



Dear Families,

Welcome to the 2021 - 2022 School Year! We are so excited you will be joining us this year. It has been a year and a half since our community has been together in person, five days a week, in our schools. We, at Explore Schools, are thrilled to be welcoming everyone back to our buildings for in-person instruction. As a network, we want to make sure the focus of our return to school is the joy and excitement for learning. It is important to us that our students and staff are safe and that our families know the health and safety of our students is a top priority for us.

This year, to help keep our staff and students healthy and safe, we are implementing the following policies. If you have additional questions, please reach out to your school directly. These policies were informed by guidance from the CDC, State and NYC, to ensure the health and wellbeing of our students and staff. Your school will have additional details about what these policies will look like at your child's campus. We encourage our families to reach out to schools to ask any questions or share any concerns you may have about COVID-19 and returning to in-person instruction. This will be a fantastic year and we cannot wait to start it with you.

Health & Safety Policies

While we're excited to come back together, we know that COVID-19 is still in our community. In order to keep our students and staff safe, our schools are taking the following steps. If you have any questions about specific procedures, please reach out to your school to learn more about how they are implementing these policies on the ground.

1. We expect that all students and staff wear masks at all time, except when eating. Students can remove masks for meals but should be prepared to wear masks at all other times. If you have questions about what masks to use or how to wear them, please refer to the [CDC guidance](#) or reach out to your school.
2. We will continue to participate in [daily health screenings](#) and temperature checks aligned with guidance from the NYC DOE.
3. We have worked with our buildings to ensure the ventilation systems have been updated and have installed CO2 monitors and air purifiers in our classrooms to ensure there is proper airflow during classes.
4. We will continue to supply our schools with additional PPE in the form of masks, hand sanitizer, etc., and will implement frequent handwashing and/or sanitizing practices throughout the day.
5. Alongside the practices above, we will continue to practice social distancing as extensively as possible, aligned to the CDC's guidance for reopening schools.

Testing Policy

We ask that all students consent to participate in regular COVID-19 testing as part of our effort to keep our community safe and contain any potential spread of the virus. Your school will share more details on what testing will look like, as well as the forms you'll need to complete and return to participate in on-site testing. We plan to test 10% to 20% of our student population prior to the start of the school year and weekly thereafter. Please look out for info from your school and take action as soon as possible.



All unvaccinated staff will be required to participate in weekly testing. You can learn more about our staff vaccination policy in the next section.

Vaccination Policy

New this year, we are requiring that all our staff either get the COVID-19 vaccine or participate in weekly COVID-19 testing. This is the policy established by the city for all city workers, including school employees.

Right now, the city and state are not requiring eligible students to be vaccinated. However, we strongly encourage eligible members of our community (everyone age 12 and older) to get vaccinated against COVID-19. Please reach out to your school if you need assistance with finding information about vaccinations. All of the vaccines available in the U.S. authorized by the Food and Drug Administration have been shown to be safe and extremely effective at preventing serious illness and death from COVID-19. Vaccines help us develop immunity without disease. Vaccines are essential to stopping the pandemic. When you support COVID-19 vaccination, you help to protect your school and your community against COVID-19.

For more information about COVID-19 vaccines, visit nyc.gov/covidvaccine or call 311. To find out where you or your loved ones can get vaccinated, visit nyc.gov/vaccinefinder or call 877-VAX-4NYC (877-829-4692). You can also sign up by visiting nyc.gov/homebound or calling 877-VAX-4NYC for an in-home vaccination.

Health Screening Policy

All staff, students, and visitors to our school buildings must submit a [daily health screening](#) upon entry which will include answering a series of health related questions as well as a temperature check. This requirement is for all visitors at any DOE building. Our schools are building time into arrival to account for the health screen and will reach out to families directly with additional details on what to expect.

Students who are feeling sick or showing symptoms of COVID-19 should remain home and consult their primary care physician to see if they should take a COVID-19 test. The daily screener will ask questions regarding symptoms related to COVID-19 and will not allow symptomatic students into the building.

Confirmed Cases

If a community member is feeling sick with COVID-19 symptoms, they are required to stay home and are asked to get tested. If there is a confirmed case of COVID-19 in our community, we will work with The Situation Room which is comprised of NYC DOE, NYC Test & Trace, DOHMH, and Department of Buildings. The Situation Room is a “one-stop shop” for handling COVID-19 cases in schools and provides all essential assistance needed for a potential or confirmed COVID-19 case, including verifying cases, providing communications to be shared with school communities, initiating any investigation or contact tracing as needed, and advising schools on next steps.

In the event that there is a confirmed case, all individuals in that class are assumed close contacts and will be instructed to quarantine for 10 days. Fully vaccinated individuals that are not displaying any symptoms are not required to quarantine. If this happens, families will receive communication directly from the school including instructions on transitioning to remote learning.

**Visitor Policy**

We are asking our schools to reduce the number of visitors to the building as much as possible. What this will look like will differ by school, but generally, you can expect arrival to take place at the entrance to the building instead of the classroom for most grades as well as smaller family events to ensure social distancing. Whenever possible, we will continue to use Zoom and other forms of communication to connect with families safely.

Technology Policy

Schools will continue to embed technology into in-person programming, and all students will have access to their own Chromebook or tablet while at school. In the event of a mandatory closure, we will ensure that every student will be equipped with the technology and skills to quickly transition to remote learning. Your school will have more information about how technology will be used in your child's classroom.