



State of New Jersey

DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND SENIOR SERVICES

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County Superintendents of Schools  
District School Superintendents  
School Nurses

This is the guidance for the New Jersey Department of Education regarding tuberculosis screening of students as a condition for admission to a New Jersey school. The guidance also addresses the screening of employees and other adults having direct contact with the student population. This guidance was provided by New Jersey's Tuberculosis Medical Advisory Board to the New Jersey Department of Health and Senior Services.

**New:** An interferon gamma release assay (IGRA) blood test or a Mantoux TB skin test (TST) is acceptable for tuberculosis screening in schools.

Students and/or employees with a "positive" IGRA result have latent TB infection, a "negative" IGRA result indicates no latent TB infection and an "indeterminate" IGRA test shall be repeated. A "positive" IGRA or "10mm" or greater induration on a TST shall be considered a "significant reaction" and requires a subsequent medical evaluation to rule out active disease. Any person with symptoms of pulmonary TB should be evaluated regardless the result of the IGRA or TST and excluded from school until disease is ruled out or they are no longer considered infectious, as indicated in writing by a licensed physician.

The current recommendation is for testing in only two groups of students;

- Those entering a school system in the United States for the first time, if born in a high TB incidence country (**not** listed on page 3 of the guidance), and
- Those transferring to the New Jersey school system directly from a high TB incidence country (**not** listed on page 3 of the guidance).

All other students are exempt from TB testing as a requirement for school entry in New Jersey.

School districts are strongly urged not to require testing of any students not included in this guidance. Such activities would be of limited or questionable value to the public's health or protection of the student population. The local health department will be under no obligation to provide screening and/or evaluative services for any student excluded from the TB testing requirements in this guidance. New Jersey Department of Health

and Senior Services funding will be unavailable to support such expanded screening or evaluative activities.

### Reporting Requirements

Schools are no longer required to submit the "Annual Report of TB Testing in Schools" (TB-57 form) to the New Jersey Department of Health and Senior Services, TB Program. **The TB-57 information should be kept up to date and on site at each school. A copy of the form should be sent to the county superintendent and the local health department or TB Control Agency.** The report should only include testing done during the current calendar year (2012-2013). The TB-57 form and instructions are available online at:

<http://web.doh.state.nj.us/apps2/forms/subforms.aspx?pro=aids#tb>.

It remains the responsibility of the school nurse to gather the chest X-ray results and treatment recommendations for latent TB infection (LTBI) prescribed by a private physician or local chest clinic and retain this information on site.

In addition, the Office of the Attorney General has advised that religious exemption cannot be denied for TB testing in schools. See TB-8 Form for alternate testing protocol if religious exemption is claimed by a student or employee required to be tested under this guidance.

If you have questions concerning the application of the TB testing guidance, please call the TB Program at (609) 826-4878.

Sincerely,



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Medical Director  
Division of HIV, STD and TB Services

Cc: Thomas D. Privett, Tuberculosis Program Manager  
Geraldine Caparotta, RN, Surveillance Coordinator, Tuberculosis Program

Ver. 06/12

**New Jersey Department of Health and Senior Services  
Tuberculosis Program**

**Required Tuberculosis Testing in New Jersey Schools**

Justification: To restrict tuberculosis screening in New Jersey schools to teachers/other employees and only those students who are at highest risk for latent TB infection.

- I. **Only a positive interferon gamma release assay test result or a Mantoux intradermal test using 5 TU of stabilized PPD tuberculin skin test result measuring  $\geq$  10mm of induration shall be considered a “significant reaction” and evidence of latent TB infection.**
  
- II. **The following tuberculosis testing requirements apply to ALL school districts:**
  1. **Students born in a country that is not listed on page 3 and entering school in the U.S. for the first time, regardless of age or grade.**
  
  2. **Students transferring into the New Jersey school system directly from a country not listed on page 3, regardless of age or grade.**

**EXCEPTIONS FOR BOTH GROUPS OF STUDENTS LISTED ABOVE:**

Entering at preschool through grade 5: Tuberculosis testing is not required if the student has documentation of an IGRA or Mantoux tuberculin skin test at the age of three years or older, regardless of the result of that test.

Entering at grades 6 through 12: Tuberculosis testing is not required if the student has documentation of a negative tuberculosis test in the last six months or a positive test, regardless when this test was done.

Tuberculosis testing is not required if the student has attended school in another state prior to entering the New Jersey school system.

Any student with parents claiming religious exemption (TB-8 Form) cannot be compelled to submit to tuberculosis testing. In these instances, a symptom assessment must be done (TB-8 Form). If TB-like symptoms are reported, a physician must document that the student does not have active disease. Each school district is responsible for determining the criteria essential to document a valid religious exemption.

