



2020-2021 NSCAS 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

For all NSCAS (General, Alternate, & ACT) Assessments (except ELPA21), districts will have the ability to indicate a student did not test because of an ongoing and continued concern about exposure to COVID-19. The COVID-19 Waiver, COV, is a unique Not Tested Code (NTC) that is new and only intended for use in the 2020-21 school year. Districts should use UTT for ELPA21 students that do not test because of an ongoing and continued concern about exposure to COVID-19.

- Districts may use the sample COVID Waiver letter or other similar method to have families indicate their intentions regarding testing. The COVID Waiver letter is a sample and is not required by NDE.
- Districts are not required to use a specific form or mode for communication between the district and families. Families may indicate that they will not test via phone, email, text, or other reliable common communication method. Districts may require a signature, but the NDE considers signatures as optional.
- If districts communicate expectations to students/families but the student still does not test, it is reasonable for districts to indicate the student did not test because of a concern of exposure to COVID-19 in the following situation:
 - Student receives 100% of instruction remotely and has demonstrated an ongoing and continued concern of exposure to COVID-19
 - Multiple invitations were sent to notify the student/family of the opportunity to test
 - At least two opportunities to test were missed by the student (Scheduled and Make-up)

Emergency Medical Waiver (EMW)

- EMW will continue to be used for students that were not tested because of a medical emergency. These rare circumstances will continue to need to be documented and approved by NDE in the traditional way.
- EMW Codes should also be used for students that cannot test due to COVID-19 infection or COVID-19 exposure. COV should be used for students whose families refuse to test.
- EMWs related to COVID-19 do not need to use the typical EMW form and do not need to be pre-approved by NDE. EMWs related to COVID-19 should be tracked and documented in the same or similar way as students that will be coded as COV.
- NDE will assume any student that is marked as EMW in the test management systems and does not have an approved EMW on file was COVID-19 related and those students will be included in the list provided to districts by NDE following the assessment windows. DACs will be asked to verify the



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students coded as COV and EMW related to COVID-19. DACs will also be asked to sign assurance statements that students on the list are coded correctly and that the district did its due diligence in attempting to test all students.

Example of EMW related to COVID-19 and COVID Waiver

- Both are related to COVID-19
- EMW related to COVID-19-student was unable test due to being infected with COVID-19 or because of a possible exposure and subsequent quarantine related to COVID-19. The student was unable to test due to circumstances and health guidance
- COV-student did not test because of conscious decision by the student’s family

Use Emergency Medical Waiver (EMW) Not a Choice	Use COVID Waiver (COV) Choice
Student has tested positive for COVID-19 and was in isolation. Student did not have an opportunity to make-up testing.	Student has been attending school in a completely remote learning environment. Family indicates that student will not come and test in person because of an ongoing and continued concern about exposure to COVID-19. (Despite district efforts to provide low risk safe environments for testing.)
Student has been exposed to or been potentially exposed to COVID-19 and has been ordered to quarantine for a period of time during scheduled testing. Student did not have an opportunity to make-up testing.	Student has been attending school in a completely remote learning environment. Student failed to attend two opportunities to test and the district assumes the student will not test in person because of an ongoing and continued concern about exposure to COVID-19.



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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. The following describes NDE expectations about making the statewide assessments available to all students.

- District assessment contacts will be asked to verify the list of students during post-test cleanup and sign an assurance statement attesting to the following district actions.
 - The district invited the student to take the assessments in person. The invitation was sent through multiple modalities and included a detailed description of precautions that would be utilized to minimize the spread of COVID-19.
 - The districts developed a detailed plan using the latest local, state, and national guidelines to provide all students an opportunity to test in person while minimizing the risk of students being exposed to and contracting COVID-19.
 - Districts provided at least two opportunities for each student to test (think of this as an original opportunity and make-up opportunity) unless the district has received notice from the family that the student would not test due to concern of contracting COVID-19.
 - District should maintain records of the plan, efforts, and results of making testing available to all students. NDE may request copies of these records.
 - The district communicated the following information to students and families:
 - Testing all students is a part of both state and federal law.
 - Testing results provides useful data for schools, districts, state, and national policy makers.
 - For the 2020-21 school year only, districts and schools will not be penalized for failure to test students that have demonstrated an ongoing and continued concern for exposure to COVID-19.
- District communication does not have to try to persuade students/families to test, but the communication should also not try to dissuade students/families from testing. The district should provide objective facts about the assessment, the results, and the risk of contracting COVID-19 so that students/families can make the best-informed decisions for themselves.
- The district made all reasonable efforts to ensure that students were tested or had opportunities to test.



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Not Tested Codes for 2020-21 (District Use)

CODE	Code Name	Tests	Descriptor	Reporting Application
ALT	Alternate Assessment	General; ACT	Student took the NSCAS Alternate assessment and is not included in results from this testing vendor	Not included in General or ACT testing
COV	COVID-19 Waiver	General; Alternate; ACT	NSCAS, ACT: Student did not test because of an ongoing and continued concern about exposure to COVID-19. ELPA21: Should use the UTT code, see below.	Not included in reporting
EMW	Emergency Medical Waiver	General; Alternate; ACT; ELPA21	Student was not tested because of a medical emergency. EMW must be submitted and approved by NDE. See above for EMWs related to COVID-19	Not included in reporting
GEN	General Assessment	Alternate; ACT	Student was originally coded ALT, but the district administered the General Assessment or the ACT.	Not included in Alternate or ACT testing
MIS	Student Misclassified	ELPA21	Student misclassified/No longer ELL. Code 03 ELPA21	Not included in reporting
NLE	No Longer Enrolled	General; Alternate; ACT; ELPA21	Student was not enrolled in the district/school during the testing window(s).	Not included in reporting
PPE	Paper/Pencil Expected	Phase 1 Pilot	Add to exempt students who require paper/pencil material per accommodations.	Not included in reporting
PAR	Parent Refusal	General; Alternate; ACT; ELPA21	Student was not tested because of a formal request from the parent/guardian	Non-participant Scale Score = lowest score
SAE	Student Absent Entire Testing Window	General; Alternate; ACT; ELPA21	Student was absent from School for the entire testing window(s)	Non-participant Scale Score = lowest score
SAT	Summative test taken in another ELPA21 state during this year	ELPA21	Student identified as EL and took a summative in another ELPA21 district this testing window. Code 07 ELPA21	Not included in reporting
STR	Student Refusal	General; Alternate; ACT	Student not tested due to student's refusal to take the test. District should attempt to test the student on multiple occasions.	Non-participant Scale Score = lowest score
TXP	Testing at External Program	General	Student is attending at an external program and test scores should be transferred to district/school of accountability	Tracking code for district/school of accountability. Not used for reporting
UTT	District Unable to test Not Tested	General; Alternate; ACT; ELPA21	Student not tested; such as suspensions/expelled or excessive absences. NSCAS, ACT: This code should be used when no other code accurately describes why a student did not test. ELPA21: This code should be used when student did not test because of an ongoing and continued concern about exposure to COVID-19.	Non-participant Scale Score = lowest score
WSR	Waived Score Replacement	ACT	Previous ACT scores that met qualifications and were approved by NDE	Participant Scale Score = approved scores
NOR*	NonResponsive	Alternate	Student is unable to interact and respond to any item on the test	Participant Scale Score = lowest score