

Pooled PCR Testing POLICY & PROCEDURES

Fiddlehead will offer pooled PCR testing for SARS-CoV-2 (the virus that causes COVID-19) to designated classrooms on a weekly basis. Pooled testing provides an efficient way to test larger groups of individuals for the virus with the goal of keeping more students present for in-person learning. This type of testing helps detect the virus before the viral load is high enough to be infectious. The test mixes unidentified samples in a batch and tests that sample for the virus. Routine pooled testing may also allow for fewer restrictions related to physical distancing for those enrolled in the testing.

As of 5/11/21, the Maine DOE has partnered with the pooled testing service provider Concentric by Ginkgo who will provide all testing and shipping materials and provide technical support as needed.

Fiddlehead will abide by the assurances outlined by the DOE (see Maine Pooled Testing Program: Statement of Assurances) <https://www.maine.gov/doe/sites/maine.gov.doefiles/inline-files/Pooled%20Testing%20Assurances%20FINAL.4.30.21.pdf>

Consent & Privacy

- Consent form (online) to be completed by parents/guardians and any staff participating. The online consent form incorporates both the pooled testing and follow-up antigen testing.

Why is participation important?

- All testing is voluntary and not required however higher participation rates can help identify new potential infections so we can take action to reduce the spread and enable better decision making.
- The more people that participate in the program, the more accurate the data will be.
- Pooled testing is a beneficial strategy in areas with low transmission. If COVID19 cases are reduced the need for follow up testing decreases as well. This can increase our ability to continue with in-person learning.

Testing Protocols

- Test all participating students and staff in a designated pool at least once per week, on a schedule set by the school and the service provider. Testing may be performed in the classroom with supervision by the teacher.
- Instruct participants to wash their hands before using the swab. Open the swab without touching the cotton tip. Insert swab into the nostril until feeling push back and rub the swab around the nostril 4 times. Repeat with the other nostril. Insert swab cotton-tip side down into the test tube. Seal and wipe off the top of the test tube with an alcohol swab. The coordinator will collect the tubes.
- Maintain a list of all students/staff in each pool. Register tubes and assign each to a unique pool (named for the classroom). Register the test on the Concentric website as instructed and mail the samples using return boxes to FedEx. Submit end of test day online form.
- Supplies needed for day of test: swabs, tube, barcode scanner, USB adaptor, computer to scan barcodes, PPE, hand sanitizer, return box with prepaid label.
- Provide comfort and anti-anxiety strategies around testing for all students especially preK-2nd grade.
- Educate parents provide resources and allow for questions and concerns around testing.

Test Results

- If pooled testing result is negative, pool members are notified and continue instruction without interruption. Repeat pooled testing on scheduled day.
- If pooled testing result is positive, pool members are tested individually using the BinaxNOW rapid antigen test. Document all results in the REDCAP database for the antigen tests.
- If antigen test does not identify any positive individuals from the pool, the BinaxNOW test is repeated in 24-48 hours. If no positive individuals are identified in the second test, proceed with pooled testing as scheduled. Two negative rounds of the BinaxNOW antigen tests indicate that the viral load is not detectable and unlikely to be infectious.
- If antigen test does identify a positive individual from the pool, that person isolates for 10 days from date of test (or symptoms). Unvaccinated close contacts who are NOT in the pooled group will quarantine for 10 days from last contact. Remaining negative pool members and vaccinated close contacts in the testing program resume in-person learning.
- Contact the COVID-19 DOE Hotline to report a positive case.

Training and Compliance

- Maintain communication with students, families, and staff regarding the program providing updates to schedules or procedures.
- Monitor staff and students for proper testing procedures.
- Consult the pooled testing vendor website as needed: <http://www.concentricbyginkgo.com/>
- Consult Abbott BinaxNOW Online training as needed. All staff administering the BinaxNOW test must complete training.

Maintenance

- Ensure adequate supply of PPE required for testing (refer to DOE Personal Protective Equipment guidelines).
- Maintain current CLIA waiver (ID #20D2198998; expires 11/4/2022)
- Maintain Concentric testing website account with a champion and test supervisor updated as needed