



**The American School of Marrakesh**

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Dear Parents,

I hope this letter finds you well!

As a leader among PreK-12 schools in Morocco, ASM continues to be forward-thinking in its approach to ensure the health and safety of your children and our faculty and staff.

Our required COVID-19 testing for all faculty and staff on Monday was a bold move and unique among PreK-12 schools in Morocco. Recognized as such, other schools across Morocco have contacted ASM to understand how they might follow suit at their own institutions.

This morning, the laboratories provided the results of the serological and PCR tests. Below, we provide the findings to you in the spirit of full transparency:

**Serological (IgG/IgM) Results:** 6 employees tested positive from the following departments: facility & grounds, administration, teachers and teaching assistants.

**Why is the test used?**

Serology looks for antibodies against SARS-CoV-2 (the virus that causes COVID-19) in the blood to determine if there has been an infection **in the past**. Antibodies are formed by the body to fight off infections. IgM is the first antibody that is formed against a germ, so it appears on tests first, usually within 1-2 weeks. The body then forms IgG, which appears on tests about 2 weeks after the illness starts. IgM usually disappears from the blood within a few months, but IgG can last for years.

**What does a positive serological (IgG/IgM) test result mean?**

A positive antibody test means that the person being tested was infected with COVID-19 in the past and that their immune system developed antibodies to try to fight it off.

**PCR Results:** 2 employees tested positive from the following department: facility & grounds; 3 employees' test results were inconclusive.

**Why is the test used?**

PCR looks for the virus itself in the nose, throat, or other areas in the respiratory tract to determine if there is an **active infection** with SARS-CoV-2.

**What does a positive PCR test result mean?**

A positive PCR test means that the person being tested has an active COVID-19 infection.

**What does an inconclusive PCR test result mean?**

An inconclusive PCR test result means that the individual needs to be retested for an accurate determination of infection.

All employees whose test results were positive or inconclusive have been notified of their results. Those with positive and inconclusive PCR test results have begun a mandatory 14 day self-quarantine as outlined in our *ASM School Opening Plan* that you received last week by email and also available at our website: <https://asm.ac.ma/>. These employees have been asked to contact their personal care physicians and conduct contact tracing so that those with whom they have been in close physical contact may take the necessary precautions to ensure the health and safety of themselves and others. Where possible, ASM will also help affected employees by assisting with contact tracing.

It is important to note that even with a negative test result, a person may have an active infection and should take appropriate actions, including self-quarantining if COVID-19 symptoms are or become present (cf. <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/downloads/COVID19-symptoms-24x36-en.pdf>).

If a person is sick (i.e. exhibits symptoms OR tests PCR positive but exhibits no symptoms), ASM has adopted the following policy as outlined in the *ASM School Opening Plan*:

<b>Students and adults who test positive for COVID-19</b>	<b>Students and adults who have been in close contact with someone who has had COVID-19</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>● They will be quarantined for 14 days.</li><li>● They will have to bring a medical doctor’s certificate when returning to school stating they are COVID-19 free.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>● They will be quarantined for 14 days</li><li>● They will have to be symptom free by the time they return to school.</li></ul>

Although the test results are not the news we had hoped for, we are pleased that the infection distribution within the community is low and that ASM conducted these tests prior to the start of the school year, which is unique among other schools in Marrakesh and greater Morocco.

It serves as a sober reminder that we must remain vigilant and practice self-care for the sake of ourselves, students, family members, colleagues, and greater community. For the safety of your family and the ASM community, we recommend that you, as parents, test your family members, including your children.

By taking proactive measures, we hope that you may find peace of mind that ASM is doing everything it can—and more—to ensure that your child has a safe and joyful learning experience.

Sincerely,

Casey Asato, Ed.D.  
Head of School