

Friday November 19, 2021

Dear Parents and Guardians:

On Wednesday, November 10, 2021, the School Board approved a pilot program called “Test to Stay” in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. We will start this program on Wednesday, December 1, 2021. Students and staff who have been identified as close contacts of a non-household COVID positive person will have an additional option beside off-site quarantine. Student and staff close contacts may remain in school as long as they test negative and have no COVID-19 symptoms. We have worked with neighboring districts and the Wood County Health Department to put this “Test to Stay” program in place at Port Edward School District. This program is optional for families and no children will be tested without parental permission. The details of the program are described below:

Test to Stay Procedures for non-household asymptomatic close contacts:

1. Parent/guardian completes the test consent form prior to testing.
2. Individuals participating in the program must be transported to school in the morning during the testing cycle, and may ride the bus home in the afternoon as long as the child remains symptom free.
3. Individuals in the program will report to the designated testing area each morning for 7 school days after exposure to the positive case. A rapid COVID-19 test will then be administered each day. ***If the rapid test is negative and the person remains symptom free,*** they may remain in school.
4. Individuals in the “Test to Stay” protocol must wear a face mask at all times inside the building for 14 days and on the bus in the afternoon.
5. Individuals may remove their face mask if outside and at least 6 feet from others.
6. ***If the rapid test is positive,*** then a PCR test will be done at school and sent to the lab for processing. A positive rapid test will require out of school quarantine until the results are returned from the lab. It is possible some asymptomatic students may test positive.

County Quarantine for Asymptomatic close contacts who do not choose the “Test to Stay” option:

- Unvaccinated: quarantined out of school. Recommend a PCR COVID-19 test on days 5-7 for early return on day 8 after exposure. If no test for early release, may return on day 11 with no test and no symptoms tracked on a symptom tracker form. Both early return options require masking. On day 15 if the student has no symptoms, and if masks are optional, students will not be required to wear a mask.
- Vaccinated: stay in school, masking for 14 days. Recommended to test on days 5-7. If the result is negative and masks are optional, the student may remove their mask while in school.

The Test to Stay option is designed to keep symptom free (asymptomatic) negative close contacts in school and learning. It will decrease the number of missed student days due to

quarantine. Overall, our families have been doing an outstanding job of keeping their children home when they are sick and verifying what the sickness is before sending them to school. The implementation of “Test to Stay” may require changes throughout the implementation of the program to improve the efficiency of the program which will be communicated. Please have a plan in place in the event of out of school quarantine.

Again, this program will officially kick off on December 1, 2021. Any student or staff member who is a non-household close contact in quarantine at that time may participate in the program. Testing will generally be done at Port Edwards Ed Heuer Elementary School and will start at 7:30am. Due to start times of school, the testing from 7:30am to 7:45am will be reserved exclusively for middle and high school students. After 7:45am, testing will then open to elementary students. The testing process will generally take 15-30 minutes to complete. Depending upon how many individuals require testing, the process could take longer, but we are able to run multiple rapid tests at any given time. Parents are not required to remain on site while testing is completed and parents will not be able to access the testing area as there may be many students seeking tests and we are working to run this as quickly and efficiently as possible. If a test is positive, we will contact the parent as soon as we are able to pick up their child, otherwise students will be sent to class and middle/high school students will be taken to the middle/high school building.

There will be two forms that need to be completed prior to testing. The first form needs to only be completed one time, this is the test registration form explained here: to sign your children up for this program, please complete the registration form at www.lifepointlink.com/noah/outreach. Each student will need a separate registration. When filling out the form, please make sure to use your student’s information, not yours. The only information that should be a parent/guardian is the email address, as this is where results will be sent. A second form that is required is a District consent form that will need to be completed prior to any “Test to Stay” 7- day testing cycle commencing. This form will be available on our website on Monday, November 29, 2021.

Additionally, school staff will not be able to process forms on the morning of testing, consent forms need to be filled out at least the night prior to first testing. We will not test any child who’s testing consent information is incomplete. If you have already signed your child up, please consider verifying that you have in fact used your child’s information. Please also keep in mind that there may be a delay from when you complete the registration to when it shows up in our staff’s inbox. We encourage you to register your student ASAP at the link above to avoid delays.

As we implement this program we ask that you please be patient with staff.

Sincerely,

Kyle Cronan, District Administrator