



# OAK PARK and RIVER FOREST HIGH SCHOOL

## Frequently Asked Questions about Saliva Testing, Quarantine, and Isolation

*Aug. 25, 2021*

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The information below is based on recommendations from the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) as well as guidance provided specifically for schools by the Oak Park Department of Public Health.

If you have additional questions after reading this FAQ, please email Karin Sullivan, executive director of communications and community relations, at [ksullivan@oprfs.org](mailto:ksullivan@oprfs.org).

### Saliva testing

#### What is SHIELD testing?

SHIELD is a free, noninvasive, saliva-based test created by the University of Illinois. Oak Park and River Forest High School will be implementing voluntary SHIELD testing for students and employees in the coming weeks. More information about SHIELD is available at [SHIELD Illinois Saliva Test](#).

#### Who will be tested?

SHIELD testing is entirely voluntary and will be available to all students and employees. We particularly encourage anyone who is unvaccinated to participate.

#### How do you define “fully vaccinated”?

A person is considered fully vaccinated:

- Two weeks after their second dose in a two-dose series, such as the Pfizer or Moderna vaccines
- Two weeks after a single-dose vaccine, such as Johnson & Johnson’s Janssen vaccine

#### How does someone opt in to testing?

- **Students:** An opt-in form must be completed in Skyward by the parent/guardian or employee. [Click here](#) for instructions on how to complete the form. Please note that the form is available only to parents/guardians listed in Family 1 in Skyward.

- **Employees:** Must complete an opt-in form. [Click here](#) for the form.

**Is there an opt-out form for the SHIELD testing? Or do we just not complete the opt-in form if we don't want to participate in testing?**

There is no opt-out form. If someone has not opted in, they will not be tested.

**Why is saliva testing optional this year when last year it was mandatory for on-site students?**

Last year, we were able to require testing for all in-person students because there was a fully remote option for any student who didn't want to test. Because the state is not allowing fully remote or hybrid learning this year, that also means we cannot require testing as any non-participating student would be unable to attend school in any form.

**Can't you at least mandate testing for unvaccinated students?**

No. Again, because the state is not allowing fully remote or hybrid learning this year, that also means we cannot require testing of any student, including those who are unvaccinated, because any non-participating student would be unable to attend school in any form.

**Why would a fully vaccinated person want to opt in for testing?**

Fully vaccinated persons can still become infected with COVID-19. In fact, we already have had a few cases of vaccinated students and staff members notifying us that they are positive. Testing vaccinated students and employees helps catch asymptomatic breakthrough cases and prevent transmission to others. In addition, even though fully vaccinated close contacts do not have to quarantine, the CDC recommends they get tested ~~three to~~ five days after exposure to ensure they haven't developed an asymptomatic case of COVID. Testing at school is convenient and easy--but the student or employee must be opted in to participate.

**Let's say my fully vaccinated child develops an asymptomatic case of COVID. If they don't participate in testing, then no one will know they're positive; therefore, they won't have to isolate and miss ~~two weeks of~~ school. Why would I opt them in?**

We agree that students need to be in class as much as possible. But fully vaccinated, asymptomatic persons can still infect others with COVID. As a school, we want to keep everyone in our community as safe and healthy as possible. Testing both unvaccinated and vaccinated persons helps us accomplish that goal.

**Doesn't the CDC recommend against routine testing for fully vaccinated persons?**

No. What the [CDC states](#) is that "fully vaccinated people can refrain from routine screening testing if

feasible.” Again, we are not requiring testing. But we believe there is a community benefit to testing as many people as possible, regardless of vaccination status.

### **How often will testing occur?**

Once a week. We are developing a testing-day schedule that will be shared prior to launching our testing program.

### **Why do we need to opt in by a specific date? Will we have an opportunity to opt in later?**

We need to create as complete a list as possible now because SHIELD will not have access to Skyward to see who opts in later. While opting in after the deadline is possible, any additions to the initial roster will require completing separate paperwork by hand and is a more cumbersome process.

### **If someone is opted in, are they required to get tested every week? What happens if they miss weekly testing?**

Because testing is voluntary, we cannot compel anyone to participate, including those who have opted in. There is no penalty for missing a test.

### **Where and when will testing take place?**

All sample collection will take place at school by workers who are contracted by SHIELD. Unlike last year, we will *not* be asking participants to collect their own samples at home and then drop them off at a dropbox. We will have assigned days for testing, and we will have designated collection stations at school. Testing will be available before school, during lunch periods, and after school.

### **What is the rate of false positives?**

According to SHIELD, the saliva test has a sensitivity of 97% and a specificity of 99%, with very few false positives. High specificity combined with frequent testing makes the SHIELD saliva-based test extremely accurate.

### **Why can't individuals eat or drink one hour prior to testing?**

Doing so may provide an invalid sample or inconclusive result.

### **When are results available?**

Generally within 24 hours.

