

Interim Guidance: Recommended Uses of COVID-19 Rapid Antigen Tests for Schools in Austin/Travis County

For public and private schools who are choosing to participate in the COVID-19 Rapid Testing Pilot Program offered by the Texas Education Agency (TEA) and the Texas Division of Emergency Management (TDEM), Austin Public Health offers the following recommended approaches and guidance.

Which Schools?
<p>Consider focusing testing on schools that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Are located in zip codes with higher rates of COVID-19 • Have a Title I designation • Have higher numbers of people in racial and ethnic groups with disproportionately high rates of COVID-19
Who? (In Order of Highest Priority),
1. Individuals with COVID-19-like symptoms who are on campus
2. Surveillance testing of specific members of campus population or full campus population (i.e. sustained transmission within school, high rates of community transmission)
3. Proactive testing of asymptomatic individuals at risk for exposure because physical distancing is difficult to maintain or because they cannot easily limit their movements throughout the school (i.e. special needs classrooms, food service, janitorial, athletics, etc.)
Testing Guidance
Testing must only be offered on a voluntary basis. Parent consent must be obtained for minors.
It is not recommended to retest individuals who have tested positive for COVID-19 in the last three months and who do not have symptoms of COVID-19.
See attached flow charts for specific guidance on next steps based on test results of symptomatic and asymptomatic individuals.

Contact Tracing

When identifying close contacts, schools should use the [CDC's updated definition](#): Someone who was within 6 feet of an infected person for a cumulative total of 15 minutes or more over a 24-hour period* starting from 2 days before illness onset (or, for asymptomatic patients, 2 days prior to test specimen collection) until the time the patient is isolated.

All persons who are identified as close contacts need to quarantine for 14 days, even if they are tested and receive a negative test result, because they can still develop COVID-19 for up to 14 days after being exposed. Quarantine helps prevent spread of disease that can occur before a person knows they are sick or if they are infected with the virus without feeling symptoms. Close contacts who are in quarantine who develop symptoms should be referred to their healthcare provider or [Austin Public Health](#) for a PCR test.

Reporting Test Results

- 1. Texas Department of State Health Services (DSHS)-** As required by law, all results – negative, positive, and inconclusive - from testing shall be reported daily to the Department of State Health Services DSHS through the provided test portal system Texas Rapid Test app - <https://app.txrapidtest.org/>
- 2. Austin Public Health (APH)-** Positive results from rapid antigen tests conducted by schools should also be included in the online reporting form used to report cases to Austin Public Health (APH). If your school/school system is not yet connected to the APH online reporting form, please email APHSchoolInfo@austintexas.gov to get connected.