

November 4, 2021

Dear Parents/Guardians:

At its monthly meeting last night, the Chester School Board approved a new program supported by NH DPHS that will enable our nurses to administer rapid COVID antigen tests while children are in school. There is currently a nationwide shortage of test kits so testing will be provided based on availability. The testing will only be an option for children whose parents have signed a permission form and have developed a [COVID-19 symptom](#) during the school day **and** the nurse determines they may be well enough to remain at school. Students with fevers and/or multiple symptoms will continue to be dismissed from school and be required to seek a COVID-19 test or quarantine before returning.

Participation in the symptomatic testing program is completely voluntary and requires a parental permission form. An electronic **Symptomatic COVID-19 Antigen Test Permission Form** will be sent via email early next week to parents/guardians who have completed their 2021-2022 Annual School Registration and COVID Attestation Form. If you have not yet completed this year's Registration or Attestation or are uncertain, please contact Beth Howard or Ann Parnell in the main office. Paper copies of the permission form will also be available in the main office.

Once a completed **Symptomatic COVID-19 Antigen Test Permission Form** is on file for your child:

- One of our school nurses will contact you if your child is seen in the nurse's office for a COVID-19 symptom if a rapid antigen test is appropriate given their clinical evaluation.
- Upon confirming your approval, the nurse will administer the nasal swab test and interpret the results (this takes about 15 minutes).
- The nurse will contact you with the results as soon as possible to determine next steps.

The leadership team and nurses at Chester Academy appreciate the opportunity to implement this new testing program as we believe it will help us keep students with minimal symptoms in school and engaged in learning. This initiative, managed by our school nurses and supported by our parents, will complement our overall objective of Learning, Growing and Thriving Together at Chester Academy.

Once again, we are asking for your help in keeping our students safe. **Please do not send your child to school** if they have any *new or unexplained* [symptom of COVID-19](#), or if someone in their household has been diagnosed with COVID-19 in the prior 14 days. Please report any symptoms or exposure to the school nurse.

Thank you again for your partnership in keeping our students safe, healthy, and in-person this school year.

Sincerely,

Sharon Locke, EdD, Superintendent of Schools

Karen Lacroix, Principal

About the Rapid Antigen Test: The District applied for and has been granted a [CLIA Waiver](#). The district's Medical Advisor, Dr. Kilroy, has written a standing order so that our nurses can administer rapid antigen tests at Chester Academy. The NH Department of Homeland Security and Emergency Management (HSEM) has authorized and is supplying emergency use of [BinaxNOW](#) test kits. Unfortunately, free tests are currently unavailable so the district utilized ESSR funds to purchase some of these approved rapid test kits so we can begin the program. Please note that we will only be able to offer testing if we have test kits available. We are hopeful that the HSEM will soon have the resources to supply the free tests so we can continue the program as long as necessary.