

ATTACHMENT 2

New Jersey Department of Health Tuberculosis Program

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

- 1. QUESTION** Is it required to submit the “Annual Report of TB Testing in Schools” Form (TB-57) to the New Jersey Department of Health, 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, 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=aid#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, 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** **NO. 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. Please refer to the NJ Symptom Assessment Form (TB-5).
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? Ex: If the student dis-enrolls from a NJ school and re-enters with school transcripts, then they must be retested.
- 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, which are **attenuated** (weakened) **live virus vaccines**), 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 attenuated 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 or others.

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 DOH 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 as their primary school will document 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- γ is released in response to antigens mixed with a blood sample. QuantiFERON-TB Gold and T-Spot testing are currently available and 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.

24. **QUESTION** Are teachers with a break in service required to be retested for TB?

ANSWER Yes – if it's longer than the usual summer break (June – Sept), then the teacher should be retested because they would be considered a new hire.