



January 2022

Dear Thames Valley Families:

In an effort to help slow the spread of COVID-19, reduce absenteeism, and to continue to support our school communities, the Thames Valley District School Board is pleased to offer rapid antigen test (RAT) kits, provided by the Ministry of Education, for **symptomatic** students and staff.

In alignment with the updated testing guidance from Ontario's Chief Medical Officer of Health, individuals may use rapid antigen tests if they are **experiencing symptoms** compatible with COVID-19. The test kit provided to you contains two rapid antigen tests. This testing option is **voluntary** for students, children and staff. If a symptomatic individual chooses **not** to participate, they are presumed positive and should isolate immediately and follow updated testing guidance:

https://www.health.gov.on.ca/en/pro/programs/publichealth/coronavirus/docs/school_childcare_guidance_omicron.pdf

Please read the information below carefully, if choosing to participate.

When to Use a Take-home Rapid Antigen Screening Kit:

- For individuals choosing to participate in this testing option, they must display symptoms commonly associated with COVID-19. As outlined in the updated guidance (https://www.health.gov.on.ca/en/pro/programs/publichealth/coronavirus/docs/2019_reference_doc_symptoms.pdf), this includes:
 - Fever and/or chills; OR
 - Cough; OR
 - Shortness of breath; OR
 - Decrease or loss of taste or smell; OR
 - **Two or more of:**
 - runny nose/nasal congestion
 - headache
 - extreme fatigue
 - sore throat
 - muscle aches/joint pain
 - gastrointestinal symptoms (i.e. vomiting or diarrhea)
- Symptomatic individuals must complete the rapid antigen tests **at home**.
- **If the first RAT test is positive there is no need to use the second test.** A positive RAT is highly indicative that the individual has COVID-19. A positive RAT does NOT need to be confirmed with a PCR test. **Positive RAT tests do NOT need to be reported to the public health unit, school or child care.**
- **If the first RAT test is negative complete the second test separated by 24-48 hours.**

Using the Take-home Rapid Antigen Screening Kit:

Thames Valley District School Board has provided instructions on how to use the rapid antigen test within the kit (package).

Important note: Parents or guardians may choose to administer this screening on children who may need help (i.e. younger children).

What to do after your test:

- You will know the outcome of the test within 15 minutes.
- **If the first rapid antigen test is positive**, there is no need to use the second test. A positive rapid antigen test is highly indicative that the individual has COVID-19. **Positive rapid antigen tests do NOT need to be reported to the public health unit, school or child care.**
- **If the first rapid antigen test is negative**, complete the second test within 24-48 hours of the first test. If two consecutive rapid antigen tests, separated by 24-48 hours, are both **negative**, the symptomatic individual is less likely to have COVID-19 infection, and the individual should isolate until symptoms are improving for at least 24 hours (or 48 hours if gastrointestinal symptoms are present).

Positive Results:

- **If the individual who tests positive is fully vaccinated or 11 years of age or younger**, they must self-isolate for at least 5 days from symptom onset and until their symptoms have been improving for 24 hours (or 48 hours if gastrointestinal symptoms), whichever is longer in duration.
- **If the individual who tests positive is 12 years of age or older and is either partially vaccinated or unvaccinated** they must self-isolate for 10 days from symptom onset or from the date of their test (whichever was earlier).
- **If the individual who tests positive is immune compromised (regardless of age and vaccination status)** they must self-isolate for 10 days from the onset of symptoms, or from the date of their test (whichever came sooner).
 - If symptoms persist / worsen, individuals are encouraged to seek advice from Telehealth or their health care provider.

Please note: in alignment with updated testing guidance, there is **no confirmatory PCR test required** if an individual tests positive. For more information about what to do if you receive a positive test results, please following the guidance found at:

https://www.health.gov.on.ca/en/pro/programs/publichealth/coronavirus/docs/school_childcare_guidance_omicron.pdf

There is no requirement of parents/ guardians to report their child's rapid results to the school or child care, as per Ministry of Health guidance.

Sincerely,

Thames Valley District School Board