



RSU 16

MECHANIC FALLS • MINOT • POLAND

www.rsu16.org

April 29, 2022

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The Mills Administration announced on April 13, 2022 that pooled testing for COVID-19 in Maine schools will conclude in May, given its reduced effectiveness in limiting the spread of the highly contagious BA.2 variant and the widespread availability of free and convenient at-home tests for students and school staff. As such, the pool testing program that has served the families of RSU 16 since the summer of 2021 will end on April 29.

The BA.2 variant is significantly more contagious than previous strains of the virus, lowering the likelihood of detecting, identifying, and isolating an individual with COVID-19 through pooled testing before that individual has spread the virus to others. **In this new phase of the pandemic, frequent use of over-the-counter rapid antigen tests has become a more effective way to protect the health of school communities.**

As we move forward with our response to the COVID 19 pandemic, we will begin to offer the administration of Abbott Binax NOW rapid antigen tests to students who become symptomatic during the school day. We continue to ask that you **prescreen your child each morning** and if they have symptoms of a fever (100 or higher), cough, runny nose, nasal congestion, sore throat, vomiting, diarrhea, muscle/body aches, or a loss of taste or smell, that they stay home for at least 24 hours or until their symptoms improve. We also would ask that you access a home test for COVID-19 and email a picture of those test results to your school nurse.

In the event that your student becomes symptomatic during the school day, to access free rapid antigen testing in their school nurse's office will require that they have a signed consent to test on file. **If your child participates in our pooled testing program, we have that consent on file and it is good for the remainder of the school year. If you would like to give consent because your child does not participate in pooled testing: print, read, sign, date and return the attached Consent to Test to your student's school health office.** If you have more than one student enrolled, you will need to complete and sign a separate consent for each student. If you need a paper copy of the consent form, please contact the school office.

Reporting Positive Cases After Hours, Weekends, Vacations

When reporting a positive case after hours, weekends and vacations, please [use this form](#). The form will also be located on our website, www.rsu16.org

Free at-home tests

There are free at-home tests available for Maine residents through Project Access COVID-19 Tests www.accessCOVIDTests.org.

The White House recently announced that U.S. residents can order two sets of four free at-home tests through www.COVIDtests.gov.

Sincerely,
Amy