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September 27, 2021

Dear Parents and Guardians,

As we start this school year, COVID-19 continues to be a problem, largely in the form of the Delta variant. Scientists tell us this COVID variant is more easily transmissible, probably contributing to the large numbers we are seeing in our local area. Right now, Rochester is considered an area of “high transmission.”

Given these facts, Nazareth will be following the advice of the CDC and the New York State Department of Education. Both the CDC and the Department of Education recommend the use of random COVID testing as part of a prevention program in schools. As one step to help stop the spread of COVID-19 and keep our school open for in-person learning, we will offer **free COVID-19** testing for students and staff at Nazareth Elementary School. Along with handwashing, masking, frequent cleaning and disinfection of surfaces, and social distancing, random 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 our local 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. Each week we will test a random 10% of the school population. In addition, if a parent wants their child tested that week and they are not on the random testing list, they may request (by phone or email) to have their child tested that week. Likewise, a staff/faculty member can request testing.

(Please remember that a symptomatic student or staff member should NOT come to school. In that case, call the school nurse and your medical provider for instructions. The same advice goes for someone who knows they have been exposed to COVID -19. Do not come to school, but call the school nurse for further instructions.)

- **How is the testing done?** The COVID-19 testing is free, quick, and easy. The school nurses will oversee testing with a rapid antigen test, which involves 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.

- **Where and when is the testing done?** Our school's testing site will be in the nurse's office and will take place Tuesday mornings. You will be notified 1-2 days prior to testing if your child is scheduled for random testing that week. Results will be available within 15 minutes. Negative results will be shared with parents via email by the end of the day. Positive results will be shared as soon as possible via phone contact.
- **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 test your child regularly at school. We will only test students whose parents/guardians have provided consent for us to do so. If you wish to take advantage of this opportunity, please complete this online form: <https://forms.gle/fDRgZdNB7UjE5TSN7>.

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 COVID-19 testing, please reach out to Sr. Marlene Pape, RN, MS at mpape@nazarethschools.org or by phone at **458.3786 x3207**.

Sincerely,

Sr. Marlene Pape, RN, MS
Ms. Kathleen Knope, LPN
School Nurses