

# Pilot #2: Virginia K-12 COVID-19 Screening Testing Pilot Program



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## Overview and Requirements for Program Participation

The Virginia Department of Health (VDH) and the Virginia Department of Education (VDOE) have developed a K-12 Schools **Screening Testing Pilot Program** to provide free point-of-care (POC) COVID-19 tests for school divisions and non-public schools to implement a COVID-19 screening testing program. Eligible schools should be offering some level of in-person instruction or have a plan to do so during the remainder of the 2020-2021 school year.

Screening testing involves testing a broad group of asymptomatic individuals on a regular basis (e.g. weekly). The goal is to identify infected people who may be contagious as early as possible so measures can be taken to keep the virus from spreading. Screening testing is considered an additional mitigation layer that may be used to proactively identify people with COVID-19. In many people, COVID-19 has no symptoms and people may not realize they are infected; however, these people are contagious for a period during their illness. It is estimated asymptomatic or presymptomatic individuals account for more than 50% of transmissions.<sup>1</sup>

The Virginia K-12 Screening Testing pilot program will provide schools with the necessary tools and information to implement POC antigen testing (using Abbott BinaxNOW cards) for school staff or students with the goal of testing a sample of asymptomatic people at regular intervals, but at least weekly.

The Commonwealth will provide antigen POC tests proportional to the number of students and staff returning for in-person learning. Planning assumptions should include testing approximately 10-20% of students and/or 10-20% staff on a weekly basis, as capacity allows. VDH will support the initial pilot phase of this program until June 30, 2021 and will re-evaluate future plans at that time. This program can stand alone as a school's testing regimen or can enhance an existing testing effort already implemented by the school.

**This is a voluntary program; schools may opt-in to this program as an additional layer of protection. Testing is not a replacement for COVID-19 prevention practices; any testing program needs to be combined with the prevention strategies outlined in the [Interim Guidance for K-12 School Reopening](#). Furthermore, testing must be voluntary for students and staff.**



<sup>1</sup> <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/science/science-briefs/masking-science-sars-cov2.html>

## Pilot #2: K-12 COVID-19 Screening Testing Process: Protocol and Roles/Responsibilities

### Implementing Screening Testing:

Screening testing consists of testing a sample of school students/staff on a regular basis. Schools must commit to conducting testing at least weekly. Common methods for sample selection include random sampling, testing by designated cohorts, or selecting one classroom from each grade level.

VDH recommends following CDC guidance to develop a screening testing schedule based on level of community transmission:

During low levels of local community transmission: Encourage staff to participate in weekly testing.

During moderate, substantial, or high levels of local community transmission:

- Encourage staff to participate in weekly testing.
- Encourage students to participate in weekly testing.

In areas with substantial and high community transmission, twice a week screening testing may be preferable to quickly detect cases among teachers and staff.

Refer to the CDC's guidance on [Testing Recommendations by Level of Community Transmission](#) for additional information.

To make testing programs more feasible, schools may consider testing a random sample of at least 10% of students. For example, a school may randomly select 20% of the students each week for testing out of the entire population of students attending in-person instruction. Alternatively, a school may select one pod for each grade level each week for testing. Different strategies for random selection may be used based on the most adequate fit for a school's screening testing strategy.

While some schools may choose to focus screening testing on a specific population (e.g., athletics), schools should be aware that broad community participation will maximize the benefits of screening testing.

Additionally, school divisions should prioritize screening testing to these identified groups in the following order:

1. Schools in areas with high community transmission (red zones)
2. Teachers and staff
3. High school-aged students (who typically have higher transmission rates than younger students)
4. Individuals who are part of a group particularly vulnerable to COVID-19 (including people with access or functional needs, people of color, low-income students and staff)

### Program Participation Requirements:

Schools must have the following requirements and procedures in place and relevant documentation on file prior to beginning this testing program.

