



GLADWYNE MONTESSORI

The future of education: here, **now**.

INTRODUCTION

Gladwyne Montessori will begin conducting pool COVID-19 surveillance testing on Tuesday, September 28. Testing will be piloted with faculty, staff and will progress into classrooms that have achieved 100% consent from caregivers. Embarking on this pooled COVID-19 testing program will enable the School Nurse to identify positive cases before symptoms emerge or at the early stage of illness. Surveillance testing will reduce the likelihood that the Montgomery County Department of Health will quarantine an entire classroom for 7-10 days.

COVID-19 POOLED TESTING FAQ's

What are the CDC's recommendations regarding school testing? The CDC recommends that schools use layered prevention strategies—including testing—to support full-time in-person learning. The CDC also recommends testing at least once per week when using testing programs, ([CDC guidance as of August 2021](#)).

What pooled testing program has Gladwyne Montessori selected? Beginning in July 2021, Gladwyne Montessori's School Nurse began researching programs for in-school testing. The program offered by [Concentric by Ginko](#) was selected as most ideal for our school's needs.

How will pooled testing work?

- We will begin pooled testing once each week, on Tuesdays.
- The School Nurse will come to each classroom and will sit outside, in a location that is not visible from inside the classroom, and will partner with faculty, who will escort children to the Nurse when it is their turn.
- The School Nurse will conduct a shallow nasal swab for each member of a classroom.

How long will this testing program be utilized by Gladwyne Montessori? Gladwyne Montessori will have access to the program for the 2021/2022 school year. We will begin with weekly testing but may be able to change the frequency as determined by the number of children who become sick at Gladwyne Montessori, the positivity rate in our community, and evidence of community spread in our area.

Can parents be present when children are undergoing testing? No, as testing will take place during the school day. If parents feel strongly about being present during testing, they may elect to have their child(ren) tested privately weekly and share results with our [School Nurse](#). Please contact our School Nurse if this is your intention.



How will the school reduce / address anxiety that testing may raise in children? Our School Nurse, who has extensive experience working with very young children and talking them through medical procedures will be the only individual conducting testing. Children will be able to ask questions throughout their testing experience and will be able to visit the nurse's office to practice if they would like.

My child has had a negative experience with a COVID-19 test and is not comfortable with nasal swabs. Please tell me more about the test itself. The nurse will be administering a shallow nasal test swab, 4 swabs in each nostril. Unlike a nasopharyngeal (NP) swab, which reaches deep into the nose to take a sample from the back of the throat, a shallow nasal sample is taken from the lower part of the front of the nose, at least half an inch inside the nostril. This method decreases discomfort. Our younger children will be directly participating in their own testing, with our Nurse's direct assistance, to allow the children a sense of control. Our older students will eventually be able to administer their own test, under the guidance and supervision of our Nurse.

Why are tests pooled, rather than individually assessed? Pooling covers many people with just one test; this reduces the cost of testing without sacrificing accuracy. If the pooled test result is negative, it's unlikely anyone is infected and students continue learning uninterrupted. If the pool result is positive the School Nurse will administer individual rapid antigen tests to each member of the pool to determine who is positive.

How long does testing take? Our School Nurse anticipates that each test administered will take approximately three minutes at first, but will speed up over time, likely taking as little as one minute per child.

Testing did not take place at school last year. Why is it needed now? This year, Gladwyne Montessori has returned to our fully-enrolled, multi-aged classroom environments (vs. pods within each classroom) and re-established academic groupings and before and after care programs. All of these allow for more programming and socialization, but mean that we are unable to *cohort* students or maintain a six foot distance between students within their learning environments. In addition to this, the Delta variant that has emerged is more contagious and affecting more children.

Why aren't you testing children under three years of age? The program offered by Concentric by Ginko is available for students in K thru 12th grade. However, if we only test the kindergarten-aged children in each room, we will not have an accurate picture of the health of the full class. Therefore, Gladwyne Montessori requested and received an exception to allow our three- and four-year old students to participate, allowing for a complete picture of the health of each Primary class.



Can a child who has already tested positive for COVID-19 participate in classroom pooling? Please inform the School Nurse if your child has tested positive for COVID-19 within the last three months. Your child will not be included in pooled testing for a period of time following their positive test result, as the test may detect leftover viral particles in a student's nose. This exception will be handled on a case by case basis with our School Nurse.

Is this a research program? How will information obtained in this testing be used? This is *not a research program*, nor is Gladwyne Montessori receiving funding or other benefits as a result of our participation. Test results will be accessible to and held in confidence by Gladwyne Montessori's School Nurse, just as she handles all other medical information provided to her. As required, positive rapid antigen test results will be shared with parents and with the Montgomery County Department of Health. The testing partners that we will be utilizing, Concentric and Ginkgo, *collect no individuals' information*; all information is stored outside of Concentric and Ginkgo's lab systems in our third-party partners' HIPAA compliant systems. These partners only collect the necessary information to provide results back in accordance with CLIA regulation and to report to public health authorities. In all cases, all data will be handled in accordance with HIPAA compliance.

What if I give consent and after a period of time, I decide that I no longer want my child to participate? Please contact [Gwen Shangle](#), [Susan Ballas](#) and/or [Carrie Kries](#) at any time, so that we can address your concerns. If we are unable to satisfy your concerns, you may withdraw consent. Doing so may compromise the school's ability to continue testing in that particular classroom, unless you are willing to test your child outside of school weekly.

What if my child gets an unexpected result on the rapid antigen individual test? We recognize that unexpected results can occur and we will talk with your family and the Montgomery County Department of Health to determine next steps.

Will I be notified if there is a positive pool, or a positive rapid antigen in my child's class? Yes, families of children in the classroom will receive an email.

Can I choose to keep my child at home if the pool was positive but their rapid antigen test was negative? Yes

Who should I contact if I have additional questions?

- **Carrie Kries, Head of School** | P: 610-649-1761 x 101 | E: ckries@gladwyne.org
- **Gwen Shangle, Assistant Head of School** | P: 610-649-1761 x 135 | E: gshangle@gladwyne.org
- **Susan Ballas, MSN, RN, CSN, School Nurse** | P: 610-649-1761 x 136 | E: sballas@gladwyne.org

Additional information on [Concentric by Ginko](#) is available by following [this link](#).