State of New Jersey
DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH
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Lt. Governor

JUDITH M. PERSICHILLI, RN, BSN, MA
Commissioner

January 1, 2021

Re: Testing of ill children suspected of having COVID-19 prior to return to school

Colleagues:

In the context of an ongoing state-wide second wave, New Jersey continues to experience COVID-19 transmission among school-aged children. In children, signs/symptoms are often mild, and it may not be possible to clinically distinguish COVID-19 from other illnesses. For this reason, the New Jersey Department of Health (NJDOH) recommends that **any child with COVID-19 compatible symptoms should not return to school until they have either received a negative viral test (molecular or antigen) for SARS-CoV-2 or they have completed an isolation period of at least 10 days since symptom onset and at least 24 hours after resolution of fever without fever-reducing medications with symptom improvement**. A purely clinical alternative diagnosis is no longer acceptable.

Providers should continue to work with local health departments to ensure that COVID-19 cases amongst K-12 students are identified for isolation, contact tracing, and quarantine. All healthcare providers, laboratories, and facilities performing testing for COVID-19 must report COVID-19-positive and negative laboratory- test results (molecular, antigen, serology) to public health authorities electronically through CDRSS (see below link) and all reported cases must contain complete contact information for the patient and healthcare provider. For providers who do not perform testing, a list of COVID-19 testing sites in New Jersey is available at the website linked below.

Should you have any questions regarding this guidance, please contact your local health department or the NJDOH at: DOH-CDS.COV.SCC@doh.nj.gov.

NJ Testing sites: https://covid19.nj.gov/pages/testing#test-sites
CDRSS: https://cdrs.doh.state.nj.us/cdrss/login/loginPage
NJ Local Health Department Directory: www.localhealth.nj.gov

Sincerely,

Edward Lifshitz

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