

# Maine Regional School Unit #22

Hampden, Newburgh, Winterport, Frankfort

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**August 9, 2021**

Dear Parents and Guardians:

Thank you for your continued partnership as we continue to manage COVID 19 in our school buildings. In an effort to prevent the spread of COVID-19, we have been working closely with the Maine Department of Education to implement a free COVID-19 pooled testing program for students and staff in all of the buildings in RSU 22 for the 2021-2022 school year.

The purpose of this letter is to ask your permission to regularly test your child as part of the pooled testing program. Pooled testing involves collecting several individuals' test swabs together into one "pool" and then testing the pooled sample for COVID-19. This approach increases the number of individuals that can be tested at one time and allows us to regularly test our school community for COVID-19. The Maine Department of Education and RSU 22 are striving to achieve 30% of our students and staff participate in the pooled testing program to forgo most social distancing requirements.

Pooled testing will be performed once per week, using a shallow nasal self-swab for all participating students and staff members. We will receive the pool results within 24-48 hours. If the result of the pool is negative, then all individuals are presumed to not have COVID-19. If the pool returns a positive result, all individuals in the pool will be retested using the Abbott BinaxNOW Rapid Antigen Diagnostic Test. You will be notified if your child requires follow-up testing. Individuals with no symptoms and a negative rapid test will no longer be required to quarantine. **RSU 22** will report all follow-up test results to the Maine CDC's Redcap reporting system.

To allow your student to participate in the COVID-19 Pooled Testing Program, including consent to pool test, consent for any necessary follow up Abbott BinaxNow Rapid Antigen tests, and consent to share test result information with the Maine CDC, please complete a consent. **Consents are available through the buildings' main offices and the RSU 22 website.**

We are extremely grateful to our committed students, staff and families that continue to show great flexibility and resilience as we begin to navigate this upcoming school year. It takes all of us working together to contain the spread of this virus. RSU 22 is excited to add pooled testing as another mitigation strategy for our school community.

If you have questions regarding the COVID-19 Pooled Testing Program, please reach out to Brittany Layman, Health and Wellness Coordinator for RSU 22 (blayman@rsu22).

FOR PARENTS

# Hello and welcome to your pooled testing program!

Our mission at Concentric by Ginkgo is to make testing accessible for every school in America. We use a method called pooling that dramatically lowers costs without sacrificing accuracy, making it possible to test every student, every week.



## *Why should we test for COVID-19 in schools? Why should my student participate in pooled testing?*

You know the old saying: “knowledge is power.” Tools like pooled testing empower us to make great decisions. Without knowing the prevalence of COVID-19 in your school, it’s tough for school leaders to make informed decisions about safeguarding your school community, returning to school, or continuing in-person learning.

## *What is classroom pooling? How does it work?*

Classroom pooling tests up to 25 people using one test. All students in a class, pod, or cohort swab their own noses using short nasal swabs; think: cotton swabs. (We like to say, “if you can pick your nose, you can take this test!”) Then, everyone places their swabs in a single tube (that’s the pooling step). The samples in that tube are then run using one test. [See it in action here.](#)

## *How accurate is Concentric’s test?*

Molecular tests like our pooled test are typically highly accurate at detecting the virus that causes COVID-19. We validated our pooled test by comparing its performance against an FDA-authorized “gold standard” PCR test. Our test correctly identified 96% of the positive tests detected by the PCR test and 100% of the negative tests (meaning that there were no false positives). The pooled results in our study matched the expected individual results 100% of the time.

Each of our lab partners has also validated their test by comparing performance to an FDA-authorized “gold standard” PCR test. [Click here](#) to read our validation reports for our lab at Ginkgo and all our partner labs across the country. Fair warning: it’s a bit dense!

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## *What happens if my child's pool is positive?*

While we understand a positive test result can cause concern, a positive result means the routine testing program is doing exactly what it was designed to do: monitoring pockets of infections. This can help your school stop or mitigate potential outbreaks. A positive pooled test result enables your school to take further steps to safeguard your student, you, and your community.

Your school has designed a policy to respond to a positive pool. Please reach out to your school directly about its specific guidelines and available resources.

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## *Is my child's privacy protected?*

We take privacy concerns very seriously and will never use test results for any reason other than to help your school make decisions about safeguarding its community and continuing in-person learning.

We provide pooled test results directly to schools and minimize access to results to only people authorized by each school. Since our test is a public health tool designed for communities, we're only interested in collecting or analyzing data that will enable schools to formulate the best public health response to COVID-19.

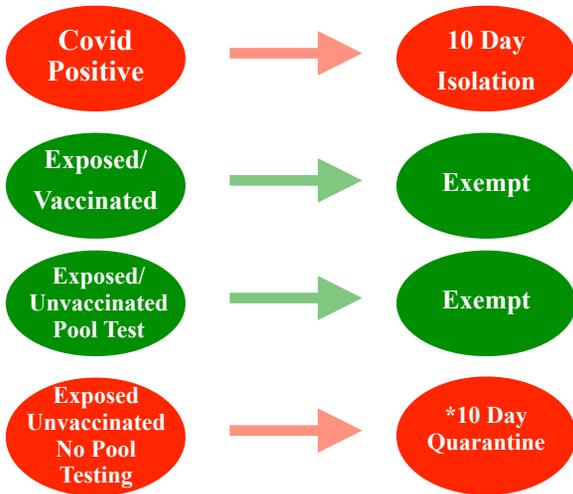
We safeguard student's privacy through several layers of protection. [Please read our full blog post on this](#); we think it's important and want you to understand how we take this responsibility seriously and with care.

