

UCHICAGO Charter School



Frequently Asked Questions about UChicago Charter School's TEST TO STAY Program

February 1, 2022

In February 2022, the University of Chicago Charter School will be utilizing Test To Stay, a COVID-19 testing protocol for students and staff, which will allow more students to stay in school for in-person learning, rather than quarantining for remote learning when another student or staff member tests positive for COVID-19. This Frequently Asked Questions document provides answers to questions parents and staff may have regarding UChicago Charter's Test to Stay Program. For more information, contact your Campus Director. Thank you for your partnership in mitigating risks to our students and staff during this time.

1. What is Test To Stay?

- a. Test To Stay is a program that has already been used in other Chicago charter schools and other public schools since October 2021.
- b. Test To Stay allows all students who have been exposed to a positive case of COVID-19 to stay in school for in person learning if they agree to be tested 3 times in the 7 days after the exposure to the positive person has occurred.
- c. By using Test To Stay, UChicago Charter will stop the practice of quarantining a whole class or pod when one student or staff member tests positive. These quarantines were — in the past — 14 days long in 2021, and in January 2022, quarantines were 10 days long. These are long periods of remote instruction, which has value, but is not always as effective as in person learning.
- d. By using Test To Stay, UChicago Charter will be able to keep many more students in their classrooms learning in person, while safely isolating any students who test positive for COVID-19.

2. How exactly does Test to Stay work?

- a. Currently, UChicago Charter tests all its students who have not opted out once a week for COVID-19 using a saliva-based test. Test results come back the next day.

- b. Under Test to Stay, any student in a classroom or pod where a student tested positive would take an additional three tests for COVID-19. These 3 tests will be between 1 and 7 days following the exposure.
- 3. When does Test to Stay start at UChicago Charter School?**
- a. Test to Stay is scheduled to start on Monday, Feb. 7, 2022.
- 4. How Long will Test to Stay go on at UChicago Charter?**
- a. Test To Stay is scheduled to continue through the end of this school year: June 18, 2022.
- 5. Will there be Quarantines under Test to Stay?**
- a. **Before Feb. 7.**
 - i. Before Test to Stay, UChicago Charter was issuing quarantines of 14 or 10 days of whole classrooms to go into remote learning when there was one positive case. This was deemed the safest health protocol during this period.
 - b. **Beginning Feb. 7 – No Quarantines**
 - i. With the relatively new Test to Stay technology, UCCS can keep students in school for in person learning through frequent testing.
 - ii. When Test to Stay is implemented on Feb. 7, students in a class where another student has tested positive will NOT be quarantined. Instead, these students will continue to come to school, AND they will be tested 3 extra days after the positive case has been detected.
 - iii. Parents will receive an email from the Director when a positive case has been detected, and a classroom is being put on Test to Stay protocols – that is, 3 extra days of testing for the students in this classroom.
- 6. How many times will my child be tested in the Test To Stay program?**
- a. If your child’s classroom has a positive case, then your child will be tested 3 times after that positive case has been detected, on either a Monday, Wednesday or Friday or all of the above days.
 - b. If your child’s classroom does not experience a positive case during weekly testing, your child will not need to participate in Test To Stay that week.
 - c. Only students in classrooms with a positive case will participate in Test To Stay.

- d. On some occasions, for example, if your child was a close contact of a positive case during an after-school activity on campus, then your child may be Tested to Stay as well.

7. What days will my child be tested under Test To Stay?

- a. Donoghue:
 - i. SHIELD Testing for Everyone: Monday
 - ii. Test to Stay for Exposed Classrooms/Pods/Students: Wednesday & Friday.
- b. NKO:
 - i. SHIELD Testing for Everyone: Wednesday
 - ii. Test to Stay for Exposed Classrooms/Pods/Students: Monday & Friday.
- c. Woodlawn Middle and High Schools:
 - i. SHIELD Testing for Everyone: Monday
 - ii. Test to Stay for Exposed Classrooms/Pods/Students: Wednesday & Friday.

8. Will the Test To Stay Tests be Saliva Tests Like the Current SHIELD Once a Week Testing?

- a. Yes. Test To Stay is exactly the same saliva-based procedure as Weekly SHIELD Testing.

