

August 26th, 2021
Testing Update:

Dear McKinley families,

I know you've been eagerly awaiting more information about the mandatory weekly COVID testing of students and staff. The testing process is being coordinated by the district, so principals have been waiting for details about logistics, scheduling, and registration. I am pleased to share that I now have updated information.

Attached is the district's **Testing FAQ document** that contains detailed answers to common questions about the testing and registration. This should address most questions and concerns you may have. If you have additional questions please don't hesitate to email Tara Brown at tbrown@smmusd.org.

McKinley's **scheduled testing day and time block are Fridays 8:30am-12:30pm** and will be provided by the company Malibu Medical. Our first date will be **next week 9/3/21**.

The format of the testing is as follows: Each class will have a scheduled ten-minute time block within the testing window. Testing will occur one class at a time, outdoors on the K yard grass.

1. The teacher will walk the students to the outdoor testing location
2. The testing staff will demonstrate how to swab
3. The students will be provided with a labeled tube and handed a swab
4. Students will self-swab with guidance from the testing staff
5. Then students will put the swab in the tube and hand it to the testing staff

The test is extremely non-invasive. Just the 1-inch tip of the Q-tip-like swab will swirl in the very tip of the nose (a shallow nasal swab). Students can even practice at home with a regular Q-tip to see that the swab does not go in deep and it is a similar experience to itching the inside of their nose. The swabbing takes just a few seconds. It will be a quick, painless, and easy process. And staff will always be available to provide support as needed.

As we have throughout the pandemic, we have our students' social-emotional wellness in mind. Like we did with the COVID safety protocols, I plan to make a fun video to show the testing process so students know what to expect (to be blasted soon). Some classes may also use the opportunity to explore the exciting science behind such tests. And teachers and staff will set aside community meeting time to share feelings and support students with any worries. I also have samples of the testing swab and tubes, and would be happy to show them to students who are nervous. We will make the whole process as light and anxiety-free as possible and will emphasize how we are doing this together, as community helpers, to keep ourselves and each other safe.

It is expected that testing will continue through December 31, 2021, at which time the district will reevaluate if weekly screening testing is still necessary.

Please note that parents will only receive an email message if their child receives a positive test result and the school nurse will follow up with quarantine instructions.

Please register online at <https://hipaa.jotform.com/212318620488153>. The new deadline to register is Friday August 27th at 8pm. Testing is required for all students and staff so please register by the deadline so we can have labels ready. See the FAQ document for details about registration.

Weekly testing will be a great tool as a quick regular check-in of the health of our students and staff. It will allow us to identify asymptomatic positives, so that individuals can quarantine and we can reduce the spread of COVID.

Thank you for participating and helping to keep our school family healthy and safe.

Dr. Benjamin