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DPHSS Guidance Memorandum 2021-27 Rev01

RE: Additional Guidance Relative to Executive Order No. 2021-23

The purpose of this guidance is to provide updated instruction for the design and implementation of a screening testing program within K-12 Schools as introduced in the **Department of Public Health & Social Services (DPHSS) Guidance Memorandum 2021-27**. This document also incorporates guidance relative to facilitating contact tracing within the school setting. This guidance rescinds **DPHSS Guidance Memorandum 2021-26**.

Pursuant to **Executive Order 2021-23**, all schools shall submit a testing plan as part of school COVID-19 mitigation strategies. This guidance memorandum is issued in furtherance of DPHSS's authority as provided in the *Island Guåhan Emergency Health Powers Act*, in particular, 10 GCA § 19601, which provides that DPHSS shall use every available means to prevent the transmission of infectious disease and to ensure that all cases of contagious disease are subject to proper control and treatment.

Screening testing is part of a layered prevention strategy that involves testing asymptomatic persons without recent known or suspected exposure to SARS-CoV-2, the virus that causes COVID-19. Early detection of asymptomatic cases through screening testing can ensure rapid isolation, identification and quarantine of close contacts, which will minimize disruption to in-person instruction. Although the submission of a COVID-19 screening testing plan is required with the overall COVID-19 mitigation plan, the implementation of the screening testing plan may be contingent on resources available to the schools. Ideally, schools shall set a goal to test at least ten percent (10%) of its consenting population, to include students, faculty, and staff, every other week.

All school COVID-19 screening testing plans must be emailed to DPHSS at dphss.surveillance@dphss.guam.gov. Testing plans are subject to review by DPHSS.

I. DESIGNATE A POINT OF CONTACT

Participating schools shall designate two (2) staff members as the primary and alternate school Point of Contact (POC) to ensure adherence to federal and local public health recommendations outlined in this Guidance.

The primary POC shall be responsible for the following:

1. Serve as a liaison between the school as a whole, including students, teachers and staff, and DPHSS to ensure efficient communication and transmission of correspondence and pertinent data;
2. Coordinate and monitor all COVID-19 screening testing activities on campus;
3. Designate staff to be trained to conduct COVID-19 testing;
4. Coordinate the distribution and collection of consent forms prior to COVID-19 testing;
5. Identify testing locations that are well-ventilated, with designated points of entry and exit, and ensure chairs are distanced three feet apart (may occur within respective classroom); and,
6. Plan for anticipated quantity of tests needed based on testing requirements for consenting teachers, staff, and students; it is highly recommended to test individuals who are not fully vaccinated.

If the primary POC is not immediately available to perform the functions described herein, the alternate POC shall perform the functions.

II. DESIGNING A SCREENING TESTING PROGRAM

A. TEST TYPES AND COLLECTION METHOD

There are several COVID-19 tests that are available to help determine current or past infection:

1. Viral tests look for current infection and may include:
 1. **Molecular tests**, such as RT-PCR tests or isothermal nucleic acid amplification tests, detect the virus's genetic material.
 2. **Antigen tests** detect specific proteins on the surface of the virus.
2. **Antibody tests (serology tests)** might tell you if you had a past infection. Antibody tests should not be used to diagnose a current infection.

Schools may opt to have trained staff facilitate proper specimen collection of the COVID-19 test, or have trained staff supervise self-administered COVID-19 tests. Existing personnel at schools may be trained by DPHSS to collect anterior nasal swabs. Training may be coordinated with the Guam Public Health Laboratory (GPHL), or with any medical provider. Upon completion of training, schools shall obtain a Clinical Laboratory Improvement Amendments (CLIA) waiver extension through GPHL, or the medical provider, to allow for specimens to be collected at a school site.

All specimens collected must be accompanied by a completed laboratory form.

B. FREQUENCY AND SCHEDULING

Although the amount of testing conducted depends on the needs of the school, schools shall set a goal to test at least ten percent (10%) of its consenting population every other week. However, understanding that effective screening testing programs strive to test as much of the population as possible, therefore, schools are encouraged to test a higher proportion.

At a minimum, testing shall be administered every other week. The date, time, and frequency will be at the discretion of the school. Human resources, test turnaround time, available space, and school schedules should be considered when designing the testing schedule. For example, schools may consider dividing the testing population across several days to reduce time and resources required for each testing day.