1. Secure a signed order from someone with prescriptive authority (e.g., physician) for testing or elect to use the K-12 Statewide Standing Order and identify a supervising licensed healthcare provider.
2. Obtain an approved CLIA certificate of waiver. Schools must apply for a CLIA certificate of waiver by completing this form: <https://www.cms.gov/Medicare/CMS-Forms/CMS-Forms/Downloads/CMS116.pdf>

This form requires an original signature, and the completed form must to be mailed to:

Virginia Department of Health  
Office of Licensure and Certification  
9960 Mayland Drive, Suite 401  
Richmond, Virginia 23233

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3. Identify individuals who will form the testing team and develop a plan to collect samples, including processing the samples on-site and reporting results to the Virginia Department of Health.
4. Confirm ability to maintain an adequate supply of personal protective equipment (PPE) for testing team members who will be collecting and processing samples. Schools may reach out to their local emergency manager for assistance in acquiring PPE.
5. Confirm ability to properly handle and dispose of biohazard waste.
6. Ensure all testing staff have completed Abbott BinaxNOW online training modules and document training completion: <https://www.globalpointofcare.abbott/en/support/product-installation-training/navica-brand/navica-binaxnow-ag-training.html>
7. Obtain consent from staff and/or students (or their parents/legal guardians, as necessary). VDH has provided template consent form language and sample school community letters that schools can customize for their own use.
8. Establish testing program schedule, process for selecting a sample of the community, and plan for conducting tests. Refer to the CDC's guidance on [Testing Recommendations by Level of Community Transmission](#) for additional information.
9. Establish procedures to notify school members that are tested, as well as the school community, including relevant follow-up actions needed to isolate any individual with positive results and plans to quarantine and contact trace as appropriate and in collaboration with the local health department.
10. Register for the VDH reporting portal and verify ability to complete VDH reporting requirements. (Schools will need to have their CLIA waiver number prior to registering.) Instructions on registering for the portal are available at: <https://apps.vdh.virginia.gov/pocreporting/login/login.aspx>.

Schools should register with the portal prior to beginning any testing, since it may take several days to gain access.

Schools that require assistance with these requirements are encouraged to contact the VDH Central Office Testing Team, which can be reached at: [antigeninfo@vdh.virginia.gov](mailto:antigeninfo@vdh.virginia.gov)

### Pilot 2 Program Application Process:

A school site interested in participating in the pilot screening testing program must:

1. Review the Readiness Review Checklist and certify that they have completed all the requirements (defined above).
2. Send the completed Readiness Review Checklist to the VDH Central Office Testing Team at [antigeninfo@vdh.virginia.gov](mailto:antigeninfo@vdh.virginia.gov).

The VDH Central Office Testing Team will review the completed checklist. Upon review and confirmation by VDH, schools that meet all requirements will be enrolled in the program and receive BinaxNOW tests. VDH will also notify the local health department that serves the school division for awareness.

# Pilot #2: K-12 Screening Testing Process: Protocol and Roles/Responsibilities

## About the Test:

Abbott BinaxNOW is a POC antigen test that uses a nasal swab for sample collection and can return test results in about 15 minutes. These tests are most accurate when administered to symptomatic individuals. The sample is taken with an anterior nasal swab (i.e., swabbing about 0.5 inches into the nostril). Individuals who perform or observe testing must complete online training modules and be under the supervision of a licensed healthcare provider. Samples may be self-collected by an adult staff member or a child who is deemed able to follow the directions, while visually monitored by trained testing team members. Young children or those with disabilities may require assistance from their parent/ legal guardian to collect the specimen.



Healthcare professionals and trained testing team members must be stocked with appropriate personal protective equipment (PPE) – gloves, gowns, face protection (shield or goggles), and masks (N95 or surgical masks, not cloth masks). Nasal swabs should be processed in the test card as quickly as possible after collection.

## Allocation and Distribution of Tests:

Approximately 2 million BinaxNOW tests have been allocated to Virginia from the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. VDH and the Virginia Department of Emergency Management are coordinating allocation and distribution to school divisions and other partners. Upon verification by VDH, schools that opt-in to this voluntary program and submit documentation that they meet all criteria for participation will receive POC antigen tests. VDH will ship BinaxNOW tests and will continue to distribute allocations upon request until supplies are diminished or June 30, 2021. Future allocations and distribution processes might be adjusted depending on usage, district needs, and historical information.

