**Serial Testing Guidance for Maine Schools 02/24/2021**

This guidance is for public and private PreK-12 schools who want to use Serial Testing of **asymptomatic adults (staff)** who have been identified as a close contact of a confirmed COVID-19 case. This is a strategy to advance or maintain in-person instruction after a positive COVID-19 case is identified. Schools must have a CLIA waiver and a School Nurse to administer the tests to offer this service within the school. Using this approach, asymptomatic adults with negative results would be allowed to maintain their core roles and potentially avoid workforce shortages. Maine CDC approval is not required for this testing

An asymptomatic adult who has been identified as a close contact of a confirmed COVID-19 case and a negative BinaxNOW Ag Card test may work only on the day of the negative BinaxNOW result with proper personal protective equipment and symptom monitoring.

A negative BinaxNOW Ag Card test result suggests that the adult does not have COVID-19 at the moment the test was taken. But because these individuals by definition have a known COVID-19 exposure, those who have any symptoms consistent with COVID-19 may not work whatsoever and should be placed in isolation. Symptomatic close contacts should be further evaluated, and a confirmatory PCR test should be considered.

Serial testing does not need to be implemented for all staff identified as close contacts. Staff that can work from home or complete their quarantine at home should do so. School staff who are close contacts of confirmed cases staff may return to work while in quarantine so long as (1) there are no substitute school staff members available, (2) the school staff members take appropriate infection control precautions, including the use of PPE, limit in school contact with other students and staff, and (3) the staff remain in quarantine outside of work. Under no circumstances should a positive COVID-19 person be attending school or working in a school setting.

**Serial Testing for schools that do not provide on-site testing:** Schools that do not opt to provide testing on location may still utilize the serial testing method for essential staff by having staff test daily at one of the [Walgreens test sites](https://www.maine.gov/covid19/restartingmaine/keepmainehealthy/testing) and then providing proof of negative test before reporting to work each day.

**Serial Testing in Schools:**

1. Serial testing is allowed for asymptomatic teachers and staff in the school setting who are identified as a close contact to a COVID-19 + case. (confirmed by NBS #). This may be done to ensure proper staffing in schools during this pandemic.
2. Serial testing does not need Maine CDC approval prior to conducting this type of testing. Additional test kits should be ordered through the normal process as needed.
3. A negative BinaxNOW Ag test suggests the staff person does not have Covid-19 that day. The staff person may work that day **only** wearing proper face covering at all times, additional PPE if duties require it, and symptom monitoring.
4. Staff should be monitored for symptoms and tested each morning upon arrival to the school. Once a negative result is obtained, they may proceed to work.
5. Staff should remain in quarantine apart from going to work during the designated time. (10 days)
6. Should the staff person develop symptoms before or after school or on the weekend, they are to stay home and get tested at [a designated testing site](https://www.maine.gov/covid19/restartingmaine/keepmainehealthy/testing) . Report the results to the school nurse or to the appropriate school representative as determined by local process. A positive Covid -19 test puts this staff person in isolation for ten days from the onset of symptoms or test date.
7. Serial testing is not to be used with asymptomatic close contacts who are students in the school.

For more information about BinaxNOW Testing in schools please contact Nancy.Dube@maine.gov or Emily.Poland@maine.gov