location, time, and staff to help direct those getting tested.
- Testing (swabbers) only. The school does the pre-registration and reporting.
- On-site technical assistance for reporting and registration. The school does the testing and pre-registration.

If LEAs or local health departments need support from the Utah Department of Health Mobile Testing Team to hold a Test to Stay event, complete this [form](#).

If you need to request more test kits or need REDCap assistance, please contact the Utah Department of Health K-12 testing team at [K-12testing@utah.gov](mailto:K-12testing@utah.gov) or call 385-286-0296 or toll-free at 855-222-7531, Monday to Friday from 12 noon to 6 p.m.

