

Cheektowaga-Sloan Union Free School District

Mrs. Andrea L. Galenski
Superintendent of Schools
(716) 891-6402



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December 31, 2021

Dear Cheektowaga-Sloan Families,

I hope this communication finds you well and that you have had a chance to enjoy the holidays with your friends and families. I do apologize for disrupting the last few days of the holiday recess especially with today being New Year's Eve; however, I wanted to provide all families with information regarding an announcement that Governor Hochul made just a few days ago.

Earlier this week, Governor Hochul's Office asked school districts to distribute *free antigen tests* to interested families before the start of school on Monday. While testing **is not required** for students to return to school on Monday, it would be an opportunity for individuals to do as much as possible to ensure that Cheektowaga-Sloan continues to be a safe and healthy place for students and staff. We know how important in-person learning is for our students and this is just one more way to help maintain the safest teaching and learning environment possible.

While the concept makes sense given the rise in positive COVID cases in Erie County, we still do not have the tests and we are now approaching the holiday weekend. Despite not having the tests to date, we have been working hard all week to develop a plan that we can quickly roll out to our families should the tests arrive either today, or tomorrow.

If we receive the free antigen tests either today or tomorrow which will allow us time to pick them up, organize them, and prepare for distribution, the following plan will be put into place.

The tentative plan would be as follows:

On Sunday, January 2, 2022, we will have the free antigen tests available for any families who are interested in obtaining them. The tests can be picked-up in the front foyer of John F. Kennedy High School from 10:00 a.m. until 1:00 p.m. We ask that you park in the front parking lot and proceed to the front doors of JFK HS. We will have staff available to check off your child's name on our student enrollment list and once that has been done, you will be provided with a free antigen test for each child in your family. Please note that masks are required to be worn when entering JFK HS.

Do I have to pick up a test for my child? No, this is strictly optional for families.

How do I administer the tests? From what we have been told, instructions on how to administer the COVID tests are included in the pack. Please follow all instructions as given.

166 Halstead Avenue • Sloan, New York 14212-2295 • www.cheektowagasloan.org

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When should I administer the tests? The purpose of these tests is to help facilitate a safe return to school on Monday. With this in mind, the tests should be administered on either Sunday or early Monday morning.

What should I do if my child tests positive?

Any individual who tests positive for COVID should immediately isolate from others and contact their primary health care provider. Additionally, you should report the positive result to the Erie County Department of Health (ECDOH) by calling 716-858-2929.

Is this part of a Test-to-Stay program?

No. Test-to-Stay programs are designed for unvaccinated students who have been identified as close contacts in school. As long as they test negative for COVID and show no symptoms, they can still attend school rather than quarantine at home. Now that State and local health officials have come out in support of Test-to-Stay programs, the Erie County Superintendents have scheduled a call with the ECDOH next week to talk through the required protocols. I am looking forward to this call and plan on sending an update to all families once we have confirmed details of how this process will work.

While we believe the free antigen tests will be effective tools for helping to slow the spread of COVID, we ask that you continue to help us in any way possible to protect the health and safety of all students, staff and our community. If your child is not feeling well on Monday morning, please keep them home and follow the return-to-school guidelines that we have used all year. We ask that you also please call your child's school to report any illness so that we can ensure all guidelines are being followed.

I would like to conclude by thanking you for your time in reading this lengthy communication as well as your strong partnership for almost two years now as we have worked to educate our students during a pandemic. Your partnership with us means so very much. Together with your help, we have and will continue to work to maintain in-person learning for all students and keep our schools safe and healthy.

I will send out one more communication tomorrow letting all families know if our plan can be carried out on Sunday. We will have an alternative plan to distribute these free antigen tests should they not arrive on time for this Sunday's pick-up.

Please enjoy the holiday weekend with your families and be safe and well.

Sincerely,

Andrea L. Galenski

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