9. Will every child be tested on the weekly SHIELD Testing Days?

- a. On the Weekly SHIELD Testing Days, every student who has not opted out will be tested.

10. Who will be tested at each campus on Test to Stay testing days?

- a. On Test To Stay Days, only students whose classroom or pod has been in close contact with a positive case will be tested.

11. How long will my child have to isolate at home if my child tests positive?

- a. Students and Staff who test positive for COVID19 will isolate at home for 5 days. They will return on Day 6, if they are symptom-free.
- b. The University's Contact Tracing Unit will continue to issue guidance to every parent or staff member of UChicago Charter regarding the length of time for their Isolation. ("Isolation Release.")

12. What do I have to do to make sure my child participates in Test to Stay so they can keep getting in-person learning at UChicago Charter?

- a. **If you want your child to participate** in Test to Stay and Weekly Testing, you DO NOT NEED TO DO ANYTHING MORE. An information letter was sent to you via PowerSchool letting you know your child will be tested.
- b. **If you opted out of Weekly SHIELD Testing in Phase 1** (October 2021 through January 2022), **and you want to Opt In to Test to Stay**, you do not need to do anything. You will be placed in the Test to Stay and Weekly Testing Program. This is because your Opt Out for Phase I expires on Feb. 7, 2022.
- c. **If you opted out for your child in Phase I, and you want to opt out again** from Test To Stay in Phase II, you will need to complete a new Opt Out Form. The Form can be found in [PowerSchool](#).
- d. **Opt Out Forms are due Monday, Feb. 7, 2022.**

13.If I opted out of Weekly SHIELD Testing, why should I consider changing and opting in to the Test to Stay Program?

- a. The best reason to opt in to Test to Stay is because if your child does not participate in Test To Stay, unfortunately, your child will be individually quarantined for 5 days. The rest of the class will be in person at school. Your child will be marked absent. Your child will receive a homework packet and asynchronous instruction during these 5 days, but there will be NO REMOTE INSTRUCTION during this individual quarantine. This is because the teacher will be teaching the students who are in person using the Test To Stay program.

14.How will I know the results of my child's Test to Stay Tests?

- a. Your student's Campus Director will call and email you IF YOUR CHILD IS POSITIVE. If your child is negative, no notice will be sent.

15.How long will individual quarantines last for students who opted out of Test To Stay?

- a. 5 days

16. How long will quarantines of staff last who are not vaccinated and who have been a close contact?

- a. 5 days.

17.Test To Stay works for exposures in the classroom or at school only.

- a. If your child tests positive, then your child's class will be allowed to stay in school for Test To Stay because of the other safety protocols at school, such as masking, social distancing, hand sanitizing, and the limited

number of hours at school. However, if you have other children in other grades or other schools, they will need to quarantine at home for 5 days because their exposure to your child who has tested positive did not occur at school.

18. What if my child is sick on the weekend, and I have an outside test (not a SHIELD Weekly or a Test To Stay Test), and my child is positive?

- a. Keep your child at home during this time.
- b. Continue to report all positive tests for your child to your child's Campus Director whenever they occur.
- c. If you have questions about whether to report a test, or whether to take your child for testing, or any other question about symptoms or contact, please reach out to your Campus Director. Your Director can put you in touch with Contact Tracing, who can provide next steps to you.

19. Can I change my mind about Opting In for the Test To Stay if I opt out now?

- a. Once you Opt In, you are in the Test To Stay program for the remainder of this school year. If you do nothing, you are Opted In.
- b. If you Opted Out from Test To Stay in Phase II, and later want to Opt In, you may do so, but please note — your child's ability to be in the program might be delayed because of entering your child's data into the SHIELD testing system. Also, once your Opt In is processed, your child will be in the program for the rest of the school year.
- c. Please remember: If you want your child to remain in school for in person learning, you must Opt In for the Test To Stay Program. In other words, do not Opt Out.
- d. Students who do not participate in Test To Stay will be sent home for an individual quarantine for 5 days, and will not be provided remote instruction.