Schools may consider testing a larger percentage of its population following an extended break, i.e., Fall or Spring Break. Schools may also consider offering testing to individuals who are returning from off-island travel.

C. REPORTING

The POC or trained individuals are responsible for notifying all students (for minors, parents/legal guardians/authorized representatives) teachers, staff regarding test results.

The POC must report all COVID-19 test results to DPHSS via the following options:

1. Simple Report Database

Simple Report is a free web tool developed by the CDC to make COVID-19 rapid testing and reporting accessible for schools. To sign up, visit the Simple Report website at <https://www.simplereport.gov/sign-up/>. The POC must fill out all fields in the Simple Report database prior to submitting all tests to DPHSS.

2. Excel Database

Schools may alternatively utilize the DPHSS Excel line list template to report COVID-19 results. In addition to submitting the Excel file, all accompanying GPLH COVID-19 referral forms must be submitted via secured link to DPHSS within 24 hours of testing.

D. ADDITIONAL CONSIDERATIONS

1. Sports and Extracurricular Activities

Schools may implement more frequent testing for students, teachers, staff, and adult volunteers who are not fully vaccinated and participate in sports and extracurricular activities. Testing at least once per week is recommended for participants in high-risk sports and extracurricular activities (e.g. activities that cannot be conducted outdoors or with masks). Refer to **DPHSS Guidance Memo 2021-23** and **DPHSS Guidance Memo 2022-08** for additional information regarding contact and non-contact sports or events and extracurricular activities.

2. Persons with Disabilities

Students, teachers, or staff with disabilities may require accommodations when being tested. School administrators may offer modified job responsibilities for non-fully vaccinated staff at higher risk for severe illness while protecting individual privacy.

Schools should consider taking an individualized approach for working with children and youth with disabilities, consistent with the child's Individualized Family Service Plan (IFSP), Individualized Education Program (IEP), or Section 504 plan.

School administrators should consider modifications and alternatives to prevention strategies when serving people with disabilities, while maintaining efforts to protect all students, teachers, and staff from COVID-19.

3. Temporary Exemption to Screening Testing

Students, teachers, and staff who have (1) received a positive COVID-19 test result within the past 90 days, (2) recovered, and (3) not developed any new symptoms may be eligible for an exemption from screening testing. Individuals seeking such exemption must present the following documents to the POC:

- i. A valid positive COVID-19 molecular or antigen test result collected between 10 to 90 days prior; or
- ii. A valid positive COVID-19 molecular or antigen test result collected within 10 days and a subsequent clearance from a physician, clinic, or health department.

III. IMPLEMENTING A SCREENING TESTING PROGRAM

A. CONSENT FORMS

Schools are responsible for disseminating and collecting consent forms for all students, parents/legal guardian/authorized representative, teachers and staff prior to participation in the COVID-19 screening testing program. Additionally, consent forms allow for the POC to be notified of all COVID-19 test results.

Schools may consider one-time consent forms for this screening testing plan for each academic year.

1. Components of the Consent Form

The consent form shall include the following:

- i. Purpose of testing;
- ii. Authorization for students, teachers and staff to be tested;
- iii. COVID-19 testing information;
- iv. Privacy statement; and,
- v. Acknowledgment.

The POC will be responsible for providing a copy of the signed consent forms to students, parents/legal guardian/authorized representative prior to the testing of students, teachers and staff.

A student, parent(s), legal guardian(s), or authorized representative(s) may revoke their informed consent by submitting a written request to the POC.

School administrators should consult with their legal counsel to review consent forms prior to distribution.

B. TESTING SITE

Schools shall identify the location of COVID-19 testing to be administered. Schools may consider establishing a single test site, or establish multiple test sites.

Single test sites will serve as the central location where all on-site testing procedures will be facilitated. For example, a school gym may serve as the single test site where all participating students, faculty, and staff will proceed on their designated time and day.

Multiple test sites means that any on-site testing procedure may be administered in various locations throughout the school campus. For example, different classrooms identified within the school campus may be used to test multiple cohorts.

Schools may also consider off-site testing facilities, including collaborating with local public/private clinics or laboratory services to support the implementation of the screening testing program.

When determining the location of the test site, schools should consider the number of staff performing the test, physical distancing, type of test and accompanying result (certain tests must be read by a trained professional).

