**Dear Parents, Caregivers, and Guardians,**

We know that last year was tough, but we’re excited to get back in the classroom this fall. We are committed to taking the steps necessary to help us have a safe return to school. As part of steps to help stop the spread of COVID-19 and keep our school open for in-person learning, we will offer a **free COVID-19 Testing Program for students and staff at Santa Fe Trail School District**.Regular testing will help protect our students, staff, family members, and others who are not vaccinated against COVID-19 or are otherwise at risk for getting seriously sick from COVID-19.

Through this program, we will be able to identify COVID-19 cases quickly and early, which can help us stop an outbreak before it happens. This will help us keep students in the classroom and able to take part in the school activities they love.

We are working with KDHE and our Osage County Health Department and are joining other school districts throughout the state that offer this program.

* **Who will be tested?** We will offer testing to everyone—all students and staff—even if they don’t have symptoms of COVID-19.
	+ Testing is also available for students and staff who have [symptoms of COVID-19](https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/symptoms-testing/symptoms.html), even if vaccinated, or who have been in close contact with someone with COVID-19.
* **How is the testing done?** The COVID-19 testing is free, quick, and easy. Members of our school staff will oversee testing with either a [NAAT/PCR or antigen] test, which includes:
	+ [For nasal tests] Gently swabbing the inner part of the lower nostril. This test is not painful. We do not use the longer swabs that reach higher into the nose.
	+ [For saliva tests:] A saliva sample.

Currently Santa Fe Trail School District has BinaxNOW antigen test available. The test is completed with a nasal swab.

* **Where and when is the testing done?** Our school’s testing sites will be available in all four buildings and will take place daily while serving a quarantine or upon request. Results will be available within 15 minutes.
* **How can I be sure that my child’s information will be protected?** Sharing of information about your child will only be done for public health purposes and in accordance with applicable law and policies protecting student privacy and the security of your child’s data.

**This letter asks your permission for us to:**

* **regularly test your child as part of a free COVID-19 testing program at school, and**
* **test your child if he or she shows symptoms consistent with COVID-19 or has been in close contact with a person with COVID-19 while in school.**

To learn more and provide consent for your student(s), please visit usd434.org to obtain the form.

We are extremely grateful to our committed families and staff who continue to show great flexibility and resilience as we work together to contain the spread of this virus. If you have questions regarding the COVID-19 Testing Program, please reach out to your school nurse, or your administrator.

Sincerely,

Jim Lentz

Superintendent

*CDC recommends everyone 12 years and older get a COVID-19 vaccine to help protect against COVID-19. COVID-19 vaccines are safe, effective, and free. Getting vaccinated prevents severe illness, hospitalizations, and death. Visit* [*vaccines.gov*](file:///C%3A%5CUsers%5Calana.johnson%5CAppData%5CLocal%5CMicrosoft%5CWindows%5CINetCache%5CContent.Outlook%5CA6R5RDHI%5Cvaccines.gov) *to find vaccination providers near you.*