

Dear Mallard Creek Parents, Caregivers, and Guardians,

We're excited to be back in the classroom together. As part of the steps to help stop the spread of COVID-19 and keep our school open for in-person learning, we will offer a **free optional COVID-19 Testing Program for students**. Diagnostic testing will help protect our students, staff, family members, and others who are unvaccinated against COVID-19 or are otherwise at risk of becoming seriously ill from COVID-19. This will help us keep students in the classroom and able to take part in the school activities they love. Visit the [COVID-19 Testing FAQ](#) page for more information.

We are working with the North Carolina Department of Health and Human Services (NCDHHS) and a state vendor [Ginkgo Bioworks](#) partnering with [Lighthouse](#) to support testing of staff and students.

Who will be tested? Any families who opt-in to the testing program will be able to access diagnostic testing for their students. Students can receive on-site testing at school if they develop symptoms of COVID-19 or have been identified as a close contact and want to reduce quarantine time (student must be symptom-free for 5 days to receive a test; after a negative test the student can return to school on day 8).

- **How is the testing done?** The COVID-19 testing is free, quick, and easy. Trained staff will oversee testing and support staff from Mecklenburg County Health may administer a PCR test, which includes:
 - Students self-swab using the short nasal swabs on the inner part of the lower nostril. This test is not painful.
 - The swab is placed in a tube, staff package the test which is mailed to a lab for processing.
- **Where and when is the testing done?** Testing will be conducted in the school with an adult observing the student while they collect the sample. The school will receive test results within 24-48 hours.
- **How can I be sure that my child's information will be protected?** Sharing of information about your child will only be done for public health purposes and in accordance with applicable law and policies protecting student privacy and the security of your child's data.

This letter asks for your permission to register your child for COVID-19 diagnostic testing. To provide consent, use this unique code after logging into the [Consent Form](#):

[MallardCreek](#): Please do not share

Consent allows CMS to test a student if symptoms consistent with COVID-19 appear or if he/she/they have been in close contact with a person with COVID-19 while in school.

To learn more or register your child, please visit our [Student Testing FAQ](#) or contact Vincent Armstrong at 980-343-6011 or by email: vincent.armstrong@cms.k12.nc.us

We are extremely grateful to our committed families and staff who continue to show great flexibility and resilience as we work together to contain the spread of this virus. If you have questions regarding the COVID-19 Testing Program, please reach out.

Sincerely,

Shalinda Williams - Principal

CDC recommends everyone 12 years and older get a COVID-19 vaccine to help protect against COVID-19. COVID-19 vaccines are safe, effective, and free. Getting vaccinated prevents severe illness, hospitalizations, and death. Visit [vaccines.gov](https://www.cdc.gov/vaccines) to find vaccination providers near you.