

WHITEHALL CENTRAL SCHOOL DISTRICT

PO Box 29, 87 Buckley Road, Whitehall, New York 12887-3633
Whitehall – Birthplace of the U. S. Navy – www.railroaders.net

Ethan Burgess
Jr-Sr High School Principal
518 499-1770
eburgess@railroaders.net

Patrick M. Dee
Superintendent of Schools
518 499-1772
pdee@railroaders.net

Judy Gould
Elementary School Principal
518 499-0330
jgould@railroaders.net

Julie Umar
Director of Special Education
518 499-1771
jumar@railroaders.net

Kate DuBois
School Business Manager
518 499-0346
kdubois@railroaders.net

The goal of the Whitehall Central School District is to remain open for in person learning for as long as possible. If the district becomes a designated “Yellow Zone”, in order to maintain in-person instruction, the district will be required to randomly test 20% of our in-person population (*students, faculty, staff, and administration*).

In the event that the region is a designated “Yellow”, “Orange”, or “Red” Zone, the district has developed a testing plan in order to remain open for in-person instruction; to the greatest extent possible. The testing plan can be located on the district’s webpage. Listed below are some important excerpts from the plan:

- The lowest level of micro-cluster designation is “Yellow”. If we are within a designated “Yellow” Zone, the district would be required to randomly test 20% of our in-person students and staff for COVID-19, within two weeks, as part of the process to remain open.
- The district will allow parents to provide written proof of outside testing in lieu of the district’s onsite testing program result. In order for the outside test to be included in the required 20%, the test must be done during the micro-cluster timeframe. For example: if the region is classified as “Yellow” on a Tuesday, a test completed on Monday would not be counted as our 20%; however, a test on Wednesday would.
- Parents of younger children or students with special needs will be allowed to accompany their child to be tested. The district is working to identify testing availability for after school hours, if needed.
- Testing for employees is considered a condition of employment and employees will be part of the random testing when selected.
- Students receiving full remote instruction do not need to complete this form or be tested.

Listed below are some Frequently Asked Questions

Q: When will the testing plan in Whitehall be initiated?

A: If the district becomes a designated COVID-19 micro cluster zone (i.e. Yellow, Orange, or Red), to remain open for in-person instruction the district is required to test. The testing plan will be initiated once (if) the area becomes a “Yellow Zone.” However, the district may begin to collect testing consent forms prior to a micro-cluster designation so that in the event we are a designated zone, we are better able to quickly activate our plan.

Q: What happens if I do not provide permission to test my child?

A: Permission to test becomes important when the district is required to meet the state testing standard to remain open for in-person learning. As an alternative, parents do have the option of obtaining their own testing and providing timely, written proof to the district or opting for full remote learning.

Q: Who will perform the tests?

A: The district has contracted with Adirondack Health and Wellness to administer the tests. (<https://www.adkhw.com/>). The individual administering the test will be a properly trained, and certified, medical professional and will work in conjunction with district personnel.

Q: Why isn't the district nurse conducting the test?

A: In order to administer a medical exam, a facility must have an LSL (*Limited Service Laboratory*) certificate. This is not a certificate that school districts hold and the liability and administration of this certificate can be problematic for a school.

Q: Where will the testing be done?

A: The district will select an appropriate location on campus in conjunction with advice and recommendations from the Department of Health and Adirondack Health and Wellness.

Q: What type of test will the district use?

A: The BinaxNOW™ COVID-19 Ag Card rapid antigen test is the only COVID-19 test device that will be distributed to schools by the NYSDOH under a Limited Service Laboratory (LSL). It consists of a nasal swab that provides results in 15 minutes.

- Binex Rapid Antigen tests: <https://www.globalpointofcare.abbott/en/support/product-installation-training/navica-brand/navica-binaxnow-ag-training.html>
- This link will bring you to a demonstration of the actual test from Adirondack Health and Wellness: <https://www.adkhw.com/covid-video>

Q: Will parents be notified before testing? After?

A: If the district enters a micro-cluster zone designation, all parents will be notified of our intent to initiate our testing plan. When a child is randomly selected to be tested, parents will be notified. Parents will also receive the results of the testing.

Q: Will parents of children with special needs, or medical anxieties, be able to accompany their children during the testing?

A: Although NYS schools, including Whitehall, as part of their re-opening plans, have greatly restricted visitors to school buildings, we will work directly with parents in these exceptional circumstances to find a workable solution. Additionally, we will work with Adirondack Health and Wellness to try and schedule after school hours for parents to accompany their child to testing if they choose.

Q: How will HIPAA rights be addressed?

A: As a public-school district, and Adirondack Health and Wellness as a licensed medical organization, we are mandated to follow the HIPAA law. The tests and results will be protected.