



FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS (FAQs)

Proactive COVID-19 Testing Program

First Edition - October 2, 2020

1. Why is a proactive COVID-19 testing program for students and staff being pursued in the Solana Beach School District?

Each and every measure adopted and being implemented is designed to mitigate risk of transmitting the virus. Without a proactive COVID-19 testing program, the only way we know the virus has come onto a campus is after someone has exposed others. Re-entry testing will help us identify any positive cases prior to entering campuses. Once this is done, we will continue to stress the need for staff and families to adhere to health and safety guidelines outside of school. SBSD will also be implementing periodic (not random) asymptomatic testing. We are working on scheduling the remaining dates of our testing program for the 2020-21 school year.

2. Why is SBSD partnering with UC San Diego Health and why was it stated in the August 27 webinar that it was a research collaboration with UCSD?

The August 27 webinar used words such as “consider,” “explore,” and “pursue.” During initial discussions, early on in the process, the District considered that this may be of mutual interest and benefit; however, we believe a better approach is to have a partnership with UC San Diego Health in order to accomplish SBSD’s intention of identifying positive COVID-19 cases prior to staff and students coming onto our campuses and then working together to prevent spread of the virus.

We are thrilled to partner with UC San Diego Health, which was confirmed on Labor Day. Our first step, which was on a significantly tight timeline, was our re-entry testing. We are now developing asymptomatic periodic and winter re-entry schedules and will be communicating that with advance notice to staff and families. We are so grateful and appreciative of the patience and flexibility our families have exhibited with this additional health and safety precaution. Even with a tight pre-registration window, we had over 1,300 students signed up to be tested, along with all of our almost 500 employees. At the end of our three and half days, we had close to 2,000 individuals tested.

3. Is COVID-19 testing mandatory?

At this time, testing students for COVID-19 cannot be required. While there are laws currently in place for mandatory vaccinations, this is not the case for COVID-19 testing; however, we strongly recommend, and some of our parents who are doctors have used the word “implore,” our parents to get their children tested. The testing program is for **Onsite Scholars only**. Our Online Scholars are not returning to campus so there is no need to include them at this time.

4. If testing is not mandated, will those who opt out of testing pose a significant risk to all?

Again, each and every measure adopted and being implemented by SBSD is designed to mitigate risk of transmitting the virus. Re-entry testing, along with periodic asymptomatic testing, will help us identify any positive cases prior to entering campuses. Additionally, we will continue to stress the need to adhere to health and safety guidelines outside of school.

5. If families opt out of testing will their children be moved from the Onsite Scholars to Online Scholars model?

At this time, COVID-19 testing is not mandatory and will not impact the learning model families have selected for their children.

6. If some students are tested and others are not, will schools be separating the classes?

Onsite students have been placed into classes and cohorts, A and B. There are no plans to separate classes by who was and who was not tested.

7. How does a family opt out of testing?

Families who wish to opt out simply do not pre-register for the SBSD Proactive COVID-19 Testing Program, nor do they go to a testing clinic.

8. How much does testing cost families?

The District’s testing program is free to SBSD families. State and federal stimulus money will be used to help cover costs.

9. What is the process for testing?

- All children will need to be registered prior to testing.
- Once registered, the parent and child will report to their assigned testing center on the date/times provided.
- Once the parent and child arrive at the testing center, they check in and proceed to a station where a UC San Diego Health technician will administer the nasal swab (Anterior Nares or PCR) test to the student

only. This test is much more comfortable than the original tests. The swab goes into the bulb of the nostril not up into the nasal cavity. The PCR test is considered the gold standard with 99.8% specificity and sensitivity.

- Test specimens are couriered to the UC San Diego Health lab.
- Families can expect to receive their results between 24-72 hours on the private portal (MyChart) they have set up through UC San Diego Health prior to testing.

10. What are the details of SBSD's periodic asymptomatic testing scheduled for the fall?

The 2020-21 SBSD Proactive COVID-19 Testing Program schedule will be communicated out on Monday, October 5, and then posted on the district's website. It is important to note that this schedule is subject to change based on current trends on our local and county metrics.

11. Why is the district using the PCR test instead of the less invasive antigen test? (e.g. Quidel Sofia)

As we continue to work with UC San Diego Health, we are encouraged that a less invasive saliva test is almost ready for use. While we had hoped this would be ready for our first cycle of asymptomatic COVID-19 testing in October, it does not appear that will be the case.

12. Once a child tests positive for COVID-19, when is that child allowed back to school (onsite)?

Please refer to the following handout for specific details - [COVID-19 Decision Tree Chart](#), or review our *Guide to Reopening Schools* posted on your school's website.

13. When is a school or the district required to close?

In consultation with the Local Health Officer, individual school closure is recommended based on the number of cases, specifically the percentage of teacher/students/staff that are positive for COVID-19, **at least 5 percent** of the total number of teachers/student/staff cases within a 14-day period.

At this time, the metric the state has given school districts for closure includes:

- 5% of the school population (students, teachers, and staff)
- 25% of the district population (students, teachers and staff)

14. If a child gets a positive test result, will the teacher quarantine, as well? If so, will this jeopardize the other cohort?

