



UNH Safer at School COVID Screening Parent/Guardian FAQs

What is the Safer at Schools Screening (SASS) program and why is it important?

SASS is a state initiative aimed at supporting schools interested in conducting asymptomatic surveillance testing for COVID-19 among students and staff. The program is funded through the federal government's American Rescue Plan and is free to both students and the school. Routine testing surveillance allows schools to quickly understand how COVID-19 is spreading in their facilities and provides parents and guardians a chance to get their students regularly tested. People can spread COVID-19 even if they are asymptomatic. Regular screening is one of the only ways to determine the population of asymptomatic individuals.

Why do I have to consent and how long does it last?

Parents and guardians must give consent to allow students to receive testing through the screening program. Your consent allows your school's nursing/administrative team to receive a copy of your student's results for the purpose of maintaining public health. The screening program is an opt-in program for each student and consent for each of your students must be granted prior to testing. You only have to consent once for the school year. You can contact your school to remove consent at any time.

How is testing performed and what test will be used?

Testing is performed at your student's school or at a location determined by your school. A team of medical professionals will either administer the test or observe your student as they self-administer the test. The swab is only inserted up to the entrance of the nostril, approximately ½-1" deep. It is not a deep nasopharyngeal swab.

The UNH COVID Test Lab uses the rtPCR testing process, which is highly accurate, even for asymptomatic individuals. This is not a "rapid" or "antigen" test. Your school's nursing team may perform a rapid antigen BinaxNow test on students who become symptomatic while at school. The BinaxNow test is accurate for those who are symptomatic and may also be followed by an rtPCR test. Parents do not accompany their student for testing, but special accommodations may be arranged by your school staff.

What happens with my student's swabs after collection?

Swabs are delivered to the lab by the testing team. Swabs are only used to determine the presence of the virus and negative samples are destroyed after testing. If a swab is positive, it may be retained to perform additional genomic analysis to determine the specific

variant. If analyzed, the variant is only reportable to the NH DHHS and is not provided to the parent or guardian, per regulations. Your student's DNA is not stored or examined.

Who can see my child's results?

A limited team of nursing and administrative staff will be able to review results per your consent above. UNH also reports testing to NH DHHS on behalf of the schools engaged in the program. All testing is complete by midnight on the day following a test and the UNH lab via our partner Transformative Healthcare will directly notify the school and parent/guardian in the event of a positive result. Your school may elect to send positive and negative result notification using a secure portal, text messages, email, or automated voice. If your school elects this option parents & guardians will be able opt into that service if they provide a valid cell phone number and email address at the time of consent, but this is not required.

What happens if my student misses a test?

This is an optional program designed to help schools understand the spread of the virus in their facilities. There is no reason to be concerned if a screening test is missed for any reason.

Does this program provide testing for symptomatic families?

No. The screening program is not designed to replace your primary care provider or local testing options when you become ill outside of school. If your student has any symptoms or comes in contact with a COVID positive person, they should not go to school and you should contact a medical professional such as their pediatrician, PCP, or urgent care facility for further evaluation. The NH DHHS keeps a list of testing facilities here: <https://www.dhhs.nh.gov/dphs/cdcs/covid19/documents/covid-testing-options.pdf>

Who can I contact if I have questions about accessing results or my school's program?

If your school is using the UNH COVID Test Lab, you can email or call our hotline with questions (the contact information will be provided by your school). Our hotline staff is able to answer questions about the program and how to access results*. Questions about a school's individual testing protocols and procedures should be directed to the school administration.

**Please be respectful to the hotline staff. The hotline is not intended to as a mechanism to debate the merits of testing or for political discussions. This is an opt-in program and participation is voluntary.*

