

Dear MMS Families,

As we shared earlier this week and in last night's town hall, MMS will be requiring that all students, faculty, and staff participate in weekly COVID-19 testing.

For our new families and those who might want a reminder, the testing works as follows: Every person on campus will need to submit a weekly saliva sample. A collection of those samples will be "pooled" and tested for COVID-19. If the pool is positive, pairs of samples will be analyzed, and the individual positive sample(s) will be uncovered.

With the high transmissibility of the Delta variant, we feel that universal testing is one of the best ways to protect our students, faculty, staff, and their families. The additional cost of testing was at the forefront of our planning decisions. After using Mirimus last year, we looked into several other testing companies again this summer. We hoped there would be an option that accepted insurance that would be equally as effective, straightforward and painless for children and families to use, and as easy to operationalize as Mirimus. Unfortunately, we could not find a viable alternative. We understand that there is a wealth of testing options now. However, allowing families to opt out of the Mirimus plan and test elsewhere is untenable. It would place a tremendous burden on the nurse to track individual students' results on top of managing the Mirimus testing and the regular ebb and flow of sick students, parent calls, etc. For all these reasons, we are requiring that every student participate in our testing program. The Health Advisory Committee and administrative leaders will continue to review whether testing is necessary. In that case, as we have done in the past with other programs, unused testing fees will revert back to parents as a credit on tuition payments or the like.

My team has created an extensive FAQ, which you'll see below. If there are any questions that it doesn't answer, feel free to reach out to health@mmsny.org.

Sincerely,

Racheal Adriko

Head of School

MIRIMUS TESTING FAQ

How does my child collect the sample?

Your test kit includes a sample tube and a straw for collecting the saliva. Here's a [graphic](#) describing the process.

If providing adequate sample volume is a challenge, the following may help increase saliva production:

- Gently rubbing the outside of your cheeks
- Making chewing motions with your mouth
- Smelling or imagining sour foods such as lemons
- Thinking about your own favorite food

When you're done, return the sample in the bag that you received it in; All bags are color-coded so they are collected with the right pool.

When will tests occur?

Test kits will be disseminated to students on Friday. They will need to be dropped off at the front of school on Monday morning. On days when MMS is off on Friday or Monday, we will have an alternative plan.

What is the cost of testing per child?

The cost per child will be \$22.50 per week, or a discounted rate \$11.25 per week for families who receive tuition assistance or have more than two children. That's an annual fee of \$900 a year or \$450 a year, respectively. This cost will cover testing from now through the end of the year. If MMS decides to discontinue testing mid-year, unused testing fees will revert back to parents as a credit on tuition payments or the like. The total cost for the year will be added to your invoice for the month of September, and we will allow 90 days to complete payment.

Who qualifies for the tuition assistance rate?

This rate is for families who receive tuition assistance or have more than two children.

Will I be able to submit for reimbursement to my insurance?

No, that is not possible at this time.

Can I use FSA to pay for testing?

You will need to contact your employer's program to check if testing costs can be reimbursed.

If my child needs to quarantine, or the school goes remote for any reason, will I receive reimbursement for Mirimus tests not taken?

No. MMS has signed a testing contract for several months out, thereby locking in costs. We cannot recoup those costs whether students are in school for testing or not.

What information is collected by the testing company and how is my/child's privacy protected?

While sample bags will include the student's name so they are distributed accurately at school, Mirimus will only be tracking the barcode on the sample collection tube. People will only be asked to provide personal information if they or their child's test is one in a positive pair after a pool has been identified to be positive [see the following question for more details].

What happens if there is a positive pool?

If there is a positive pool, we will notify the NYC Department of Health and follow their procedures for contact tracing and closure. Mirimus will then begin re-testing the pool's samples in pairs to determine which pair has the virus. Families or faculty/staff in a positive pair will be sent a link to a third-party results reporting platform provided by Meenta.io to collect and process the regulatory requirements for an individual diagnosis. When each individual follows the provided link, they will be prompted to enter their saliva sample barcode and register for a personal account on the third-party results platform. Each individual will register for an account, sign consent, provide demographics, and answer health history screening questions. When each individual's test result is available, the individual associated with the sample barcode will be notified via email that their results are available. Each individual will log back into the reporting platform and will be able to view and download their individual diagnostic test result. There will be no additional costs to parents for the "retest" of the positive pool, this saves individuals from obtaining a PCR from an outside source.

What's the chance of a false positive, and what do we do?

False positives are possible but very rare. The test utilized by Mirimus detects three different unique viral RNA templates. For a positive result, at least two RNA templates must be detected. The protocols used substantially decrease false positives created by detecting dead viral particles. If your sample is positive, and you doubt the result, you are always welcome to get re-tested elsewhere.

What happens if my child (or self, for teachers) has already had COVID?

Any person who has tested positive in the last 90 days will not be able to participate in the pooled testing right away. Please reach out to the nurse (health@mmsny.org) if this is the case for your child.

Considering there is already in-school testing, why would a sick teacher or child need to take additional PCR tests to return to school?

Based on our experience from last year, these additional measures kept our community safe and contributed to an environment where there was zero in-school transmission. Any test represents a moment in time, and in the week between tests, infection and transmission can occur. For the safety of our community, we will still be requiring sick teachers and students to take tests in order to return to school.

Will asymptomatic cases still lead to quarantines?

Yes, an infected person who is asymptomatic can still transmit the virus and sicken others.

What happens if my child misses their testing day because they are out that week or forget to bring their sample to school?

They will be required to submit a negative PCR test from an outside provider in order to return to school, or they can take a sample outside the school building.