

Message From: Laurie Harvey

Context: Staff (All Grades)

Subject: Updates on Covid Testing at Medina El.

Happy New Year Medina Families!

I so hope it was a restful and rejuvenating Winter Break for you all. The Medina staff and I are all so happy to be welcoming our returning students, and new, back to school tomorrow, Tuesday, Jan. 4th.

Below is content that I hope will aid you all as we return to school, keeping our collective safety at the forefront of our minds and practices.

Please know that your child's safety is our priority. If, due to any possible conditions at your house, you do not feel it is safe for your child to attend school this coming week, please notify medinaattendance@bsd405.org so we can excuse the absence.

Additionally, it is important your child has appropriate shoes and outerwear for the weather. Writing your child's name on coats, gloves, hats, etc. is appreciated.

Covid 19

Though we don't know the full impact that the Omicron variant of COVID-19 will have in our school community, we ask that families continue to practice the nine mitigating measures used in BSD schools, along with following [Public Health — Seattle & King County](#) and [Washington State Department of Health](#) guidelines. Please continue to reference BSD's [COVID-19 Health and Safety](#) webpages where updates will be made as they are made available.

Pooled and Diagnostic Testing

Medina offers two types of testing for COVID-19, **diagnostic testing** and **screening testing** for all students and staff. **Here is information on both and I'm hoping to encourage all families to participate.**

- **Diagnostic testing** looks for infections in individuals who have symptoms of or have been exposed to COVID-19. This occurs daily when a child has symptoms. *If the child is at school and being sent home, we can provide the diagnostic test, with consent, prior to them leaving the building. We also offer a drive thru service for any student with symptoms who is staying home. Please notify the office of your interest. This service is provided daily from approx. 8:15-9:15 in the front main driveway of the school.*

- **Pool/Screening testing** looks for infections when there is no reason to suspect an individual is infected as a *proactive approach* to minimizing the potential for outbreaks in our schools. *This occurs every Thursday morning at Medina Elementary from 8:15-9:30.*

Bellevue School District uses **pooled screening testing** for screening. **Pooled screening testing** is a type of screening test that allows multiple samples to be processed at once. Medina's Pool testing day is Thursday morning every week (unless we are out of school), with results within 12 hours.

I would personally like to encourage all Medina families to join the pool testing that occurs each week at Medina. Students with consent come out to the hallway and self-swab which takes less than 2 minutes. The pools are sent away to a lab for analysis and results are ready before the next morning. If a pool has a positive case, all students in that pool are given a rapid test at school first thing the next morning. Students who test negative return to class. **This is a helpful shift in practice of Pool testing from prior to Winter Break.** The identified positive student begins their isolation period at home and contact tracing begins to identify any close contacts that meet the Department of Health's criteria. Students participating in the pool are tested every Thursday, providing us valuable information on ensuring that our students are healthy and that we are not unknowingly spreading Covid 19. To opt in-to **pooled surveillance testing**, a parent/guardian will need to complete a **consent form** for each child under the age of 18.

In addition, because the symptoms of Covid 19 are like those of the common cold, students should remain at home if they have any one of the following conditions: Congestion or runny nose, nausea, vomiting, diarrhea, headache, fatigue, or sore throat. If a child is at school and has any of the above conditions, they will be sent home and advised to return using the information in the attached Symptom Decision Tree. Please follow the link to the most current decision tree regarding symptoms. <https://www.doh.wa.gov/Portals/1/Documents/1600/coronavirus/820-229-SymptomDecisionTreeCTChecklistSchools.pdf>

Thank you for your continued partnership as we celebrate the return to school and focus on providing a high-quality education experience for your child.

Warmly,

Laurie