

COVID-19 Testing Available to Our School Community

Saint Charles Borromeo is excited to partner with the Washington State Department of Health and Health Commons Project to offer free COVID-19 testing in our school building this year. This program provides students, staff, and families with quick and highly accurate COVID-19 testing as symptoms arise or following known exposure.

Diagnostic testing is voluntary, free, painless, and private:

- Families voluntarily opt-in to testing
- Testing is free; there is no out-of-pocket costs or co-pay for families or schools
- Samples are collected with a quick and painless shallow nasal swab (not the dreaded “brain tickler”)
- All health information is kept private and protected

School-based testing for COVID-19 is a proven strategy for minimizing transmission of the disease and maximizing in-person learning time. Masks, testing, and other safety strategies are essential for safe and sustainable in-person learning this year until vaccinations, for all ages, reach critical levels. Our new COVID-19 testing program is one more way we are limiting the spread of COVID-19 in our schools and communities.

Testing is voluntary

Families opt-in to the testing program.

Access to community testing sites is variable, and in some areas, it is increasingly difficult to find a nearby testing site. While entirely voluntary, school-based testing shortens the length of time between sample collection and results while reducing the burden on families to arrange for a test.

Getting tested at your school building is just one more resource for your family – you can still choose to get tested by your doctor or at a community test site.

Testing is free

There is no out-of-pocket cost or co-pay for schools or families.

- Have insurance? Great. Your provider will be billed directly with no cost to you.
- No insurance? No problem. Just provide a valid government-issued ID and you’re good to go.
- If you do not provide insurance or a government I.D., you can still get tested at no charge! The Washington Department of Health will cover the cost.

Testing is painless

Samples can even be self-collected by the individual.

This is not the dreaded “brain tickler” or nasopharyngeal swab. The shallow nasal swab enters the nose to gentle resistance, about half-an-inch into each nostril, makes several rotations, and is placed, swab-side down, into a collection tube.

Testing is private

With regards to patient privacy, it’s no different than getting tested at your doctor’s office.

All health information for the participant is kept private and is protected under federal HIPAA regulations (Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act). Our contact tracers will be alerted if there is a positive test result so they can immediately start contact tracing and outbreak mitigation procedures.

Testing is quick and highly accurate

Samples are collected by or under the supervision of a trained employee or volunteer. They are then sent to the lab to be tested via PCR (or polymerase chain reaction), the gold standard in accuracy for COVID-19 testing. Results are reported back to the school within 24-72 hours at which time appropriate quarantine and contact tracing protocols can be initiated. Testing can help reduce time away from school and the number of students who are required to quarantine by quickly identifying and isolating infected individuals.

The Washington State Department of Health and Health Commons Project have developed the [Learn to Return](#) program to support implementation of school-based testing throughout Washington.

Learn More About Testing

Families and students can visit the [Learn to Return website](#) to find out more about testing programs, vendors, and what to expect when getting a diagnostic test.