A further breakdown of school responsibilities and available resources is below:

What is the requirement?	Who is responsible for executing the requirement?	What resources could schools use to fulfill the requirement?
<p><b>1. Partner and coordinate with a person with prescriptive authority</b> to write the order for the test, authorize collection, and manage reporting and results follow-up.</p> <p><b>Or utilize the K-12 Statewide Standing Order</b> and identify the supervising licensed healthcare provider.</p> 	<p>Individuals who can write an order include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Local healthcare provider</li> <li>School-contracted healthcare provider</li> </ul>	<p>Schools might consider:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>School-contracted physician</li> <li>Partnership/agreement with local pediatrician</li> <li>Local health department</li> <li>Other contracts</li> </ul> <p>The K-12 Statewide Standing Order can be found here.</p>
<p><b>2. Obtain a CLIA certificate of waiver to analyze samples.</b> to analyze samples.</p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>School submits application</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The form to apply for the CLIA certificate of waiver can be found here: <a href="https://www.cms.gov/Medicare/CMS-Forms/CMS-Forms/Downloads/CMS116.pdf">https://www.cms.gov/Medicare/CMS-Forms/CMS-Forms/Downloads/CMS116.pdf</a></li> <li>Schools may contact <a href="mailto:CLIAlab@vdh.virginia.gov">CLIAlab@vdh.virginia.gov</a> with any questions related to the CLIA certificate of waiver.</li> </ul>
<p><b>3. Establish a screening testing calendar</b> based on CDC recommendations.</p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>School</li> </ul>	<p>School staff may collaborate with local health department resources/local Epidemiology resources to apply CDC guidance.</p>

## Pilot #2: K-12 Diagnostic Testing Process: Protocol and Roles/Responsibilities

What is the requirement?	Who is responsible for executing the requirement?	What resources could schools use to fulfill the requirement?	What is the requirement?	Who is responsible for executing the requirement?	What resources could schools use to fulfill the requirement?
<p><b>4. Develop a plan to collect samples</b> from staff and/or students.</p>  	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>School identifies individuals who will conduct testing.</li> <li>A licensed healthcare provider must conduct testing or provide supervision for individuals who will conduct testing.</li> <li>Individuals who conduct sample collection do not need to be medical professionals, but must complete Abbott BinaxNOW online training modules.</li> <li>In many cases, a student or staff member may self-collect the sample while supervised by a trained individual.</li> </ul>	<p>Individuals who conduct/observe sample collection might include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>School team</li> <li>Outside community support</li> <li>Private contractors</li> </ul>	<p><b>6. Establish and implement procedures to refer certain persons for confirmatory testing</b> if needed.</p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Depending on the test result, certain individuals may be advised to seek confirmatory PCR testing. The school should assist by connecting the individual with resources to find testing in the community.</li> </ul>	<p>Schools should refer to the Testing Protocols for guidance on when to refer an individual for confirmatory testing. VDH has developed a resource for schools that overviews testing options in the community, <a href="#">available here</a>.</p> <p>Local health department resources may also assist in providing guidance on specific cases.</p>
<p><b>5. Obtain consent</b> from staff and/or students (or their parents, where applicable) to conduct testing (testing must be voluntary; schools may not make it mandatory).</p>  	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>School collects signed consent and maintains record of consent.</li> </ul>	<p>VDH has provided template consent form language and sample school community letters that schools can customize for their own use.</p>	<p><b>7. Collaborate with VDH</b> to report test results.</p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>School reports test results to VDH through the VDH reporting portal.</li> </ul>	<p>Schools can report electronically through the VDH Reporting Portal. Additional information and the link to register for the portal can be found here: <a href="https://apps.vdh.virginia.gov/pocreporting/login/login.aspx">https://apps.vdh.virginia.gov/pocreporting/login/login.aspx</a></p> <p>VDH will also hold training sessions on reporting for participating schools.</p>
			<p><b>8. Work with VDH to establish and implement follow-up protocols</b> for each test result (including case investigation, contact tracing, and mitigation).</p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>School coordinates with ordering provider or supervising licensed healthcare provider (if using K-12 Statewide Standing Order) on follow-up care for individuals testing positive.</li> <li>School works with local VDH resources on containment and mitigation practices.</li> </ul>	<p>Individuals who support follow-up activities might include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Local healthcare provider</li> <li>School-contracted healthcare provider</li> <li>School staff in collaboration with local health district</li> <li>Private vendor</li> <li>VDH specialized strike teams</li> </ul>