



## COVID-19 Testing Frequently Asked Questions

The Santa Monica-Malibu Unified School District Board of Education voted unanimously to authorize the superintendent to enter into a contract allowing testing companies Doctor Now and Malibu Medical Group to provide the weekly polymerase chain reaction (PCR) testing for students and staff. **The deadline for registering and providing consent for testing has been extended to Friday, August 27 at 8 p.m.**

As of August 25, 2021 we have more than 70% of the school population registered and we encourage all to do so. Thank you for your compliance as we navigate through this ongoing pandemic. Please remember that our goals with these safety measures are to keep students and staff safe and to maintain the continuity of learning for the entire year. These measures will help the district attain these goals.

### Here are some common questions and answers regarding testing:

#### Which company is conducting testing at my school?

**Doctor Now** (<https://www.doctornow.net/home>): Lincoln MS, John Adams MS, Samohi  
**Malibu Medical Group** (<https://www.malibumedicalgroup.com/>): Malibu ES, Webster ES, Malibu MS, Malibu HS, Franklin ES, Roosevelt ES, Grant ES, McKinley ES, Rogers ES, Muir ES, SMASH, Edison Language, Obama Center (Olympic HS, PPBL), District Office

#### How do I register?

Registration is organized by school site for students and staff. District office and other district services staff links vary by site. See the [attached chart](#) to find your registration link.

#### When will testing start?

Testing is being rolled out and schedules are being created. Details of how, when, and where on your campus will be communicated by the site principals prior to testing.

#### Have the registration and consent forms been updated with earlier concerns addressed?

Yes. The forms now include additional information regarding insurance requirements and data privacy. Both are addressed in questions below.

#### Can I opt out of testing or wearing a mask on campus or a district facility?

Yes, there is an exemption option. This form must be submitted and approved.

[Student Testing and Mask Exemption Form - English](#)

[Student Testing and Mask Exemption Form - Spanish](#)

### **What happens if a parent / staff member refuses to provide insurance, or if uninsured, refuses to provide social security or identification information or has none of the above?**

Insurance information is necessary for the companies to seek reimbursement from the insurance companies who have been backed by the federal government with CARES Act funds. There is no cost to the insured nor will there be a co-pay charged to the insured.

For anyone who doesn't have insurance, the companies will need a social security number or government-issued identification like driver's license or ID card. This information allows for the companies to seek reimbursement from the federal government. If you do not have any of the above, please contact your school site.

If you decline to include insurance information, you will not be able to complete and submit your registration for SMMUSD testing. Alternatively, you will be required to provide proof of a valid negative PCR test (not an antigen test) to your school site aligned with the site's testing schedule. SMMUSD is providing free testing on site as both a convenience to families and staff and a way to keep our students and staff safer with no cost to anyone.

Note that many companies supporting school districts follow the same reimbursement procedures.

### **What happens if a student and/or parent refuses to undergo mandatory testing or wearing of a mask without an approved exemption form on file?**

SMMUSD is providing testing on site as a no cost service for families and staff.

You will have two options:

- If you decline to include insurance information, or if uninsured, your social security info or identification info, you will not be able to complete and submit your registration for SMMUSD testing. Alternatively, you will be required to provide proof of a valid negative PCR test (not an antigen test) to your school site aligned with the site's adopted testing schedule. SMMUSD is providing testing on site as a no cost service for families and staff.
- School administration will seek to meet with the parents to understand why and/or review the exemption form submitted. In some cases where warranted, a face shield and drape will be offered as a remedy. If the exemption is denied, our independent study program may be offered as a remedy.

### **Can I get testing done privately and provide my school / site with results in lieu of SMMUSD testing?**

Yes, you will need to provide PCR test (not antigen) results weekly aligned with your site's testing schedule. More information on submitting test results will follow in the next few days.

### **I have a FERPA opt-out on file with the district. What are my options?**

1. Submit the registration form and we will know you have opted in to this program only.
2. Test with the provider of your choice and provide the test results to your school site.

## **Testing procedure**

### **Who is conducting the testing on students and staff?**

Students and staff will self-administer nasal swab tests in the presence of trained staff. Instructions will be provided to students on how to self-administer the nasal swab. The district has successfully executed instructions on self-administered nasal swab tests to primary and secondary aged students throughout the 2020-21 school year. The test is designed to be self-administered by even our youngest students. It is quick and easy with no more than length of the cotton portion on a standard size Q-tip-style swab that is inserted in the nose. Although it is a simple test, trained staff is available to assist the students with a hand-over-hand technique or, in select cases for students with special or medical needs, an alternative such as the oral collection route may be offered. Below are links to an English and Spanish YouTube video describing the process:

[Self Administered nasal Swab \(English\)](#)

[Self Administered Nasal Swab \(Spanish\)](#)

### **May parents attend the testing of their student?**

No, this will be done on campus during the school day. School site staff will be on hand for elementary student testing. Middle school and high school students may test with some classes or may be asked to report to the testing location independently. Your child's principal will communicate with you the process for your campus.

