

COVID-19 POOL TESTING IN NORWOOD PUBLIC SCHOOLS

WHAT? Recently the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE) offered to cover the expense of COVID-19 pool testing, beginning this spring and through the summer, for all students and staff in the Norwood Public Schools. Our district was paired with the Veritas EDU Safe program which performs the PCR test using a saliva sample.

WHY? Protecting our students, staff and community from COVID-19 requires a combination of mitigation, or preventative, measures. The school staff, including teachers, transportation drivers, custodians, food service workers and administration are fully or in the process of being vaccinated if they chose. We all wear masks, wash hands, maintain as much distance as possible and our buildings are cleaned and disinfected regularly. However, now we are all back in school full-time at a minimum of 3 feet apart. Weekly pool testing is another tool we can add to keep our school community, especially our students who are not yet eligible to be vaccinated, safe.

WHEN? Norwood Public Schools' testing day will be on Thursdays beginning on Thursday, May 20th. The information is being shared now so that you will have time to consider participating and have your questions answered prior to our start date.

WHERE? Saliva samples will be self-collected in the comfort and privacy of home. There will be a collection box at each of our nine school buildings. Samples will need to be dropped off by 9:30 Thursday mornings.

WHO? The EDU Safe testing program is available to all students and employees of Norwood Public Schools.

HOW? A link will be made available soon so students and staff may register online. The process only takes a few minutes and is only done once. Collection kits will be sent home with in-person students on Wednesdays. RLA students and staff may stop by their neighborhood school to pick up a test kit before the end of the school day on Wednesdays. This link provides a demonstration of how easy it is to use the test kit, the video is less than 2 minutes long: <https://drive.google.com/file/d/1zV624zBLDgBo6G5EiMtHhTIZyqZrwDul/view> . After samples are dropped off, the school nurses will package 10 samples together to form a 'pool'. The pools will be sent to the Veritas lab for analysis. If a pool is negative you will not be notified – no news is good news! If a pool tests positive the individual samples will then be retested separately and those results are shared with the positive person and the Department of Public Health.

MORE INFORMATION? If you are interested in learning more about the Veritas EDU Safe program https://docs.google.com/presentation/d/1khZJq2MkKdrccrVktuwyWqjFLMKbD902yH-1tTIHghs/edit?ts=609993b4#slide=id.gc997bb1868_0_37 If you have any additional questions please contact Jill Driscoll at 781-440-5843 or by email at jdriscoll@norwood.k12.ma.us