Public Health Guidance for Pooled Testing


This K-12 testing program is voluntary and free for schools and participants. Participating schools can choose from three testing options when opting in the program, one of which is pooled testing. [Learn more about these types of testing offered by Ginkgo.](https://www.concentricbyginkgo.com)

What steps should schools take based on results of pooled testing?

- **Pooled testing is negative**
  - No additional public health action is needed.

- **Pooled testing is positive**
  - Re-test all individuals that contributed to the pooled sample as soon as possible. Antigen or PCR testing can be used.
  - Individuals who are part of a positive pool do not need to quarantine while they await their follow-up test results unless they are symptomatic.¹
  - Symptomatic individuals should not attend school and should be medically evaluated and tested, as appropriate.
  - Asymptomatic individuals in a positive pool must follow procedures for follow-up testing. Individuals who receive positive follow-up individual test results will need to be isolated for 10 days.
  - Schools should continue to be diligent with implementing other mitigation measures such as masking, physical distancing, and proper ventilation. This is especially critical for the positive pool until individual follow-up testing is conducted.
  - Schools may opt to request to quarantine the individuals in the positive pool pending the results of follow-up testing based on the situation.

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¹ It is possible that individuals who had COVID-19 (knowingly or unknowingly) but are no longer contagious will cause some pooled tests to come back positive, and every test has a chance of false positives. If a pooled test comes back positive and all individual follow-up diagnostic tests come back negative, schools should re-test all individuals in the positive pool one additional time, ideally with PCR testing, before disregarding the positive pooled test result.