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Ask the Mayor

Muriel Bowser
Mayor

Mayor Bowser Announces Expansion of COVID-19 Testing Infrastructure for DC Public Schools Students and Staff

Wednesday, December 2, 2020

(Washington, DC) – Today, Mayor Bowser outlined new asymptomatic coronavirus (COVID-19) testing protocols for students and staff participating in DC Public Schools (DCPS) in-person programming. This pilot for schools with CARE or In-Person Learning Classrooms will include in-school testing for students and mailed testing kits for staff. The pilot will begin next week, and tests are at no cost to students or staff.

"We are proud of the very robust testing system we have built in DC, and now we can use that infrastructure to support this program," said Mayor Bowser. "There is a sense of urgency to get more students back in school with their teachers, peers, and school community, and we are hopeful that these new protocols move us one step closer to reopening."

DC Health will manage on-site testing of students who attend CARE Classrooms at their schools. Students may receive a PCR nasal-swab test, administered by DC Health medical staff, approximately every 10 days. A testing consent form signed by the student's parent or guardian will be required, and schools will provide those documents to families.

DCPS staff and partner staff supporting CARE Classrooms in person will receive a self-administered testing kit in the mail once a week. Staff will not be required to complete the weekly test but are encouraged to utilize the convenience offered by this at-home method.

With this regular asymptomatic testing protocol, students and staff will continue to participate in their in-person programming while test results are pending. Individuals will be notified of their results via email. Should a person attending or working at a school develop COVID-19 symptoms at any time, they should immediately self-quarantine and contact their medical provider per DCPS health and safety protocols.

"The ability for DCPS to implement an asymptomatic testing protocol for students and staff will allow us to continue to meet our commitment to prioritize the health and safety of our entire school community," said DC Public Schools Chancellor Lewis D. Ferebee. "We thank Mayor Bowser and DC Health for their ongoing partnership and investment in supporting a safe reopening of our schools."

Every school with CARE Classrooms has three Patient Care Technicians (PCTs) at schools to support school-based health protocols, such as temperature checks at

arrival, symptom screenings during the day, and staffing of the health isolation room. Schools with CARE Classrooms will continue to provide on-site rapid testing for symptomatic individuals. Follow-up confirmatory PCR testing is also available should a student receive a negative rapid test result.

School staff members who develop symptoms during the workday may receive a PCR test on site and are encouraged to see their personal medical provider. All DCPS staff members who are working in person, whether they are a District resident or not, can show their school ID to be prioritized at any District public testing site.

CARE (Canvas Academics and Real Engagement) classrooms serve students in grades PK-5 and are opening in phases during Term 2: November 18, December 2, December 9, and also in January. The number of classrooms and grades offered vary by school. Across DCPS, 31 schools are currently offering classroom programming. As of this week, approximately 700 seats are available for students and rooms are supervised by 140 facilitators, comprised of DCPS elementary or school partner staff.

Learn more about DCPS' COVID-19 Response Protocol and CARE Classrooms online at DCPSReopenStrong.com.