

**New Jersey Department of Health
Division of HIV, STD, and TB Services/TB Program**

Guidance for Tuberculosis (TB) Testing in New Jersey Schools

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

- I. **Only a positive interferon gamma release assay test result or a significant reaction to a Mantoux tuberculin skin test shall be considered evidence of TB infection.**
- II. **The following tuberculosis testing recommendations apply to all school districts:**
 1. **Students born in a country with a TB incidence of \geq 20 cases per 100,000 population (as determined by the World Health Organization) 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 with a TB incidence of \geq 20 cases per 100,000 population (as determined by the World Health Organization), regardless of age or grade.**

World Health Organization TB Profiles by Country:

https://worldhealthorg.shinyapps.io/tb_profiles/?inputs_entity_type=%22country%22&lan=%22EN%22&iso2=%22AF%22

EXCEPTIONS FOR BOTH GROUPS OF STUDENTS LISTED ABOVE:

Repeat TB testing is not required if the student has valid documentation of a tuberculosis test regardless of when this test was done.

Continuing students should not be re-tested in the absence of a known or suspected exposure to active and infectious TB disease or unless otherwise ordered by a licensed clinician.

Re: Overseas Travel

No evidence-based data exists that identifies the amount of time spent in a given high-risk country that constitutes significant exposure. Parents or guardians should discuss the specific travel circumstances with a health care provider who can determine the appropriate evaluation.¹

Religious Exemptions

Any student with parents or guardians claiming religious exemption (TB-8 Form) cannot be compelled to submit to tuberculosis testing. In these instances, a symptom assessment should be performed (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.

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3. Teachers and Other Employees

Baseline TB testing is recommended for 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 FOR TEACHERS AND OTHER EMPLOYEES

TB testing is not recommended for volunteers working with pupils for less than 20 hours per month.

TB testing is not recommended for new employees, student teachers, and contractors of the district with a documented tuberculosis test result, regardless of when this test was done. Repeat TB testing is not required in the absence of a known or suspected exposure to active and infectious TB disease or unless otherwise ordered by a licensed clinician.

Repeat TB testing is not recommended for school employees, with a documented tuberculosis test result upon their initial employment, transferring between school districts or from non-public schools.

Repeat TB testing is not recommended for student teachers, with a documented tuberculosis test result upon their initial assignment, performing practicums if or when they move between school districts.

Religious Exemptions

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 should 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.

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, TB Program. Schools may continue to use the TB-57 for internal purposes in accordance with local school district policy.

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References

1. <https://www.cdc.gov/tb/topic/testing/default.htm>