

Expanded Asymptomatic Targeted Testing in Schools

What

The Ministry of Education is supporting access to targeted asymptomatic COVID-19 testing in schools for students and staff across the province. The goal is to support public health units by providing resources that minimize the burdens of testing implementation and that support timely implementation.

The Ministry of Education has procured mobile testing vendors to undertake testing of asymptomatic students and staff in schools province-wide.

Testing will continue to be voluntary for students and staff, and consent will be required from parents or guardians for students under 18 years old.

Where

Mobile testing will be available for implementation in schools province-wide.

Asymptomatic testing for students and staff can also be made available in select pharmacies for students and staff.

When

Local public health units will determine if there is a need for asymptomatic targeted testing in their communities based on local school and community epidemiology.

Why

Targeted testing is being made available to support:

1. The return to in-person learning
2. Schools experiencing outbreaks
3. Schools with high case counts and/or a high level of community transmission
4. Other local priorities, e.g. increasing access to testing

How

The Ministry of Education will work with public health units and school boards to support the testing approach, implementation and reporting, with recognition that approaches will vary by region.

In addition, testing approaches will be determined at a local level using either polymerase chain reaction (PCR) or rapid antigen tests.

This targeted testing is being funded by the Ministry of Education.

If you have any questions about the targeted testing initiative or would like to discuss testing options for your schools' communities, please contact: Shannon Fuller Assistant Deputy Minister, Strategic Policy and Planning, at shannon.fuller@ontario.ca.

From there, the ministry and testing partners will work with you on logistics planning and communications.