### **How will I know the test results?**

In this case no news is good news: If the test is negative, you will not receive those results. If the test is positive, SHIELD will automatically send you an email; in addition, [a school nurse or administrator a member of our COVID Team](#) will call the parent/guardian or employee with next steps.

**If the test is positive, is a follow-up test required to confirm the result?**

No. SHIELD is a diagnostic PCR test and does not require additional confirmation.

**Who will receive test results?**

District 200 will receive a report on all results from SHIELD, which will be kept confidential in accordance with FERPA (Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act) and HIPAA (Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act). In addition, SHIELD is required to notify the Illinois Department of Public Health (IDPH) of any positive results.

**How much does the test cost?**

The State of Illinois has made testing available free of charge to all schools. There is no cost to OPRF High School families or employees.

**Will participant data be published?**

Individual data will not be published. Positive cases will be reflected in the district's COVID-19 dashboard.

**How will the district protect the privacy of participants?**

SHIELD Illinois uses a third-party collections and logistics team to collect the samples and disseminate the results. All parties are subject to confidentiality agreements. Identifiable information is kept to a minimum through the use of QR codes and barcodes. Individual results will be reported directly to the district. Results will be available only to the school nurses and a very small, select group of administrators in order to connect with families whose students had a positive test result.

**Does SHIELD analyze the saliva for anything other than COVID? Does it analyze or keep DNA from the saliva samples?**

No. SHIELD uses saliva samples only to test for COVID-19. Samples are destroyed after testing.

**Will this program replace other safety measures in the school?**

No. The SHIELD testing program will not take the place of [our other health and safety measures](#), which include universal masking, hand hygiene, staying home when sick, enhanced cleaning protocols, and upgrades to ventilation and filtration. These mitigations already make the risk of in-school

transmission low; PCR testing is an additional tool that can help ensure that asymptomatic individuals do not come to school and potentially transmit COVID-19 to others.

## **Positive test results**

### **What is the difference between quarantine and isolation?**

*Quarantine* is for persons who are not fully vaccinated and who have been in close contact with someone who has COVID-19, to see if they get sick. Persons in quarantine should stay home and away from people they live with as much as possible, and monitor themselves for symptoms. (See next section for specific information on quarantine requirements.)

*Isolation* is for anyone who has tested positive, regardless of vaccination status. The person should stay separate from others, remain in a specific “sick room” or area, and use a separate bathroom if available.

### **If someone tests positive, how long are they required to isolate?**

Regardless of vaccination status, any student or employee who tests positive for COVID-19 will need to isolate at home for at least 10 5 days. The infected person should separate from others, stay in a specific “sick room” or area, and use a separate bathroom if available.

- Students and employees who test positive and HAVE symptoms may return to school/work if the following conditions are met:
  - 10 5 days since symptoms first appeared, and
  - 24 hours with no fever without the use of fever-reducing medications, and
  - Other symptoms of COVID-19 are improving. (Loss of taste and smell, however, may persist for weeks or months after recovery and need not delay the end of isolation.)
- Students and employees who test positive and have NO symptoms may return to school/work after 10 5 days have passed since a positive viral test for COVID-19.

### **Does isolation count against the 12-days/semester absence limit for students?**

No. Any absence due to isolation does not count toward the limit.

### **If a vaccinated employee tests positive, do they get extra sick days to isolate?**

No. Any employee required to isolate must use their regular sick days.

## **Close contacts**

### **How is “close contact” defined for the purpose of requiring quarantine?**

The CDC defines “close contact” as follows:

- **ALL individuals who are exposed outside the classroom:** A student or adult who is not fully vaccinated who was within six feet of an infected person for a cumulative total of 15 minutes or more over a 24-hour period is a close contact.
- **Adults who are exposed in an indoor classroom setting:** An adult who is not fully vaccinated who was within six feet of an infected person for a cumulative total of 15 minutes or more over a 24-hour period is a close contact.
- **Students who are exposed in a classroom setting:**
  - *If either the infected person or the exposed student were NOT consistently masked, a student who was within six feet of the infected student for a cumulative total of 15 minutes or more over a 24-hour period is a close contact.*
  - *If the infected person ~~or~~ and the exposed student WERE consistently masked, a student who was within three to six feet of an infected student does not require quarantine.*

**What is the protocol for someone who has been exposed to a positive case? Is there a difference if the exposed person is vaccinated or unvaccinated?**

Yes, the protocol for a person who has been exposed to a positive case differs depending on vaccination status.