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## *What if I have other questions?*

For more information on Concentric by Ginkgo visit our website [www.concentricbyginkgo.com](http://www.concentricbyginkgo.com) where we have answers to many FAQs. Or, check out our blog [www.concentricbyginkgo.com/blog](http://www.concentricbyginkgo.com/blog) which we regularly update to answer questions in longer form.

## Understanding Current Quarantine Guidelines



\*Quarantine is defined as home with family members only, and no public interactions.

## Current Screening Tools

### Northern Light Healthcare Systems

<https://northernlighthealth.org/Questionnaire/COVID-Sports-Checker>

### Regional School Unit 22

Student at Home Health Screening Questionnaire

[www.rsu22.us](http://www.rsu22.us) home page

## QUESTIONS

If you have questions regarding the COVID-19 Pooled Testing Program, please reach out to Brittany Layman, Health and Wellness Coordinator for RSU 22 ([blayman@rsu22](mailto:blayman@rsu22)).

## COVID-19 POOLED TESTING

## WHY

### have pool testing in schools?

When students, teachers, and staff get tested for COVID-19 every week we can:

- ✓ Find infections
- ✓ Isolate infections
- ✓ Prevent spread



## WHAT ARE THE BENEFITS

REGIONAL SCHOOL UNIT 22  
24 Main Road North  
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# HOW DOES POOLED TESTING BENEFIT RSU 22?

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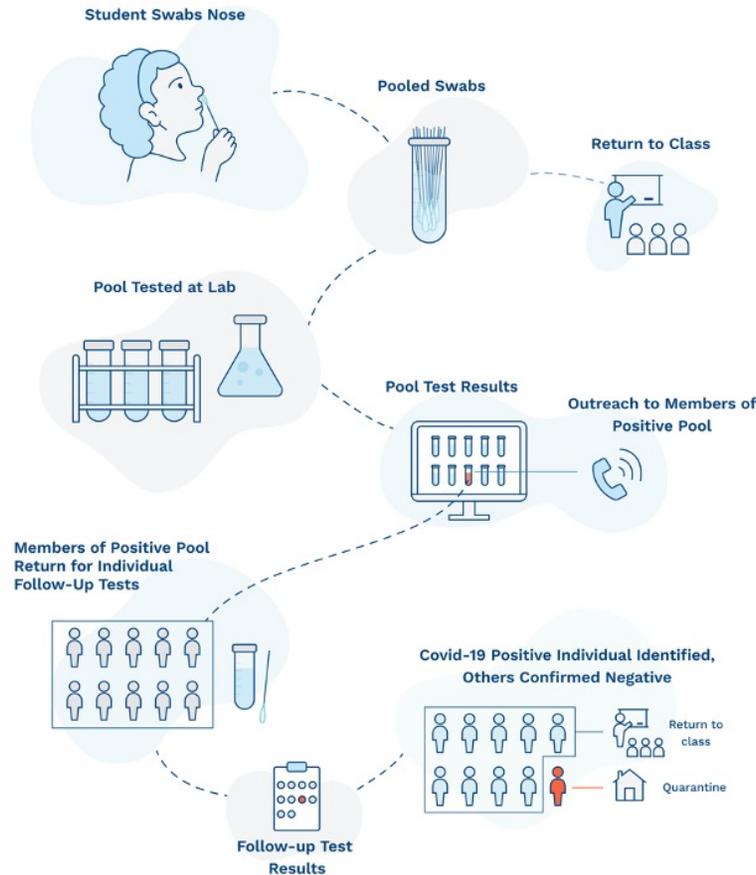
## WHAT IS POOL TESTING?

Pooled testing involves collecting several individuals' test swabs together into one "pool" and then testing the pooled sample for COVID-19. This approach increases the number of individuals that can be tested at one time and allows us to regularly test our school community for COVID-19. The Maine Department of Education and RSU 22 are striving to achieve 30% of our students and staff participate in the pooled testing program to forgo most social distancing requirements.

Pooled testing is a PRC test that will be performed once per week, using a shallow nasal self-swab for all participating students and staff members. We will receive the pool results within 24-48 hours.

## HOW DO THE RESULTS IMPACT MY CHILD?

If the result of the pool is negative, then all individuals are presumed to not have COVID-19. If the pool returns a positive result, all individuals in the pool will be retested using the Abbott BinaxNOW Rapid Antigen Diagnostic Test. You will be notified if your child requires follow-up testing. Individuals with no symptoms



and a negative rapid test will no longer be required to quarantine. **RSU 22** will report all follow-up test results to the Maine CDC's Redcap reporting system.

## HOW TO PARTICIPATE?

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## THANK YOU!

We are extremely grateful to our committed students, staff and families that continue to show great flexibility and resilience as we begin to navigate this upcoming school year. It takes all of us working together to contain the spread of this virus. RSU 22 is excited to add pooled testing as another mitigation strategy for our school community.