

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ) for the Safer at School Screening (SASS) Program

Q: What is the Safer at School Screening (SASS) program?

A: 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.

Q: Who can participate?

A: All New Hampshire schools serving children in Kindergarten through Grade 12, as well as childcare programs that offer Kindergarten are eligible.

Q: Is this program mandatory for all schools?

A: No, the program is wholly optional and school administrators must elect to have their institution participate. In addition, the program is optional to all staff and students who must opt in to the program to take part. All participants must have a completed consent form to be tested.

Q: When is the SASS program available to eligible schools?

A: Schools may elect to participate in the SASS program for the remainder of the 2020-2021 school year, the 2021 summer term, and/or the 2021-2022 school year. Each school may select any of the above periods to participate based on their own specific needs.

Q: Who does the program intend to test?

A: Asymptomatic and unvaccinated high-risk populations within New Hampshire schools including: sports teams, persons in congregate living settings, persons returning from high-risk travel, persons returning from an extended break, or other high-risk populations of concern.

Q: Is consent required to be tested?

A: All individuals must have informed consent to participate if their school has opted into the program. For individuals under the age of 18, the school's selected vendor will have a consent form that a parent or guardian must fill out for the individual to get tested.

Q: Are there costs associated with this program for participating schools?

A: There will be no cost undertaken by participating schools to set up an asymptomatic screening testing plan with one of the State's contracted vendors. BinaxNOW kits are also available directly from the State to support testing needs.

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Q: Can participants select their own vendor?

A: No, the State has contracted with multiple vendors that participants must select from to participate in the SASS program and receive State-sponsored testing services.

Q: What types of tests can be used?

A: Vendors offer both RT-PCR and antigen tests, and participating schools may select the one that works best for their institution. As noted in the SASS guidance, RT-PCR is the preferred testing method for asymptomatic screening.

Q: Is there the possibility of having staff come in to assist with specimen collection?

A: Yes, some vendors offer this resource. Please thoroughly review the 1-page documents detailing program service details provided by each vendor or reach out to them directly with questions prior to selecting a vendor. Once the program is launched, participants will coordinate with their vendor directly for further details.

Q: If a school wants to self-test, are there training materials provided?

A: Yes, schools should coordinate with their chosen vendor for training materials specific to their directions for self-testing (if offered). For BinaxNOW kits, you can view the training materials that are provided by Abbott [here](#).

Q: How many individuals can be tested as part of this program?

A: That is determined by each specific school and populations that they wish to test. Each institution can select which high-risk populations to test and the frequency at which to test each group. All individuals identified must also opt in to participating in the program and submit the necessary consent form(s).

Q: How should schools determine a testing strategy?

A: Please review the [SASS guideline](#), as well as any applicable resources from the [Department of Health and Human Services](#) and [Centers for Disease Control and Prevention](#) to help determine the best strategy for your school's goals.

Q: Is there assistance for developing a testing strategy?

A: Please consult with your chosen vendor as some may be able to provide this direction as a service.

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Q: What Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) is required?

A: Please review the [SASS guideline](#) , as well as any applicable resources from the [Department of Health and Human Services](#) and [Centers for Disease Control and Prevention](#) to determine any PPE requirements. Your vendor may supply you with the necessary PPE for specimen collection.

Q: Can symptomatic individuals be tested?

A: The SASS program is not targeted towards symptomatic testing, however BinaxNOW kits can be used in the event that a student becomes symptomatic during the school day while onsite and by following the testing guidance provided by [DHHS](#).

Q: What are the next steps when someone tests positive for Covid-19 at the school?

A: For RT-PCR tests, the vendor will inform school administrators and the individual of the positive result and provide details and guidance on the next steps. For antigen testing, please review section four of the [SASS document](#), as well as any applicable resources from the [Department of Health and Human Services](#) and [Centers for Disease Control and Prevention](#).

Q: What resources are available if I have staff or students with limited English skills or functional needs?

A: Each vendor must provide communication access and language assistance services to ensure meaningful access to programs and/or services to individuals with limited English proficiency, individuals who are deaf or have hearing loss, individuals who are blind or have low vision, and individuals who have speech challenges. Please reach out to your vendor directly regarding accessing these services for individuals who may need them.

For any additional questions, please contact SASS@dhhs.nh.gov or coordinate through your chosen vendor.