



Dear MTCS Families,

The State of Minnesota has provided free COVID-19 test kits for middle and high schools so that we can offer on-site testing or take-home testing for our students. Beginning April 26<sup>th</sup>, 2021 MTCS will begin offering free COVID-19 testing for all students every other week on the following dates and locations:

**Mondays (4/26/21, 5/10/21, 5/24/21) = MTS Secondary 9:30 - 11:30 a.m.**

**Tuesdays (4/27/21, 5/11/21, 5/25/21) = PEASE Academy 9:30 - 11:00 a.m.**

**Tuesdays (4/27/21, 5/11/21, 5/25/21) = Banaadir Academy 11:30 a.m. - 2:00 p.m.**

**Wednesdays (4/28/21, 5/12/21, 5/26/21) = MTS Secondary 9:30 - 11:30 a.m.**

\*For any student who would like to participate in COVID-19 testing, a consent form must be completed and signed by a legal guardian. A copy will be provided to all students, as well as available at each school's main office.

**Take-Home Testing Option:** For students who will be participating in the take-home testing option, Test kits will be available for students to pick up during the above times. Students should return the completed test kit the day after pick-up so that we can send them to the lab. Results will be available 24-48 hours after the test kits are sent to the lab.

In order to complete the at-home test, students will need access to a computer with the internet so that they can connect to Zoom to walk through the process with a representative from Vault Health, the company that provides these tests. If you do not have internet access at home, your student can take the test at school using a school computer.

**COVID-19 General Information:** In order to slow the spread so that we can continue learning in-person, we encourage every family to take advantage of this opportunity to get their middle and high school students tested for COVID-19. As long as students don't have symptoms and have not been close to someone with COVID-19, they do not need to stay out of school, sports or activities while awaiting test results. Learn more about [student COVID-19 testing](#).

Minnesota is experiencing high circulation of variants of COVID-19. For example, it is currently estimated that 60% of all COVID-19 cases in Minnesota are the B.1.1.7. variant strain, which is a new version of the virus that spreads more easily. The spread of COVID-19 variants, including B.1.1.7, is contributing to a sharp increase in COVID-19 cases statewide in Minnesota and in particular we are seeing more cases concentrated in the school-age population.

Anyone can have COVID-19 and not know it, and it is estimated that almost 50% of people with COVID-19 have no symptoms. Getting tested is the best way to know you are healthy and allow us to continue to offer in-person learning and extracurricular opportunities, especially with the increasing spread of virus variants in our state. Learn more about why COVID-19 testing is important for students in [this video](#).

This in-school testing program is intended to help identify asymptomatic cases of COVID-19 so that we can prevent further spread. If students are experiencing any symptoms, they should stay home, and get a test from [one of Minnesota's free community testing sites](#) or through their health care provider.

If your student is unable to take part in our on-site COVID-19 testing event, there are many other options to get tested at no cost. Families can visit [one of Minnesota's free community testing sites](#), get tested through a health care provider, or order an at-home test kit. In-person or language line assistance is available at community testing sites. Some testing sites also have COVID Community Coordinators to help walk people through the testing process. Learn more on the [COVID Community Coordinator](#) page of the MDH website.

At any time, any Minnesotan can [order a test kit to be sent directly to their home](#), through a program offered by the Minnesota Department of Health. Once you have completed the test, you can drop off the test at school to be sent to the lab.

Additionally, all youth in grades 6-12 who are participating in club or school sports are strongly encouraged to get tested at least once per week for COVID-19. Learn more on the [Stay Safe Minnesota – Organized Sports](#) webpage.

If you have any questions or would like additional information, please contact your student's school so that we may assist you.

Thank you,

Erin Copeland – COVID-19 District Coordinator

[ecopeland@emailmtcs.org](mailto:ecopeland@emailmtcs.org) / 612-235-5792