- **Fully vaccinated persons:** Do not have to quarantine. However, the CDC recommends getting a COVID test ~~three~~ five days after exposure to ensure that the vaccinated person has not become infected, even if they remain asymptomatic. *The person also should wear a mask around others for 10 days.*
- **Unvaccinated persons:** Must quarantine for ~~14~~ 5 days. *The CDC recommends getting a COVID test five days after exposure. The person also should wear a mask around others for 10 days. However, in order to reduce missed class time, an unvaccinated student or employee may return to school beginning on day 11 as long as they are tested on days 11, 12, 13, and 14.*
  - ~~Until SHIELD testing becomes available, the person must be tested at school with the BinaxNOW rapid test. We will not accept test results from other entities as we simply do not have the bandwidth to review and validate them. Persons in quarantine will receive detailed instructions about testing on days 11-14.~~
  - ~~We are offering testing only on school attendance days. If the 14th day of quarantine falls on a weekend or other non-attendance day, the person must test on the first day of attendance/work following the 14th day.~~
  - ~~If the 14th day of quarantine falls on a weekend or other non-attendance day, the person may simply return on the first day of attendance/work following the 14th day; a BinaxNOW test at school is not required.~~

### **If I'm a close contact but have recently had COVID-19, do I need to quarantine?**

No, provided the following conditions are met:

- Your case of COVID-19 must have occurred within the preceding 90 days.
- You must provide proof of a positive PCR test for that case of COVID-19. Please email to [OPRFHSCovidTeam@oprflhs.org](mailto:OPRFHSCovidTeam@oprflhs.org).

### **~~Are there any restrictions for persons who are able to test and return on days 11-14?~~**

~~Yes. Per the health department, a person is not released from quarantine until 14 days without symptoms have passed. While the person may return to school, they are still considered to be in quarantine and should avoid contact with others outside the school setting through the 14th day.~~

~~If a student or employee returns to school under this option, per the CDC, they must be masked at all times. They cannot participate in unmasked activities that share the same space as others, such as swimming, band, etc. We will expect all students in this category to eat lunch in the outdoor spaces we have identified. In unique situations where this is not possible, we will work with you to find alternative arrangements. Employees should eat outdoors or separately as well.~~

### **What if a fully vaccinated person identified as a close contact becomes symptomatic?**

They should get a COVID test as soon as possible. ~~If they are at school when symptoms develop, they should go to the nurses' office (students need to have a pass), where they will be given the BinaxNOW rapid test. If they are not at school,~~ They should remain home from school until they receive a proctored, negative test result (*not* a home test).

### **If my child is identified as a close contact, then a few days into quarantine they test positive for COVID, what happens next? Will they have to stay out of school longer?**

Unfortunately, yes. Regardless of vaccination status, any student or employee who tests positive for COVID-19 will need to isolate at home for at least ~~14~~ 5 days following a positive test. The infected person should separate from others, stay in a specific "sick room" or area, and use a separate bathroom if available.

- Students and employees who test positive and HAVE symptoms may return to school/work if the following conditions are met:
  - ~~14~~ 5 days since symptoms first appeared, and
  - 24 hours with no fever without the use of fever-reducing medications, and
  - Other symptoms of COVID-19 are improving. (Loss of taste and smell, however, may persist for weeks or months after recovery and need not delay the end of isolation.)

- Students and employees who test positive and have NO symptoms may return to school/work after ~~10~~ 5 days have passed since a positive viral test for COVID-19.

**For students who are identified as close contacts, does quarantine count against the 12-days/semester absence limit?**

No. Any absence due to quarantine does not count toward the limit.

**If a fully vaccinated employee is identified as a close contact, do they get extra sick days to quarantine?**

No. Any employee required to quarantine must use their regular sick days.

**How soon after exposure to a positive case will I be notified?**

We will notify close contacts as soon as we possibly can after we receive notification that an employee or student has tested positive.

**Will these quarantining absences count toward the 12 absences/semester limit?**

No. Excused absences due to quarantine and any illnesses do not count toward the 12 absence limit.

**Instruction during quarantine or isolation**

**Will students in quarantine or isolation be able to attend classes remotely?**

No. Per the Illinois State Board of Education, schools are not offering a hybrid learning option at this time.

**How will students be able to keep up with their classes during quarantine or isolation?**

Students who must isolate or quarantine will receive daily remote tutoring from certified subs, each of whom will be assigned to a particular grade. The tutors will have their students' schedules, access to their teachers' Google classrooms, and will be in contact with teachers to ensure they are receiving all assignments.

**How will students access the tutoring?**

In cases where isolation or quarantine is required, the parent/guardian and student will automatically receive an email with the link to their tutor's Google classroom. When the student logs into the classroom they will see a list of appointment times, and they should book an appointment with their tutor. Please note that there could be a day's lag in beginning to receive assignments; if quarantine begins on Monday, for instance, the student potentially won't receive specific information about their required work until Tuesday.



**Will my student be expected to complete all the work they miss while quarantining or isolating?**

This will be handled on a teacher-by-teacher basis.

**Is my child able to attend school events when quarantining?**

Not unless there is an option to attend an event virtually. Students in quarantine may not attend in-person events.

**Will my child be able to live stream class while they are out of school?**

No. Per the Illinois State Board of Education, schools are not offering a hybrid learning option at this time.

**Can my child access their teachers while quarantining?**

Yes, students can email their teachers with any questions.