20. Doesn't Testing 3 days a week in school take away from learning time?

- a. Test To Stay will be done quickly and efficiently by our Zebra Testing Team and our on-site UChicago SHIELD Testing Team. Only those students who have been exposed to a positive COVID case will need to do Test to Stay for 3 extra days a week. Not every child or adult at your campus will participate in Test To Stay on any given day or week.
- b. Even if a few moments of class time is taken up with Test To Stay Testing, your child will still be in school receiving in person learning the rest of the day. This provides effective learning for your child beyond remote instruction.

21. If my child is vaccinated, do they participate in Test to Stay?

- a. Phase II – Yes. Because, as of Feb. 7, UChicago Charter student vaccination rates at our campuses are still low (20 to 32%), and because the Omicron variant has shown its ability to break through to vaccinated individuals, at least in a milder form, UChicago Charter is including vaccinated students in Phase II Test To Stay.
- b. Phase III – When UChicago Charter reaches its Network Goal of 85% of students vaccinated, then UChicago Charter will have reached a tipping point for risk mitigation. At that point, only unvaccinated students would be in the Test to Stay program.

22. If my child is in a 90-day immunity period, do they participate in Test to Stay?

- a. Yes, UChicago Charter will be including children in their 90 day immunity period, due to the Omicron variant's ability to break through, at least in a milder form. Especially if your child is in a 90 day immunity period and not feeling well, Test to Stay is important.

23. Will there be extra cleaning in classrooms where a positive case is discovered?

- a. COVID19 does not live on surfaces beyond one hour.
- b. That said, UCCS cleans its classrooms regularly, and will make extra efforts in those classrooms where a positive case was reported.

24. If my child tested positive, and was isolated for 5 days, what do I have to show to send my child back to school on Day 6?

- a. First, your child should only return to school if symptom free.
- b. Contact Tracing will contact you to confirm the date of your child's Isolation Release.

25. Will you be offering more Vaccine Clinics for Students?

- a. **Yes!**
- b. **Woodlawn Student & Family Vaccine Clinic, 6300 South University Ave.**
 - 1. Wednesday, Feb. 23 from 1:00 to 7:00 pm.
 - 2. Open to all UChicago Charter Staff and Families.
 - 3. All vaccines and boosters will be available to all students, staff and families, including pediatric vaccines for ages 5 to 11.

4. Parent does not need to be present (optional) but must sign the Consent Form.
- c. **Donoghue & NKO Combined Family Vaccine Clinic. Held at Donoghue, 707 East 37th Street, for all Donoghue and NKO families.**
 - i. Wed. Feb. 16 from 1:00 to 6:00 p.m.
 - ii. Wed. Mar. 9 from 1:00 to 6:00 p.m.
 - iii. Open to all UCCS Staff and Families.
 - iv. All vaccines and boosters will be available to all students, staff and families, including pediatric vaccines for ages 5 to 11.
 - v. Parent does not need to be present (optional) but must sign the Consent Form.

26. What other protocols is UChicago Charter School following to reduce the risk of COVID-19 transmission in our schools?

- a. **Masks.** UChicago Charter continues to require masking in all classrooms and activities, including in-door and outdoor activities. During January 2022, UChicago Charter provided KN95 masks to students and staff.
- b. **Social Distancing.** UChicago Charter purchased new furniture in August 2021 to allow for more social distance while seated in classrooms and has organized lunchtime for increased social distancing between students.
- c. **Frequent Hand Washing and Hand Sanitizing.** UChicago Charter teachers and staff practice frequent hand sanitization and encourage all students to do the same.
- d. **Ventilation in our Classrooms.** UChicago Charter invested in new ventilation products for the Donoghue and NKO campuses in 2021, and in the newer Woodlawn building, staff reviews air flow to insure proper ventilation through the newer air systems.
- e. **Limited Visitors to Our Schools.** In an effort to limit contacts inside our schools and avoid the possible spread of COVID, UChicago Charter has restricted visitors' access to our campuses.
- f. **Contact Tracing Support.** The University of Chicago's Contact Tracing team provides hours of personalized support to explain to families and staff how to define close contact situations, and manage the protocols for isolation of positive cases and quarantines where required.

Dated February 1, 2022/UChicago Charter School