

COVID-19 Testing in Pre K-12 Schools

The Rhode Island Department of Health recommends COVID-19 testing for students in Pre K-12 schools.

- Students can have COVID-19 without any symptoms but can still spread the infection to other students.
- Testing in Pre K-12 schools can identify students who are infected and need to isolate at home to protect other students from getting COVID-19.

In-school testing is fast and easy.

- COVID-19 tests in schools are done with nasal swabs. Nasal swabs are gentle and not painful.
- Students in middle school and high school can swab themselves if they want to.

Sign your child up for testing if COVID-19 tests are offered at their school.

- Contact your child's school or district to find out if COVID-19 testing is available. If testing is available, you can complete a consent form to allow your child to participate in testing. Students 16 and older do not need a signed consent form to get tested at school.
- COVID-19 testing at schools is free. There is no cost to participate in COVID-19 testing at school and you do not need to have insurance.

Learn more about the COVID-19 tests used in Pre K-12 schools. Contact your child's school or district to find out what kind of testing is available.

RAPID TESTING



Some schools use the rapid antigen tests. Antigen tests perform best in symptomatic people and within a certain number of days since symptom onset. This type of test is processed at the school, so positive cases are found as soon as possible. If you receive a rapid antigen test, you may need to get a lab-processed test to [confirm your results](#).

PCR TESTING



The PCR test is sent to a lab to process. Results are usually ready in one or two days. PCR testing is available in some schools and at all [State-run test sites](#).

POOLED TESTING



Pooled testing is a fast and easy way to regularly test large groups of asymptomatic people. Each person in the pool gets swabbed twice. One swab from each person is mixed together to create a pooled sample. The pooled sample is then tested in a lab. If the entire pool tests positive, then each person's second swab is tested to see which individuals tested positive.