C. FACILITY REQUIREMENTS

Refer to **DPHSS Guidance Memo 2021-23** for additional guidance regarding the implementation of COVID-19 layered mitigation strategies to prevent the transmission of COVID-19.

1. Physical Distancing

The test site should allow sufficient physical distancing for every individual present including those waiting to be tested, and those actively being tested.

2. Ventilation

School test sites shall ensure ventilation systems are operational. Schools should consider increasing circulation of outside air as much as possible by opening windows and doors. Do not open windows and doors if they pose a safety or health risk to individuals occupying the facility.

Consider using portable high-efficiency particulate air (HEPA) fan or similar filtration systems to enhance air cleaning.

3. Cleaning and Disinfection

Schools must conduct routine cleaning and disinfection of the test site(s). Focus on high touch areas (e.g., door handles, tables, desktops, etc).

Use commercial-grade U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) registered household disinfectant. If unavailable, a home-made disinfectant may be used by

mixing 5 tablespoons (1/3 cup) of bleach (5%-7% hypochlorite concentration) per 1 gallon of water, or 4 teaspoons of bleach per quart of water.

4. Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)

All staff designated to administer COVID-19 tests must wear appropriate PPE when handling each specimen and running each test. Use of appropriate PPE significantly reduces risk of infection for staff administering COVID-19 tests.

5. Waste Disposal

All components of the test kit used should be discarded as biohazard waste according to federal and local regulatory requirements.

Biohazard waste must be disposed of in the biohazard waste bin located at Northern/Southern Region Community Health Center or GPHL, Monday through Friday between 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.

6. Signs and Postage

Schools are encouraged to post signs at the entrance and exit of the site, and throughout the facility to direct the flow of foot traffic and to promote behaviors that prevent the spread of COVID-19.

IV. ADDITIONAL COVID-19 TESTING CONSIDERATIONS

A. TESTING SYMPTOMATIC INDIVIDUALS (DIAGNOSTIC TESTING)

Students, teachers, and staff shall stay home if they are exhibiting any COVID-19 symptoms. All students, teachers, and staff who develop symptoms of COVID-19 while on-campus shall be immediately isolated and tested for COVID-19.

Individuals exhibiting symptoms with a negative viral COVID-19 test result shall return to school after symptoms resolve.

B. TEST TO STAY TESTING STRATEGY

If resources allow, schools may consider implementing a Test to Stay strategy, which combines contact tracing and repeated testing (at least twice during a seven-day period after last date of exposure), to allow students, faculty, and staff to continue in-person learning. Eligible individuals are asymptomatic school-associated close contacts. Those participating in the Test to Stay should be tested at least upon notification of their exposure and again on day 5-7 after their last date of exposure.

Participants in the Test to Stay should continue to properly wear well-fitting masks while in school, and stay home and isolate if they develop symptoms or test positive for COVID-19.

C. CONTACT TRACING STUDENTS, FACULTY, AND STAFF WITH KNOWN EXPOSURE

When a school receives a report of a confirmed COVID-19 case, the POC shall notify DPHSS. If the individual received a positive COVID-19 test result administered by the school, the individual must be isolated immediately. For minors, the parent, legal guardian, or authorized representative must be informed and the minor must be picked up.

If resources permit, the school, in coordination with DPHSS, may conduct contact tracing, within the school premises. A close contact is someone who has been within 6 feet of a confirmed COVID-19 case for a cumulative total of 15 minutes or more over a 24-hour period. Students who were within 3 to 6 feet of a confirmed COVID-19 individual may not be considered a close contact if both the exposed student the confirmed COVID-19 individual correctly and consistently wore well-fitting masks the entire time.

The school-associated close contacts identified by the school and DPHSS must be notified by the school, and the students (for minors, the parent, legal guardian, or authorized representative), faculty, and staff must be instructed to quarantine, pursuant to **DPHSS Guidance Memorandum 2021-16 Rev02**.

Students, faculty, and staff who have completed their duration of isolation or quarantine as outlined in **DPHSS Guidance Memorandum 2021-16 Rev02**, may return to school campus. A DPHSS clearance letter is not required to end isolation or quarantine, but may be provided at the request of the individual who completes isolation or quarantine.

For any questions, please contact Zennia Pecina, Acting Chief Public Health Officer, at zennia.pecina@dphss.guam.gov.

*****SUBJECT TO CHANGE WITHOUT NOTICE*****



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