

CONSENT TO PARTICIPATE IN BETHALTO CUSD #8 COVID-19 POC ANTIGEN TESTING PROGRAM

Dear Parent/Guardian:

Bethalto CUSD #8 (the “District”) will be participating again in the State’s BinexNow Rapid COVID-19 testing program. As a result of this selection, the District will continue administering rapid point-of-care antigen tests for COVID-19 to students or staff who present with symptoms while at school. The goal of this program is to quickly identify those individuals who may be COVID-19 positive so that any necessary measures for controlling the spread of the virus can be implemented, including quarantining positive cases, isolating close contacts, and limiting the exposure of others to the virus. Moreover, the on-site rapid testing will allow the District to identify those individuals who appear symptomatic due to an alternative diagnosis but who are not actually COVID-19 positive. Ultimately, the hope and expectation is that this program will help the District continue in-person learning with fewer risks of a school outbreak.

To help explain the program that will be in place, the District is providing the following FAQ. This FAQ may be revised and updated over time as new information and guidance is issued and as the testing practice within the District develops.

Frequently Asked Questions:

(1) What is the Rapid Point of Care Antigen Test?

The District will be using the Abbot BinaxNOW rapid point-of-care antigen test (the “POC antigen test”). The POC antigen test has been approved by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) and has been recommended for use by smaller community settings, such as local school districts, for diagnosing current COVID-19 infections.

The POC antigen test is less reliable than the “gold-standard” RT-PCR test; however, POC antigen tests provide rapid results (approximately 15 minutes turnaround time) which help reduce exposure to the virus by more quickly identifying infected individuals. The more quickly an infected individual can be identified, the faster the school can exclude them from the rest of the school community and isolate close contacts. Thus, fewer students and school staff members risk being exposed to a positive COVID-19 person.

(2) How is the test performed?

The POC antigen test is performed via nasal swabs.

(3) Who will administer the test?

Only the school nurse or our athletic trainer will administer POC antigen tests conducted in the District. They have taken the necessary training to administer the test and will be using all necessary PPE when conducting the test.

(4) Where will the testing be conducted?

This year, each school will work to test at their own locations. If necessary, we will return to a centralized testing location. Students may be tested during the school day. If an appointment is scheduled, please arrive promptly at the time you were given by your school nurse or administrator. Results will be given to you via a phone call or email within 24 hours.

(5) What happens if my child tests positive using the POC antigen test?

If the POC antigen test identifies your child as being positive for COVID-19, you will immediately be contacted. At this point, he/she will be placed in the exclusion protocol.

Per the most recent IDPH and ISBE guidelines, a student with a positive POC antigen test will be considered a presumptive positive and probable COVID-19 case. As such, they will be excluded from school for **at least 10 calendar days** from the day his or her symptoms began.

(6) What happens if my child tests negative using the POC antigen test?

If the POC antigen test is negative but your child has been demonstrating COVID-19 symptoms, it is recommended that your child receive a RT-PCR test within the next 48 hours to confirm the results. The school nurse will talk with families through the process.

(7) Who will see the test results?

The results of each POC antigen test conducted at the District must be reported to IDPH, per the CDC. Additionally, positive test results must be submitted to our local health department.

Within the District, only the school personnel administering the test and reporting the results will see the information. In the event the results are positive for COVID-19, the nurse will notify only those necessary District personnel responsible for conducting contact tracing within the school.

Parents/guardians will receive the results of all POC antigen tests conducted at the District.

What happens if I **do not** consent to my child receiving a POC test?

You are not required to consent to making your child eligible to receive a POC antigen test. Participation in the District's POC antigen testing program is voluntary – your child will not be subjected to any discipline as a result of your decision not to consent to his/her participation.

The goal of the District's POC antigen testing program is to reduce the number of students and staff who may come into close contact with COVID-19 positive individuals. Additionally, the program will help identify those individuals who are showing COVID-19 symptoms due to an alternative medical issue or diagnosis. Ultimately, this should result in fewer exclusions and shorter quarantine times.

(8) Can I change my mind later if I decide I do / do not want my child receiving the test at school?

Yes. Consent to participating in the District's POC antigen testing program may be granted or revoked at any time. To revoke consent, a parent/guardian must submit a signed and dated written correspondence to their child's building administrator or the District central office requesting to revoke said consent.

Before the District administers a POC antigen test to *any* student, his or her parents/guardians will be contacted to confirm the consent – even if they have previously agreed to their child's participation in the program.

If you initially choose not to consent to your child's participation in the program, when you are contacted to pick your child up from school due to them exhibiting symptoms of COVID-19, the District will offer you the chance to consent to a POC antigen test at that time, too.

No POC antigen test will be administered by the District without consent and confirmation from a child's parent/guardian that they wish for their child to receive the test.

Confidentiality of Student Records

Both the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act ("FERPA") and Illinois School Student Records Act ("ISSRA") protect the confidentiality of school student records. A school student record includes any writing or other recorded information concerning a student and by which a student may be individually identified, maintained by a school or at its direction or by an employee of a school, regardless of how or where the information is stored. Included within this definition is student health information. Under Section 6(a) of ISSRA, however, a school district is permitted to release student health information under the limited "Emergency Release of Information Exception."

Under the "Emergency Release of Information" exception to ISSRA, a school district may disclose confidential student health information "if the knowledge of the requested information ***is necessary to protect the health or safety of the student or other individuals.***" 23 Ill. Admin. Code 375.60.

Similarly, the Department of Public Health Act grants local health authorities access to health information and records that are required in order to help "prevent the spread of a dangerously contagious or infectious disease." (20 ILCS 2305/2(h)).

Pursuant to Section 7 of the Illinois Emergency Management Act, the Governor of Illinois has announced that all counties in Illinois are in a disaster area. As such, the Illinois Department of Public Health has been directed to coordinate with, among other groups, local public schools, to exchange information related to the COVID-19 virus.

Thus, consistent with ISSRA and FERPA requirements, ISBE and IDPH have issued guidance providing that certain health information related to COVID-19 must be communicated with public health officials. Specifically, the guidance requires that schools cooperate with their local health departments to provide relevant information needed for mitigating the spread of COVID-19 infection and for use in surveillance and contact tracing public health activities. Moreover, the guidance confirms that "a laboratory confirmed case of COVID-19 is reportable within 3 hours to the Local Health Department.... As such,

identifiable information on a student or staff member including name and contact information, is reportable to IDPH or to the local public health authority for any notifiable disease or condition.”

Therefore, the District, in administering its POC antigen testing program, is required to provide testing results to the local health departments. In doing so, it will remain in full compliance with ISSRA and all other confidentiality laws pertaining to school student records. No information beyond your child’s name, contact information, and COVID-related health information shall be released under this program. Moreover, notice of the release of this information will be placed in your child’s temporary file.

Acknowledgment and Consent to Student’s Participation in the District’s POC Antigen Testing Program:

Student Name: _____

Grade: _____ Home Phone: _____

Address: _____

Parent(s)/Guardian(s) Names: _____

Parent(s)Guardian(s) phone: _____

Work: _____

Home: _____

Other: _____

By signing this document, I am consenting to the above named child’s participation in the District’s POC antigen testing program. I understand that participation in this program is voluntary. I further understand that I may revoke my consent in participation at any time through a signed and dated written correspondence submitted to the building administrator or District office.

I certify that I have read this document in its entirety and fully understand its contents. I further certify and represent that I have the legal authority to sign on behalf of the above named child.

Student Signature (if over 18)

Date

Parent/Legal Guardian Signature

Date