



**ADDITIONAL ADDENDUM to
Interim Guidance on Mandatory COVID-19 Testing in Public and Non-Public Schools
Located in Areas Designated as “Yellow Zones” Under the New York State Cluster
Action Initiative
October 9, 2020
Update: November 12, 2020
Update: November 14, 2020**

Pursuant to the *Interim Guidance on Mandatory COVID-19 Testing in Public and Non-Public Schools Located in Areas Designated as “Yellow Zones” Under the New York State Cluster Action Initiative*, the New York State Department of Health (NYSDOH) has determined that schools open to in-person instruction in yellow zones are required to test 20% of in-person students, teachers and staff, at least once a week for as long as the school remains in a designated yellow zone.

Geographic areas are designated as *yellow precautionary zones* due to increased viral spread, as demonstrated by increased new cases, positivity, hospital admissions, and other factors, or as *yellow buffer zones* that are adjacent to red or orange zones.

UPDATE: Effective the week of November 16, 2020, schools in yellow zones must test 20% of in-person students, faculty and staff over the two-week period immediately following the announcement of a yellow zone designation. If the results of the testing reveal that the positivity rate among the 20% of those tested is lower than the yellow zone’s current 7-day positivity rate, testing at that school will no longer be required to continue. A positivity rate in a school that is lower than in the yellow zone is a sufficient demonstration that in-person instruction is not a significant driver of local viral spread. The current positivity rate for zones can be found at, <https://forward.ny.gov/percentage-positive-results-county-dashboard>.

However, if the results of the testing over the first two weeks reveal that the positivity rate among in-person student, staff and faculty is higher than the Yellow Zone’s current 7-day positivity rate, the school will be required to continue to test 20% of the in-person population on a bi-weekly basis.

NYSDOH is amending the existing yellow zone testing requirement due to continued review of positivity rates within school settings. Continued activities include daily school survey submissions of COVID-19 cases by schools, a daily update of the public facing School Dashboard, and laboratory reporting of all COVID-19 test results to the Department of Health. Laboratory data on COVID-19 test results for New York State residents 5-17 years of age is matched to the school district within which an individual resides. This data reflects the number of COVID-19 tests and test results for students living in a school district. Overall, the positivity rates within school settings have remained low to date. This is most

likely due to school settings adhering to the in-person instruction requirements. Schools must maintain all requirements of [in-person instruction](#).

NYSDOH is continuing to provide rapid testing kits for the virus that causes COVID-19 to local health departments (LHDs), hospitals, pharmacies, and other health care providers at no cost so long as testing is open to the public, offered free of charge, and prioritizes vulnerable and at-risk populations that may not currently have equitable access to testing.

Schools, particularly those in a yellow zone, should contact their LHDs, and other local health care partners to establish partnerships and make arrangements for deployment of these tests in their school setting to facilitate the required testing of students, teachers, and staff attending in-person. Additional information on how to schools can work with LHDs and local health care partners is provided in the [ADDENDUM of November 12, 2020](#) to the *Interim Guidance on Mandatory COVID-19 Testing in Public and Non-Public Schools Located in Areas Designated as “Yellow Zones” Under the New York State Cluster Action Initiative*.

Schools may also request test kits directly from the NYS Department of Health at Covid19rapidtest@health.ny.gov .

To find a partner who has a limited service laboratory (LSL), you can visit this website: <https://www.wadsworth.org/regulatory/clep/limited-service-labs>. Additionally, the Department can assist with partnering a school with a community partner and schools should contact SchoolQuestionsCOVID@health.ny.gov if they are interested.