Correct. Whether a teacher or a student tests positive, the whole class (Cohorts A and B) will be required to quarantine, because **the teacher will be at home quarantining**. Therefore, the entire class will pivot back to online learning.

15. Can families find out the percent of students in their child’s class who took a COVID-19 test?

All test information remains with UC San Diego Health and is not shared with the Solana Beach School District.

16. What happens if my child tests positive for COVID-19 and is required to stay home for 14 days? How will my child continue with schoolwork and class time?

Schools will work with families regarding how best to continue each student’s learning progression. Each situation will be assessed and managed individually.

17. Why does a child with a “cold” have to quarantine for 10 days?

Please refer to our *Guide to Reopening Schools* (pages 9 and 10), which is posted on our website. The Decision Tree found on page 12 is also a great resource. Per this document, there are two choices for students who exhibit symptoms, with the intention of protecting against the spread of COVID-19.

[Link to SBSB Decision Tree resource.](#)

18. If a cohort is being quarantined can the opposite cohort be on campus for those days?

Please remember that Cohort A and Cohort B have the same teacher, so regardless of which cohort needs to be quarantined, the teacher crosses two cohorts and will also be quarantined.

19. What happens if a parent/household member tests positive for COVID-19, but the child tests negative?

If a student has come into close contact (defined as less than 6’ of physical distancing for more than 15 minutes, which is most likely the case with a parent or household member), we encourage the family to consult directly with their doctor and notify the school. The student will need to self-quarantine for 14 days; if symptoms develop within these 14 days, the timeline is further extended. We will work in collaboration with families when something like this happens.

20. Can you GUARANTEE that the nasal swabs are being destroyed upon test completion?

Yes, this has been confirmed by UC San Diego Health.

21. Does the swab stay in each nostril for four seconds or for 10-15 seconds?

Each swab is rotated in a circular motion for 10 seconds.

22. Do the technicians change gloves each time they test?

Yes, gloves are changed in between each patient, even if a test is not performed.

23. Why can't SBSB require COVID-19 tests, as Los Angeles Unified School District plans to do?

LAUSD's "FAQ for Families" webpage only states that parent consent is required; it does not detail whether the district will physically exclude students if a parent does not consent.

24. Since COVID-19 test results will not be reported to the schools, are we relying on families to self-report?

Parents who elected to place their children in the Onsite Scholars model signed a Parent/Guardian Agreement, with #6 (Disclosure to Help Prevent Community Spread of COVID-19). *The children of parents/guardians who violate this agreement to self-report will be moved to the Online Scholars program.*

25. Were there any positive COVID-19 cases in SBSB before reopening?

Yes, there was one positive case detected, which enabled this individual **to not report to campus**. This, and all other data, will be posted on the SBSB COVID-19 Testing Dashboard.

26. If one cohort enters quarantine, will the entire school be notified?

Yes.

27. During the September 14 interview with Superintendent Brentlinger, she was asked about protocol if a student's family member (someone who lives in the same household) tests positive for COVID-19.

Please see answer to question 19

28. Why does a student need to stay home for three days if they have a headache per the detailed flow chart, but there is no specific protocol for the high-risk scenario in the previous question?

Please see answer to question 17.

29. If a student is absent (due to sickness or other reason), will the student be able to join the cohort that is online that day?

Schools will work with families regarding how best to continue each student's learning progression. Each situation will be assessed and managed individually.

30. If a teacher is quarantined but the cohort is not, will a substitute teacher not be provided?

In addition to reading question 18, please note that if a teacher is sick and unable to teach, a substitute will be provided to continue online learning.

31. What can someone do to incentivize families to keep their children home if they have been in a high-risk environment, such as flying? If they are unable to join the online cohort doesn't this disincentivize parents from keeping their kids home? Also, if kids have to stay home for 10 days for a runny nose or headache shouldn't they be allowed to join the online cohort on their onsite days?

The Board of Education, Superintendent, principals, teachers, and staff all want to encourage families to adhere to county health and safety measures inside and outside of school in order to keep our schools open. Please see question 17 for the second question.

32. What about this scenario?

A student has a known exposure to a positive case, but the family opts to keep the child home rather than get the child tested. The rest of the students in the class are notified of the possible exposure, but have no information about whether the student had COVID-19, since the family opted not to test the child, leaving the rest of the families in the cohort in limbo as to whether their children had been exposed or not. Eventually, other students in the class develop symptoms, which then leads to a positive COVID-19 case in the cohort.

How can we avoid this situation in SBSD?

Parents who elected to be in the Onsite Scholars model signed a Parent/Guardian Agreement, which addresses this in #6 (Disclosure to Help Prevent Community Spread of COVID-19). Parents/Guardians who violate this agreement to self-report will be moved **to the Online Scholars program**.

33. How well does testing differentiate between COVID-19 and the coronavirus that causes a common cold?

UC San Diego Health's major platform is the COBAS, which has the lowest level of detection of any of the tests. The SARS-Co V-2 ORF1 region is specific to only COVID-19.

34. What criteria will there be for return to school knowing that a test can remain positive for months after the patient is no longer infectious?

Please refer to information on page 10 of SBSD's *Guide to Reopening Schools 2020-21*, found on your school website or the district's website.