### **3. Teachers and Other Employees**

**A tuberculosis test shall be given upon employment to all newly hired employees (full-time and part-time), all student teachers, school bus drivers on contract with the district and other persons (e.g., volunteers) who have contact with students.**

#### **EXEMPTIONS:**

Tuberculosis testing is not required for volunteers working indoors with pupils for less than 20 hours per month.

Tuberculosis testing is not required for new employees, student teachers and contractors of the district with a documented negative tuberculosis test result in the last six months or a documented positive tuberculosis test, regardless of when this test was done.

Tuberculosis testing is not required for a school employee transferring between school districts or from a non-public school within New Jersey with a documented tuberculosis test result upon his/her initial employment by a New Jersey school.

Employees, student teachers, contractors or volunteers who have contact with students and claim religious exemption cannot be compelled to submit to tuberculosis testing. In these instances, a symptom assessment must be done (TB-8 Form). If TB-like symptoms are reported, a physician must document that the employee, student teacher, contractor or volunteer does not have active disease. Each school district is responsible for determining the criteria essential to document a valid religious exemption.

**THE FOLLOWING COUNTRIES HAVE A LOW INCIDENCE OF TB AND  
REQUIRE NO TB TESTING**

Antigua and Barbuda	Jordan
Australia	Lebanon
Austria	Luxembourg
Barbados	Malta
Belgium	Monaco
Bermuda	Montserrat
Canada	Netherlands
Cayman Islands	Netherlands Antilles
Cuba	New Zealand
Cyprus	Norway
Czech Republic	Oman
Denmark	Puerto Rico
Finland	Saint Kitts and Nevis
France	San Marino
Germany	Sweden
Greenland	Switzerland
Grenada	Trinidad and Tobago
Iceland	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland
Ireland	United States of America
Israel	United States Virgin Islands
Italy	
Jamaica	

**Students entering a U.S. school for the first time in New Jersey or transferring into a New Jersey school from ANY country NOT listed above must receive an IGRA or Mantoux tuberculin skin test unless they meet an exemption criterion.**

## ATTACHMENT 2

### New Jersey Department of Health and Senior Services Tuberculosis Program

#### FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

1. **QUESTION** Is it required to submit the "Annual Tuberculin Testing in Schools" form (TB-57) to the New Jersey Department of Health and Senior Services, Tuberculosis Program?
- ANSWER** **NO.** The TB-57 form is completed by the school nurse and kept on-site at each school. It is no longer required to mail the TB-57 form to the New Jersey Department of Health and Senior Services, TB Program. The tuberculin testing guidance, TB-57 form and instructions are available at these links:
- <http://nj.gov/health/tb/tech.shtml>
- <http://web.doh.state.nj.us/apps2/forms/subforms.aspx?pro=ids#tb>
- <http://www.nj.gov/education/students/safety/health/cdpr/>
2. **QUESTION** Is the Report of Significant Reactions (TB-42 form) required?
- ANSWER** **NO.** The TB-42 form is no longer required, but school nurses will continue to document the chest x-ray results and any treatment for latent TB infection (LTBI) prescribed by the private physician or local health department clinic on the State of New Jersey, Department of Education/Department of Health and Senior Services, Health History and Appraisal (A45) form.
3. **QUESTION** Is it required to record TB tests performed by other health care providers?
- ANSWER** **YES.** It is the responsibility of the school nurse to record all TB tests that were performed by private physicians, public health clinics and other health care providers as long as the testing meets the criteria in this guidance.

4. **QUESTION** Can a chest X-ray be substituted for the TB test?
- ANSWER** **ONLY IN THE CASE OF RELIGIOUS EXEMPTION.**  
TB tests detect latent TB infection (LTBI), whereas the chest X-ray detects evidence of active tuberculosis disease. The TB test provides an opportunity to prevent future disease, but if a religious exemption is granted, the chest X-ray will at least prevent undiagnosed active disease from entering the school system (see TB-8 Form).
5. **QUESTION** Is there a need to have repeat chest X-rays or further testing for persons with previous significant reactions?
- ANSWER** **NO.** It is not necessary unless symptoms develop that could be attributed to active tuberculosis disease.
6. **QUESTION** Is a history of vaccination with Bacillus of Calmette and Guerin (BCG) a contraindication to administering a TB test?
- ANSWER** **NO.** BCG vaccination does not result in permanent or complete immunity and immunity diminishes after several years. The tuberculosis test is used to support or exclude the diagnosis of tuberculosis infection, regardless of previous BCG vaccination.
7. **QUESTION** Are children returning from vacation/travel out of the country required to have a TB test?
- ANSWER** **NO.** According to the current rules for TB testing.
8. **QUESTION** Are students transferring in from another country required to receive a TB test?
- ANSWER** **YES,** unless the country is listed on page 3 or the transfer student meets other exemption criteria under Section II.
9. **QUESTION** Are students coming in from another US state or a US city required to receive a TB test?
- ANSWER** **NO.** The school TB testing program is focused on students born in high TB incidence countries who are entering school for the first time or transferring directly from high TB incidence countries.

