



COVID-19 Vaccine and Testing Program Frequently Asked Questions

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Vaccine and Testing Requirements for 2021-22

Why is PPS requiring staff to be vaccinated or participate in regular COVID-19 testing?

As part of our efforts to prioritize in-person learning and mitigate the spread of COVID-19 in the Pittsburgh Public Schools community, the District is requiring that all employees participate in regular COVID-19 testing unless and until they produce evidence that they have been fully vaccinated. People are considered fully vaccinated:

- 2 weeks after their second dose in a 2-dose series, such as the Pfizer or Moderna vaccines; or
- 2 weeks after a single-dose vaccine, such as the Johnson & Johnson vaccine

Testing is one of the District's multiple mitigation efforts, which also includes mandatory face coverings, frequent hand-washing and use of hand sanitizer, and social distancing.

Do I have to participate in regular testing if I'm fully vaccinated?

No, if you have submitted your proof of vaccination and received a verification email from Human Resources, you do not need to participate in testing. You are welcome to continue to participate in weekly testing.

Who will be conducting the COVID-19 testing?

On Monday, August 16, the Pennsylvania Department of Health (DOH) announced that they had entered into an agreement with [Concentric by Ginkgo Bioworks \(Ginkgo\)](#) to provide COVID-19 testing services and supports at no cost to participating schools. Pittsburgh Public Schools is partnering with Ginkgo to ensure testing is fast, easy, and accurate, with limited impact on instructional time for students.

How soon will regular COVID-19 testing start?

The District is currently working with [Concentric by Ginkgo Bioworks \(Ginkgo\)](#) to coordinate COVID-19 testing implementation plans. Our goal is to begin staff testing the week of September 27, 2021.

How do I provide information about my vaccination status to the District?

All staff are required to complete the [COVID-19 Vaccine and Testing Administration Program](#) survey to confirm their vaccination status.

- Employees who report being fully vaccinated will be required to provide the details of their vaccination and upload a photo or scan of their vaccination card.
- Employees who indicate they are partially vaccinated, plan on being vaccinated in the future, or are not vaccinated will be required to participate in weekly testing.

Employees will be required to participate in weekly testing until they complete the survey, provide proof of vaccination, if applicable, and receive a notification from Human Resources that their proof of vaccination has been verified. The survey will remain open as individuals continue to obtain their vaccination.

What if I've lost or misplaced my vaccine documentation?

If your vaccination card is lost or misplaced, please contact your primary care physician or the place where you received your vaccination(s) to get a new card.



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If you were vaccinated in Pennsylvania, you can contact the PA Department of Health at (877) 774-4748 or email RA-DHPASIIS@pa.gov to request replacement documentation.

Where can I get a COVID-19 vaccine?

If you are interested in getting a COVID-19 vaccine, you can find your nearest vaccine provider at <https://www.vaccines.gov/search>.

Vaccination Data and Compliance

How will my vaccination status information be used?

Human Resources and Health Services staff will review and verify vaccine information submissions through the [COVID-19 Vaccine and Testing Administration Program](#) survey. This information will be used to determine if an employee will be required to participate in regular COVID-19 testing.

Vaccination data may also be used in the aggregate to help inform the District's continuous efforts to enhance our safety and mitigation strategies.

How will the District keep track of who is vaccinated and who is not?

Human Resources will track employee vaccination data – both employees who have submitted proof of vaccination and employees who have not submitted proof of vaccination.

What are the consequences of non-compliance with the District's vaccination and testing requirements?

We hope everyone will participate in testing as mandated by the District. Instances in which a staff member does not participate in testing will be evaluated on an individualized basis, on their own merits, in consideration of the totality of the circumstances, and in conjunction with just cause principles.

Mitigation, Quarantining and Testing

Should I be vaccinated even if I've already had COVID-19?

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) recommends that you get vaccinated regardless of whether you already had COVID-19. Evidence is emerging that people get better protection by being fully vaccinated compared with having had COVID-19.

Learn more from the CDC about the [benefits of getting a COVID-19 vaccine](#).

If I'm fully vaccinated, do I still need to wear a facial covering and practice mitigation behaviors?

Yes. On August 31, 2021, the Pennsylvania Department of Health (DOH) signed a [public health order](#) mandating that all PK-12 employees and students wear a face covering regardless of vaccination status.

If I become fully vaccinated after regular testing starts, am I required to keep participating in regular testing?

You are required to continue weekly testing until your proof of vaccination has been uploaded and you have received an email verifying that you do not need to continue testing. You are welcome to continue to participate in testing after your vaccination status has been verified.

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Other Related Testing & Vaccination Concerns

Do I have to pay for weekly COVID-19 tests?

There are no costs to staff who are participating in the weekly COVID-19 testing provided through the District.

How should an employee respond to someone who inquires if the employee is vaccinated?

The District's expectation is that the answer is professional and respectful. Some examples of that response might resemble, but are not limited to:

- *Thank you for asking. Yes, I am vaccinated.*
- *Thank you for asking. No, I am not vaccinated.*
- *I appreciate your question and understand your concern with your child's health & wellness. I'm not comfortable sharing my medical history with you. I can assure you, I am following the District's health and safety plan.*
- *I appreciate your question and understand your concern with your child's health & wellness. For this discussion, it is important that we focus on your child's learning and progress. I can assure you, I am following the District's health and safety plan.*

Will the District charge me more on my health insurance if I am not vaccinated?

The District is not considering health care surcharges for non-vaccinated individuals.

Do employees have to use their vacation days and sick days in order to get the vaccine or if you get the vaccine and have a reaction to it?

Employees are encouraged to make reasonable efforts to obtain a vaccination outside of working hours. There are opportunities outside of working hours to obtain the vaccine without disrupting the workday. Leave may be available if a vaccine cannot be obtained outside of working hours. An employee may use a sick day if an adverse reaction to the vaccine is experienced.

Resources

PA Department of Health COVID-19 Testing Info:

[Symptoms & Testing \(pa.gov\)](#)

[Home - Concentric by Ginkgo](#)

Vaccination Information:

[COVID-19 Vaccine \(pa.gov\)](#)

[Vaccines.gov - Find COVID-19 vaccine locations near you](#)

[Coronavirus Disease 2019 \(COVID-19\) | CDC](#)

[COVID-19 Vaccine Booster Shot | CDC](#)

[Coronavirus \(COVID-19\) | UPMC Health Plan](#)

[COVID-19 – Symptom Checker - Highmark Answers \(discoverhighmark.com\)](#)

[cv19_vaccine_mythbusting_aug2021.pdf \(aft.org\)](#)