

## **FAQ – COVID Testing**

### **What is the average amount of time after receiving a COVID test that results will be received?**

Turnaround time (TAT) for laboratory test results is dependent on laboratory capacity. Typically, the TAT for test results from the state lab is 2-3 calendar days. The TAT can increase when the demand for testing is high. Private reference labs may be able to offer a shorter TAT and should be considered as an option for testing.

### **Can the school be notified of a confirmed or probable case as quickly as possible?**

–Schools should ask parents/guardians to notify the school as quickly as possible with any confirmed or probable COVID-19 cases. It is important that schools communicate this expectation to parents/guardians early and often. The local health department (LHD) will also receive a report of a confirmed or probable case from either a lab or provider. However, the report does not necessarily include school information (unless the school was the test submitter). This means that the LHD must obtain this information by interviewing the case/parent/legal guardian. The LHD will notify the school as soon as they have acquired the school information. Schools should identify a point of contact for LHDs, including someone who can be reached after hours.

### **If a student or staff member presents a note or negative COVID -19 test result, for how many days is that test result valid?**

A negative polymerase chain reaction (PCR) test is valid only for the day on which it was reported. It denotes that on the day that the sample was collected, the individual being tested did not have any detectable virus in their system. Because the incubation period (time from exposure to infection) for COVID-19 is 2-14 calendar days, a person with a negative test may still develop infection at some point during the incubation period.