10. QUESTION Are **preschool** and **kindergarten** students entering or transferring into a NJ school for the first time, who were born in high TB incidence countries but lived in the US for some time, required to receive a TB test?

ANSWER **YES.** The school TB testing program is focused on those students born in high TB incidence countries.

11. QUESTION Are non-public schools required to follow the guidelines mandated by the state Department of Education?

ANSWER The rules of the state Department of Education are mandated for public schools; however, children in all schools should be afforded the same benefits.

12. QUESTION If the Mantoux tuberculin skin test is not administered **before** or **at the same time** as an immunization (i.e. mumps, measles, rubella, polio), how much time must pass before the Mantoux tuberculin skin test can be administered?

ANSWER The Mantoux tuberculin skin test can be administered **4 to 6 weeks after** immunization with live virus vaccines.

13. QUESTION Can a school district or school **require** all students in any grade to receive a TB test other than those specified in the state recommendation?

ANSWER **NO.** The recommendation to test is based on the rate of tuberculosis in high incidence countries. School districts or local boards of health cannot exceed the state recommendations to test the student population.

14. QUESTION Is there a religious exemption to receiving a TB test?

ANSWER **YES.** The Office the Attorney General has stated that religious exemptions to the school TB testing recommendations must be allowed. The schools have been issued directions for the alternate screening of students or others claiming religious exemptions (see TB-8 Form).

15. **QUESTION** What does DHSS recommend be required to document a valid claim for religious exemption?
- ANSWER** The school should secure a written statement from the parent or guardian explaining how the administration of the Mantoux skin test or IGRA blood test conflicts with the pupil's exercise of religious tenets or practices. General philosophical or moral objection to receiving a TB test should not be accepted as sufficient for an exemption on religious grounds.
16. **QUESTION** Can the school nurse complete the Symptom Assessment Form for Pulmonary TB in the case of religious exemption?
- ANSWER** **YES.** The Symptom Assessment Form for Pulmonary TB can be completed by the school nurse, school physician, or the student's physician. The medical clearance forms must be completed by a physician.
17. **QUESTION** Is treatment for LTBI (preventive therapy) with Isoniazid (INH) mandatory?
- ANSWER** **NO.** Treatment for LTBI (preventive therapy) **cannot** be mandated, **but** it is encouraged and highly recommended. One of the primary objectives of the school TB testing program is to identify persons with latent TB infection and provide appropriate treatment to prevent them from developing tuberculosis disease.
18. **QUESTION** Are employees, volunteers and others having contact with students and transferring between school districts in New Jersey with documentation of a previous TB test recommended to be retested?
- ANSWER** **NO.** If the individual is asymptomatic and there is a documented record of a TB test result during employment no test is needed.
19. **QUESTION** Should all students/employees with a positive TB test be excluded from school until a chest X-ray has been given?
- ANSWER** **NO.** Students/employees should not be excluded from school unless symptomatic for TB. If symptomatic, the student/employee must be medically cleared before returning to school.

20. **QUESTION** Which column on the TB-57 form would apply to a student who is a U.S. resident, but was born in a high incidence country, has not attended school anywhere in the U.S. and is entering a New Jersey school for the first time, but does not qualify for an exemption under the current guidance?

**ANSWER** Column 1.

21. **QUESTION** How is employee testing reported when an employee works in several schools such as, a substitute teacher?

**ANSWER** The first school to which the employee is assigned will include the TB testing result on the TB-57 form.

22. **QUESTION** What is an interferon-gamma release assay (IGRA)?

**ANSWER** A type of blood test that measures the protein that is normally produced by the body in response to infection. Results are based on how much IFN- $\gamma$  is released in response to antigens mixed with a blood sample. QuantiFERON-TB Gold and T-Spot.TB are currently available FDA approved IGRA's.

23. **QUESTION** Can an IGRA be substituted for a Mantoux tuberculin skin test?

**ANSWER** **YES.** For persons who are unable or unwilling to take the Mantoux tuberculin skin test an IGRA is an acceptable alternative.