### **Why did the district choose nasal swabs instead of saliva testing?**

Nasal swabs are more accurate at detecting the COVID -19 viral load than saliva testing. It is also more efficient because attaining the appropriate saliva sample often requires more time. Saliva tests are included in the consent form as a possible method. We are considering this for certain cohorts of students (Dr. Drati will work with contractors and our medical staff to determine these details).

### **How is the swab sterilized prior to use?**

As with nearly all medical and lab equipment the material used to encase the swabs individually are sterilized with ethylene oxide gas, which is non-toxic in this format.

### **Why were there questions in the initial registration and consent forms asking for consent to blood draw?**

This language does not apply to SMMUSD and has been removed. The form being used by both companies is a standard consent form medical companies use. We have further customized the form with our providers to better meet our needs and the interests of our families.

## **Test Results**

### **When will the test results be available?**

There is a 24-hour turnaround time for the results.

### **Who will see the results of my student?**

The companies will notify school administration, school nurse, and the parent of a positive test only.

### **How will a parent / guardian be notified?**

The parent or guardian will be contacted via the phone number and/or email address that the parent provided when registering with the testing company. Later followup will be conducted by district nursing staff using the contact listed in the district's database.

### **What happens to students and staff who show a positive test?**

The Los Angeles County Office of Education [LACDPH guidelines](#), to which the district adheres, state that if a COVID-19 test is positive, the individual must stay home until 10 days have passed since symptom onset AND be fever-free for 24 hours without fever reducing medication AND symptoms have improved. Individuals testing positive without symptoms may return after 10 days from the date of positive test.

If the individual is a student, the teacher will provide a short term independent study assignment while the student is in isolation.

If the individual is a teacher, a substitute teacher will be provided for the class during the duration of isolation.

Note that once an individual has tested positive, the individual may test positive for up to 90 days based on LACDPH guidance and this would be accounted for in the decision to isolate them in the future.

### **How do the health office specialists, nurses, and school officials determine who was in close contact when conducting contact tracing in the event that there is an exposure to an individual with a positive test?**

[The District's Exposure Management Plan](#), which is in alignment with the LACDPH protocols, provides information detailing the decision making process for managing cases. In it, you will also find [a detailed flow chart of the decision pathway](#) advised by the Department of Public Health that our nurses and administrators use to determine who is considered to be in "close contact" to a known positive or suspected positive case. There is a document that provides further and detailed information on [Home Quarantine Instructions](#) for Close Contacts to COVID-19. In summary, the following is how we determine close contact based on LACDPH:

- A **close contact of a potentially infected individual** is a child or employee at the facility who was within 6 feet for  $\geq 15$  minutes over a 24-hour period with a potentially infected child OR had direct contact with bodily fluids/secretions from a potentially infected child.
- **Exposure is confirmed** for a close contact to a potentially infected employee if the Institution receives notification that the potentially infected employee had a positive COVID-19 diagnostic viral test OR received a diagnosis of COVID-19 from a medical provider.
- **Vaccinated persons** who are a close contact to a confirmed case are not required to quarantine and test if they are: (1) fully vaccinated (i.e.,  $\geq 2$  weeks following receipt of the second dose in a 2-dose COVID-19 vaccine series or  $\geq 2$  weeks following receipt of one dose of a single-dose COVID-19 vaccine) and (2) have remained asymptomatic since last contact with the infected person.

## **Data Protection / Data Privacy**

### **How will my data that I am sharing through the registration process be protected?**

Information gathered during the registration process will be kept confidential and secure and will only be shared as required for CARES Act reimbursement and state and district reporting purposes. Data will not be shared or sold to other third parties. SMMUSD has a data privacy agreement on file with both companies. Additionally, this limited information is required in order to properly identify positive cases and contact parents / guardians. Information such as race, ethnicity and gender are required as part of record keeping by the state for tracking of this virus.

### **May I view the contracts for the two providers?**

Copies of the contracts will be posted to the [www.smmusd.org/Coronavirus](http://www.smmusd.org/Coronavirus) page by Aug. 26.

The updated contracts now include the following:

- A testing end date was incorporated into the contract. Malibu Medical and Doctor Now contracts will continue through Dec. 31, 2021, at which time the district will reevaluate if weekly screening testing is still necessary, based on data such as infection and vaccination rates.
- An option for the COVID-19 saliva test in lieu of nasal test for certain cohorts of students, including younger students. (Dr. Drati will work with contractors and our medical staff to determine these details).
- Ensure that the data collected by the vendors is limited to what is minimally necessary for CARES Act reimbursement and required reporting to the state and SMMUSD.
- The registration and consent digital forms will be updated by the morning of August 26 to reflect the direction provided by the school board. You will find the full content of the forms on [www.smmusd.org/Coronavirus](http://www.smmusd.org/Coronavirus) following the update.

### **May I view the video of the August 23 special board meeting on this topic to hear the discussion and comments?**

Yes, here is the video recording of the meeting: <https://youtu.be/reWldf24U4I>

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