

Virginia Department of Health Test to Stay Guidance Executive Summary for K-12 Schools

What is Test to Stay?

Test to Stay (TTS) is a practice of serial COVID-19 testing to allow close contacts who are not [up to date](#) on COVID-19 vaccines to continue in-person learning during their quarantine period. In Virginia, the model recommends that eligible individuals take a COVID-19 rapid antigen test every day for 5 days following the exposure (except on weekends or holidays) and if the test is negative, they are allowed to stay in school for in-person instruction. Traditional quarantine practice should continue in non-school settings for the duration of the quarantine period. Testing and masking of contacts during their in-school quarantine period is integral to minimize risk of transmission. Schools may consider the use of TTS to minimize the impact of quarantine and limit school absences after a SARS-CoV-2 exposure.

What are the benefits of enrolling in the TTS program?

Participating students may benefit from COVID-19 testing and early identification of COVID-19, and will benefit from being able to continue to attend in-person school and certain school-based extracurricular activities. (Participation in high risk activities where distancing and consistent masking is not feasible, (e.g. sports) is not recommended for students completing traditional quarantine at home or participating in TTS).

Who is eligible?

VDH recommends that K-12 students, staff, and teachers who meet the following criteria may participate:

- Two years of age or older
- Asymptomatic close contact
- Any exposure in which the individual is considered a close contact, including those occurring at school, a school-sponsored extracurricular activity, on a school bus, in the community, or in the household
- Not [up-to-date](#) on COVID-19 vaccines
- Willing and able to wear a mask while at school during the entire quarantine period (except for eating/drinking)
- Remains asymptomatic
- Signed consent form on file

Who is NOT eligible?

- Individuals up-to-date on COVID-19 vaccines
- Individuals who test positive for COVID-19
- Individuals who are symptomatic
- Individuals who are not otherwise recommended to quarantine
- Individuals under the age of 2

What are the requirements of Test to Stay?

- The individual wears a mask all of the time, except when eating and drinking, for 10 days following the exposure.
- The individual takes a rapid test every day before school for the first 5 days after exposure, and it is negative.
 - Rapid test may be performed at home with a proctored test (e.g. eMed Abbott BinaxNOW Antigen At Home Test Kit) in the morning before school, or the evening prior (ideally after 7 pm) OR
 - Rapid test may be performed upon arrival at school (if driven to school by a parent or guardian and does not ride a school bus) if the school has the resources. If necessary, schools may consider allowing students who will test in the morning at school to ride the bus.
- The individual does not need to take a rapid test on mornings of days that fall on weekends or holidays (or the evenings prior), however, they must continue quarantine on these days (i.e. the student is not to attend birthday parties, sporting events, or any other group activities on these days)
- The individual monitors for symptoms of COVID-19 for 10 days and immediately isolates at home if symptoms develop or if they receive a positive test result.
- Parents/guardians agree to comply with program requirements.