

GARRISON FOREST SCHOOL

300 GARRISON FOREST ROAD • OWINGS MILLS, MARYLAND 21117

Dear Parents and Families,

We hope you are enjoying a restful start to winter break. Hopefully, you are able to disconnect a bit and enjoy time together as a family.

We are writing with an important update about our return to campus after break. Given the length of winter break and the increased chance of travel or spending time with those outside of our households, **we will be requiring a negative PCR COVID test result** from all faculty and staff and all K-12 students who are planning to return to campus prior to our return to school. To help facilitate this initiative, **we will be offering on-site testing on the GFS campus from Wednesday-Friday, January 6-8**. You will receive an email next week containing all the details you need about signing up for your test, but here is an overview of what you need to know:

- The on-site testing will be done in your car in a drive-through set-up. We will provide additional information in next week's communication.
- Because we are working with a company (see below for additional information) with a dedicated lab space, they have guaranteed us test results within 24-48 hours.
- Families who choose to use this testing service will be charged a fee of \$75 per student to their student's account.
- You may choose to use another testing site for your child's test; however, your student must test AFTER January 4 and test results must be submitted to the GFS Health Center two days prior to your child's return to school (see chart below). This must be a PCR test; antigen ("rapid") tests will not be accepted. Please note that if a negative test result cannot be provided by 48 hours before your child is scheduled to return to campus, your child should plan to learn virtually for that week.

	Return to school	Testing requirements
Preschool	Virtual: Monday, January 4 In-person: Monday, January 11	Testing not required (Preschool faculty and staff will have mandatory testing)
Lower School	Virtual: Monday, January 4 In-person: Monday, January 11	Testing required after January 4, with results submitted no later than 8:00 a.m. on January 9
Middle School	Virtual: Monday, January 4 In-person: Tuesday, January 12	Testing required after January 4, with results submitted no later than 8:00 a.m. on January 10
Upper School	Virtual: Monday, January 4 In-person: Wednesday, January 13	Testing required after January 4, with results submitted no later than 8:00 a.m. on January 11

- Sign-up for on-campus tests will open on Wednesday, December 30, and will close 48 hours prior to the test date. You will receive an email on Tuesday, December 29 with more details about registering. We will

also provide instructions on how to submit your test results if you will not be using the on-campus testing service.

- If students choose not to or cannot test, they may quarantine (for asymptomatic individuals). Their quarantine would begin on January 4, with an in-person return to school on Monday, January 18. You will need to affirm that your child followed all quarantine procedures, including avoiding any contact outside of the household and was not symptomatic at any point.
- Families of boarding students will receive additional information from Mrs. Blackburn soon after this email.

You can find additional information on [this FAQ page](#).

Please know that this decision to require testing and to offer it on our campus was made after many discussions with medical professionals and consideration of risk factors surrounding our safe return to campus. Keeping our campus open and doing so while ensuring the health and safety of our entire community remains our key goal. We have shown that, as a community, we can work together to maintain an open and healthy campus; testing is one additional step we can all take to ensure we can continue learning together, on campus.

About the testing company

We will be partnering with [Avalon Lab Solutions](#), located nearby, to process the testing. Their location and having dedicated lab space ensures a timely test result for anyone testing with us. The nurses from CMAG Health Solutions will administer tests, which are full PCR/RNA extraction. CMAG is co-owned by GFS alumna Angela Gustus '93.

While we are confident that adding testing to our toolbox is an important step to combat the spread of COVID-19 within our community, this does not mean we can be less vigilant. All of the other steps we are already taking—wearing masks, maintaining social distance on and off campus, completing the daily health screening through the Magnus app and following all state and school mandates regarding travel—are still vital. We ask that you take our shared responsibility seriously, especially over winter break, and make decisions that will ensure we can have a safe and successful return to school. This means, per the governor's order, limiting travel and gatherings and continuing to monitor your child for any symptoms or potential exposure to the virus.

Next week's email will contain all the details you need for signing up for your testing time slot. In the meantime, please reach out with any questions or concerns.

Wishing you and your families a very happy holiday. Please take good care.

Best wishes,

Chris Hughes
Head of School

Kristin Franzen
Director, GFS Health Center



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