

Return to School FAQs: A guide for school health teams

What are the symptoms that warrant being sent home from school for COVID testing?

Symptoms outside of those listed on the current testing algorithm below do **not** require an individual to be sent home from school. Examples include brief or transient abdominal pain and sneezing without cough or congestion.

What documentation is required for symptomatic individuals with no known exposure to return to school?

If student, teacher, or staff symptoms are improving AND they are fever-free for at least 24 hours without the use of fever reducing medicines, they may return to school with either a note from the healthcare provider indicating they had a negative COVID test **OR** only a copy of the negative test result (this may be provided directly from a testing site, lab or as a copy from the individual's electronic health record, e.g. MyChart).

Documentation of a healthcare provider assessment is not required, unless it is for an acceptable alternate diagnosis. Alternate diagnoses that are not acceptable as stand-alone diagnoses by our community standard include: Non-specific viral or bacterial illnesses (including URI, viral illness, bronchitis, pneumonia, sinusitis, otitis media, and viral gastrointestinal illness).

Which tests can be accepted for an individual to return to school?

Acceptable tests for return to school include: PCR and NAAT tests. Examples of NAAT tests include Molecular, LAMP, and NEAR. Any of these tests can be rapid.

*PCR is strongly recommended in the case of exposure, fever, and loss of taste/smell.

Tests that are **not** accepted for return to school include ANY home test due to inability to verify the results and antigen tests.

Do symptomatic individuals who have had COVID-19 in the last 90 days need a negative test to return to school?

No. Symptomatic students, teachers or staff do **not** need a negative test to return to school if they have had a **lab confirmed** COVID-19 infection in the past 90 days.

FOR HEALTHCARE PROVIDERS

Finger Lakes Reopening Schools Safely Task Force Interim Triage and Testing Protocol for COVID-19 for return to school

