



CHEEKTOWAGA CENTRAL SCHOOL DISTRICT

"It's All About The Learning"

www.cheektowagak12.org

January 14, 2022

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Dear Cheektowaga Central School District Families,

The purpose of this letter is to inform you of the new TEST TO STAY program that the Cheektowaga CSD will be starting on Wednesday, January 19, 2022. This program has been authorized by the Erie County Department of Health (ECDOH) as a strategy that limits student quarantines and is already in place in many areas across the county and state. This program has been implemented to help decrease the number of students placed in a mandatory quarantine when determined to be an unvaccinated, close contact to a person that has tested positive for COVID-19 within the school setting. We are pleased our advocacy efforts helped to expedite approval of this program to ensure students can remain in school for in-person learning.

Both the Center for Disease Control (CDC) and the ECDOH have reduced the duration of both the isolation time of a person who has tested positive for COVID-19 and the quarantine time of a person who is determined to be an unvaccinated close contact.

Please note the following:

- The maximum duration of quarantine for an asymptomatic, unvaccinated close contact is now five (5) days rather than ten (10) days.
- The duration of isolation for a person who tests positive has also changed to five (5) days instead of ten (10), as long as the person's symptoms have substantially resolved or are improving and there has been no fever for 24 hours without the use of fever-reducing medication AND the student can wear a mask comfortably, while at school.
- The goal of this TEST TO STAY program is to add an additional layer of mitigation to our already safe learning and working environment in school.
- We wish to maximize the opportunity for students to remain in school for in-person learning.
- In-person learning provides the opportunity for all healthy children to benefit educationally, academically, socially, emotionally, physically and nutritionally. The benefits of in-person learning are powerful when we consider student growth.

The TEST TO STAY program will be available for any student PK-12 (pre-k programs that are on site within our elementary building) who are identified as "close contacts" of a COVID-19 case from a school exposure and who are also not vaccinated. A family may take advantage of the TTS by bringing their child to school before the start of the school day and have the child tested using an Antigen or Rapid COVID-19 test, provided by the ECDOH. This test takes approximately 15 minutes to complete and CONSENT to be tested must be provided, prior to the child being tested.



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DETAILS/REQUIREMENTS of the TESTING for TEST TO STAY:

- The parent/person in parental relationship to the child **MUST GIVE CONSENT**. Consent is considered “one time” and covers any/all exposures for 2022.
- The exposure occurred within the school setting and the child, then, is considered a “close contact” of the person who tested positive while both persons were consistently and properly masked.
- The child (close contact) is unvaccinated and remains a-symptomatic (not exhibiting symptoms)
- The child/close contact will be tested a minimum of 2 times during the 5 day period following exposure, unless recognition of this exposure is delayed or weekends or school breaks interfere with this timeline.
- The 5 day period is measured by calendar days, where the last date of exposure is considered day 0. The 1st test will occur on the day immediately after the close contact notification occurs. The second test will be done on day 5.
- All testing will take place on the main campus of the Cheektowaga CSD. All students PK-12, whose families have granted consent for the TEST TO STAY program will report to the High School, enter at door #5 and register with the intake staff member for testing purposes (see details regarding location, testing protocols, etc.). All testing will take place within the high school in the corridor/area behind the auditorium, closest to door #5 and the main parking lot.
- Please note that students participating in the TEST TO STAY program during the 5 day period of time and whose parents have granted consent, are allowed to continue to ride the school bus, but we very much prefer that the parents/guardians provide personal transportation for their children involved in the TTS program.
- During the 5 day period of time, New York State does NOT allow children to participate in co-curricular activities and or sports, until the 6th day after exposure.
- If during the period of participation in the TTS program the child/student tests positive for COVID-19, the student will be excluded/isolated per existing COVID-19 protocols and contact tracing will commence immediately.
- Families will be notified of results at the time of testing. If the child tests negative, he/she will be immediately cleared to attend school. If the child tests positive, he/she will be isolated and sent home.

It is also important for everyone to know that the tests that many of you received during the New Year's weekend were only to be used as an informal, additional layer of mitigation of the spread of COVID-19. As we continue to do our part in helping our community at large in the fight against this virus, we are offering this new TEST TO STAY program to help provide a level of relief for all of you. Why? Relief comes in knowing that we can test your child and keep him or her in school learning. Our district mission statement is: It's All About the Learning. Please know that here at Cheektowaga CSD, we all want your children to continue to learn and grow in the most healthy, positive environment possible. Our teachers, administrators, nurses and staff are ready to assist you.

Your Partner in Education,

Steven L. Wright
Superintendent of Schools