



### **What is COVID-19 pooled testing?**

Pooled testing for SARS-CoV-2 processes specimens from multiple people in a single batch, saving time and resources. It is an efficient, precise, and cost-effective way to detect SARS-CoV-2 in a population such as a school like Woodland Hill. Pool members remain anonymous to the lab. In cases where the virus is detected in a pool, the paradigm immediately shifts to diagnostic testing of the individual members of the pool.

### **How will our school use a pooling strategy?**

If a pooled test result is negative, then all specimens can be presumed negative with the single test. If the pooled test result is positive, the laboratory switches to an individual, diagnostic testing approach. To proceed with diagnostic testing, federal regulations require the laboratory to have to have basic information identifying individuals. When there is a positive pool result, the required identifying information associated with individuals in the pool will be automatically and securely transferred to the laboratory to facilitate immediate, individual retesting of the original sample. This diagnostic testing can usually be completed within a few hours of finding a positive pool.

The advantages of this two-stage specimen pooling strategy include preserving testing reagents and resources, reducing the amount of time required to test large numbers of specimens, and lowering the overall cost of testing.<sup>1</sup>

### **How often will testing occur?**

Testing will occur every week.

### **How does the testing process work?**

The test requires everyone to submit a nasal swab sample taken from the front of the nose. Your school will provide the sample collection tools, and will train students, employees, and families regarding the sample collection process. Each sample collection day, at Woodland Hill this will be once per week, each individual student and faculty member will collect a sample at home in the morning. Students and employees will submit their sample to the school, using a unique ID and a no-contact process. Samples will be taken to a lab for analysis. Results of pooled and any diagnostic tests will be available to the school within 24-48 hours.

### **Will the nasal swab hurt?**

The collection process is not painful and is simple enough that it was approved for self-administration. The swab is inserted no more than 1-2 cm into each nostril and rotated. Note that this approach is much less invasive and complex than nasopharyngeal swab specimen collection, which has a reputation for causing discomfort.

### **How accurate is the test?**

The test's accuracy is virtually identical to that of FDA approved individual PCR tests, which are the "gold standard" for SARS-CoV-2 diagnosis. Samples are analyzed using a Thermo Fisher TaqPath COVID-19 RT-PCR Assay. This assay exhibits expected sensitivity (the limit of detection is 10 genomic copy equivalents per reaction) and specificity (the assay was tested with 43 organisms for cross-reactivity with no false positives).

Note that a negative test result does not imply that there is no virus in an individual's system. For example, soon after infection the body does not shed the virus, meaning that at this stage of infection the individual is not infectious, and SARS-CoV-2 is not detectable by a test. The laboratory cannot ensure the diagnostic integrity of a specimen. Other factors can also affect the presence of virus in the sample.

### **If our school conducts COVID-19 testing can other restrictions be relaxed?**

COVID-19 testing intended to supplement and not supplant the other safety actions on campus (e.g., mask wearing, frequent hand washing, social distancing). Using pooled testing in addition to following safety recommendations will help students and employees minimize health issues related to COVID-19, dramatically reducing the number of individuals who are COVID-positive on campus.

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/lab/pooling-procedures.html>

**How are the pools selected?**

A pool is designed to group individuals with similar risk of infection. At Woodland Hill, students in self-contained classes are grouped with their classmates and teachers, siblings together as well, while other faculty are grouped with those with whom they are in closest proximity to during the school day.

**Is there a cost to families and employees?**

Woodland Hill will absorb the cost of weekly procedural testing.

**How is my/my student's privacy ensured?**

JCM Analytics has created systems and protocols that meet and exceed all HIPPA privacy protections. The lab will only receive personally-identifying information in the event of a positive pool and as required by federal regulations. Samples will be used for COVID-19 testing only. Samples will be retained for two years in accordance with CLIA regulations. Only approved school administrators will be able to view results.

**Will students and employees be required to participate in the pool test process to attend school this year?**

Yes, students and employees that work or attend school in-person on campus will be required to complete testing regularly.

**What happens if my student misses the sample collection?**

Individuals who miss a collection event must contact Katie Singh, the school nurse, to make alternative arrangements for collecting their sample.

**What happens when a "pool" of students or faculty test "positive"?**

If a test pool yields a positive result, each sample in the pool will immediately be tested to identify the individual or individuals who tested positive. Results for this second-stage testing will be available within a few hours. Woodland Hill will notify the individual or individuals who tested positive, and immediately begin the appropriate contact tracing and safety protocols, including quarantine for those individuals in contact with a positive individual.

**What are the possible risks of being in the program?**

There are no known health risks associated with swab-based COVID-19 testing.