

## Why screen for COVID-19?

**Screening is the only way we can find and quarantine people without symptoms before they spread the virus to others.** People with COVID-19 can be infectious for 2–3 days before they show symptoms. These people are *presymptomatic*. Up to 50% of children and 20% of adults infected with COVID-19 never show any symptoms at all—they're *asymptomatic*.

**Screening in the schools is a way to prevent disease spread in the whole town.** Any COVID cases we are able to find and isolate are cases that will not be able to spread further in the community.

**Screening data could help the schools to maximize in-person learning.** If we are testing the majority of the individuals in the schools each week, the administration and school committee may eventually be able to move away from the broad-based response to small clusters in place now. For example, we may be able to move to a policy under which discovery of a small cluster of cases in one grade causes only that grade and associated siblings to move to remote learning, rather than the entire school.

## Will screening for COVID-19 remove the need to wear masks and social distance at school?



**No.** Maintaining social distancing and wearing personal protective equipment both within and outside of school are central to keeping everyone safe.

## Will COVID-19 screening be mandatory?

**No, but the vast majority of faculty, staff, and families have indicated that they will participate.** According to epidemiologists, any amount of testing is hugely helpful.

## How will patient privacy be maintained?

The lab will receive no personal information at all. All samples will be labeled with a bar code.

The school nurse or their designee would be the only one with access to the database linking the bar codes with specific individuals.

## How often will screening happen?

Screening will happen once a week as long as funding continues to be available.

## What kind of test will be used for screening?

It's a PCR (polymerase chain reaction) test—**the most sensitive kind of COVID test**. The test uses shallow nasal swabs (grossness alert—it's no deeper than picking your nose). The lab doing the testing is the Broad Institute, which provides testing for colleges and universities including Tufts and MIT. To help keep costs down, we are using a pooled screening system.

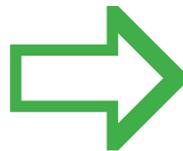
## What is pooled screening?

In pooled screening, samples are gathered from multiple people and mixed together. That mixture is called a pool.

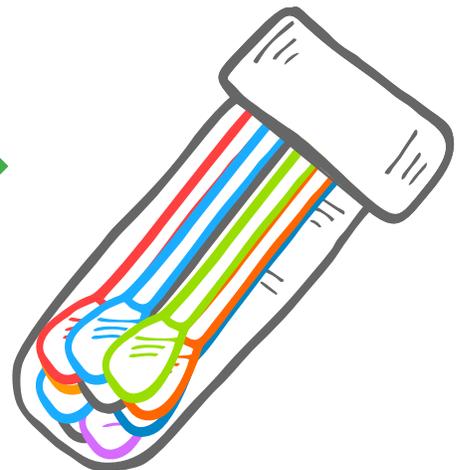
Instead of testing each individual sample on its own, the lab tests the pool. If the pool tests negative, then all the individuals in that pool are negative.

Remember, screening is just one piece of the COVID safety puzzle. Individuals who test negative should continue to observe all anti-COVID protocols.

*Ten individual samples*



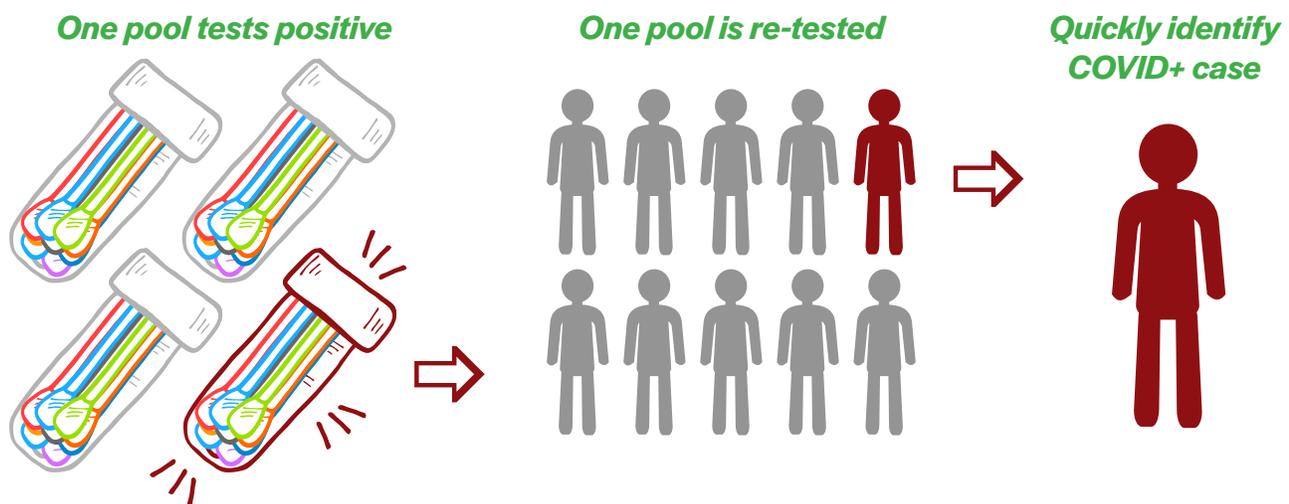
*One pool*



## What happens if a pool tests positive?

If a pool tests positive, we will re-swab and re-test all the members of that pool individually. Members of the pool will then need to self-isolate until we receive results. The turnaround time for this “reflex” testing is typically less than 24 hours.

The school nurses will inform the families of those who test positive; COVID-positive individuals must quarantine for 14 days. The nurses will also begin contact tracing to ensure that those who had close contact with any positive individuals are also notified and quarantined. Teachers will provide remote learning during quarantine.



## How much does pooled screening cost?

**Our cost will be \$10.50 per individual tested** (most testing runs between \$30 and \$150 per individual and requires long wait times both to be swabbed and to receive results). If a pool tests positive, there will be additional costs to narrow down which samples the positive result is coming from. **The total cost for the rest of the school year will be \$250.00 per person.**

## How will screening be funded?

**This program is being funded by donations** from individuals, businesses, and foundations, as well as by matching donations from individuals' employers. We'll run the program for as long as it's funded. To donate to the program go to [covid safeschools.org](https://covid safeschools.org). All donations are tax-deductible.

## Will I have to donate in order for my child to be tested?

**No.** All donations will go into a fund that will cover the screening as a whole. We encourage families who have more resources to donate additional money to help cover the cost of screening for teachers and other families. We are all in this together as a community.