



2021-2022 NSCAS COVID-19 (COV) Not Tested Code (NTC) Guidance

Purpose: Not Tested Codes (NTC) provide important data for any assessment. NTCs supply essential guidance in understanding who is and who is not included in aggregate data. The NTC also helps classify why particular students do not have assessment results. This document provides key information for all districts and encourages more consistency in data across the state. District assessment officials should make every effort to ensure that the codes are used in uniform ways across their district and the use conforms with this guidance. Neglecting this guidance can result in negative consequences. Purposefully providing incorrect codes would be considered a professional practice violation.

COVID Waiver District Requirements

Districts should not make assumptions about which families will opt out of testing due to a risk of exposure to COVID-19. All students should have a safe opportunity to participate in statewide assessments. The health conditions during the pandemic have proved to be fluid. Now that vaccines are available, families may reassess risks as their situation changes.

All NSCAS (General, Alternate, ELPA21, & ACT) Assessments require districts to indicate if a student did not test because of an ongoing and continued concern about exposure to COVID-19. NDE has updated the COVID-19 Waiver to make the process similar to Emergency Medical Waivers but is providing a secondary option for districts with larger numbers of students that may need the COVID-19 Waiver. NDE is trying to balance efforts to significantly reduce the number of COVID-19 Waivers used in spring 2021 (Approx. 8,500 Statewide) and the need to make tracking the COVID-19 Waivers as easy as possible.

Option 1: Most districts should use this option.

Districts expectations regarding the use of the COVID-19 Waiver:

1. Districts must communicate expectations to families that both state and federal law require testing of all students. Students are expected to participate in NSCAS assessments even if they are 100% remote learning.
2. Districts offer and communicate multiple opportunities for students to participate in the administration of the assessment to families through multiple modalities.
3. If families decide NOT to allow their students to test:
 - a. Districts must submit a COVID-19 waiver signed by a medical professional to NDE for approval and use the Not Tested Code of COVID-19 Waiver (COV) within the NSCAS testing platforms or Unable to Test (UTT) in the ELPA21 testing platform.

- b. If no signed waiver is received, this is considered a Parent Refusal. Use the Not Tested Code of Parent Refusal (PAR) in the appropriate testing platform.
4. Districts should keep documentation of all communications with the families. District Assessment Contacts may be asked to verify documentation of family contact and refusal.

Option 2: Only to be used by districts with established yearlong programs of students learning in remote settings and in consultation with the Director of Statewide Assessment.

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2. Districts offer and communicate multiple opportunities for students to participate in the administration of the assessment to families through multiple modalities.
3. If families decide NOT to allow their students to test:
 - a. Districts must submit a list of all students with a COVID-19 Waiver signed by the District Assessment Contact attesting to the belonging to an established yearlong program of students receiving services remotely and that the families refuse to bring student into test despite the districts attempts to provide a safe testing environment for the student.
 - b. If students are not part of an established yearlong program and the district feels that a COVID-19 Waiver is needed, the district will use Option 1 for those students.
4. Districts should keep documentation of all communications with the families. District Assessment Contacts may be asked to verify documentation of family contact and refusal.