



Explore Schools of Brooklyn

District-Wide Safety & Emergency Response Plan

20 Jay Street, Suite 211
Brooklyn, NY 11201

2022-2023 District-Wide Safety & Emergency Response Plan

Table of Contents

<i>I. Introduction & Approach to Safety</i>	3
<i>II. General Considerations</i>	3
A. Purpose	3
B. Identification of School Teams	3
C. Concept of Operations	4
D. Plan Review and Public Comment	5
<i>III. Risk, Reduction, Prevention, and Intervention</i>	5
A. Prevention/Intervention Strategies	5
B. Early Detection of Potentially Violent Behaviors	6
C. Hazard Identification	6
<i>IV. Response</i>	7
A. Notification and Activation (Internal and External Communications)	7
B. Situational Responses	8
<i>V. Recovery</i>	10
<i>VI. NYC COVID-19 Student Health Policy</i>	10
<i>Appendices</i>	11





I. Introduction & Approach to Safety

At Explore Schools, our mission is to provide our scholars with the academic skills and critical thinking abilities they need to succeed in a college preparatory high school. Our ability to fulfill this mission is contingent upon our ability to create and maintain learning environments at our schools where students and staff feel safe from danger and harm.

Emergencies and violent incidents in school districts are critical issues that must be addressed in an expeditious and effective manner. The Explore Schools' District-wide School Safety Plan is designed to prevent or minimize the effects of serious violent incidents and emergencies, and to facilitate the coordination of the district with local and county resources in the event of such incidents or emergencies. The plan is responsive to the needs of all schools within the district and is consistent with the more detailed emergency response plans required at the school building level. Districts are at risk of a wide variety of acts of violence, natural, and technological disasters. To address these threats, the State of New York has enacted the Safe Schools Against Violence in Education (SAVE) law, one component of which is a comprehensive planning effort that addresses risk reduction, prevention, response, and recovery with respect to a variety of emergencies in the school district and its schools.

The Explore Schools School District supports the SAVE Legislation and encourages and advocates on-going district-wide cooperation and support of Project SAVE. With this, our district- and school-based teams work together to establish a culture of safety for all constituents in our building, in line with the requirements and best practices addressed as part of SAVE. The following pages outline our district's and schools' approach to maintaining the safety and well-being of our scholars, staff and other community constituents.

II. General Considerations

A. Purpose

The Explore Schools District-wide Safety Plan was developed pursuant to Commissioner's Regulation 155.17 and Project SAVE. Development was led by the district office's Operations Team, in conjunction with school-based Leadership and Operations Teams, and building supports (e.g. BRT, School Safety). The general charge is to develop and maintain the plan, in service of the safety of our district's stakeholders, with support and review by representatives of our board, family, and student bodies.

B. Identification of School Teams

The Explore Schools School District has appointed a District-wide School Safety Team consisting of, but not limited to, representatives of the Explore Schools community, students, teachers, administrators, parent organizations; school safety personnel; and, other school personnel. The members of the team and their positions or affiliations are as follows:

School-Based Safety Team: At Explore Schools of Brooklyn, we operate under the assumption that all adults that work in our schools are responsible for ensuring the safety of all students, in accordance with their school's safety plan. The school safety team, however, is the school-based team that is formally responsible for coordinating with other participants of the building response team in planning, management, and maintenance of our building-wide safety plan. The team is comprised of the school's Director of Operations, other operational staff/leaders, and at least two other appointed teammates.



Building Response Team (BRT): Building Response Team is a building wide team that is the core of the building's emergency response plan. There is one BRT team in a school building, with representation across all schools that share the campus. The team manages the information and actions taken in relation to an emergency alert. Participants are trained and prepared to fulfill specific responsibilities. The BRT is activated for every incident. At Explore Schools, each school-based safety team assigns staff to the following roles:

- **Emergency Officer:** Provide leadership and guidance to BRT members during an emergency
- **Incident Assessor:** Conduct an on-scene first assessment of the incident or emergency to assess the severity of the situation
- **Special Needs Coordinator:** Primary point of contact when issues with special needs students and staff arise during an emergency. Collect information on missing individuals with special needs
- **Post-Incident Response Team:** The post-incident response team is comprised of current staff members well-versed in these issues, including social workers, our district's Managing Director or Operations, Chief Operating Officer/ Executive Director, Director of School Culture, Director of Special Populations, and of outside experts such as physical plant rehabilitators and mental health experts who could help to repair the physical and emotional damage caused by any disaster, as necessary. This team would develop both short- and long-term plans to follow up on any violent or emergency-related incident at Explore Schools. This would involve both immediate recovery and more long-term recovery of both the physical plant and physical/emotional needs of students and staff.

NYC DOE School Safety Agents: School Safety Agents provide security and ensure the safety of students, faculty and visitors in our school buildings and surrounding premises. They coordinate with our Building Council team and Building Response Teams to respond to concerns of safety. School Safety agents patrol school premises, act as first points of contacts at school entrances (verifying identity of school visitors, operating scanning and surveillance equipment, etc.). The agents also serve as direct liaisons to city officers and officials (NYPD, etc.).

Building Council Team: In schools, Building Council teams at schools are comprised of the Director of Operations, Principals, members of the BRT, School Safety Agents and other school leaders who share responsibility for building a safe, consistent campus culture for their community. All Building Councils must host 12 meetings between August and July of the following year to make decisions around school safety planning.

School Safety Team: School Safety Agents provide security and ensure the safety of students, faculty and visitors in our school buildings and surrounding premises. They coordinate with our Building Council Team and Building Response Team to respond to concerns of safety. School Safety Agents patrol school premises, are first points of contacts at school entrances, verify identity of schools visitors and operate scanning and surveillance equipment. Safety Agents are also direct liaisons to city officers and officials (NYPD, etc).

C. Concept of Operations

- The initial response to all emergencies at Explore Schools will be by the School Based Emergency Response Team.
- Upon the activation of the School Emergency Response Team, the Managing Director of Operations or his/her designee will be notified and, where appropriate, local emergency officials will also be notified.



- Efforts may be supplemented by county and state resources through existing protocols.

D. Plan Review and Public Comment

- Pursuant to Commissioner's Regulation, Section 155.17 (e)(3), this plan will be made available for public comment at least 30 days prior to its adoption. The district-wide plan may be adopted by the Board only after at least one public hearing that provides for the participation of school personnel, parents, students and any other interested parties. The plan must be formally adopted by the Board of Education.
- Building-Level Emergency Response Plans shall be confidential and shall not be subject to disclosure under Article 6 of the Public Officers Law or any other provision of law, in accordance with Education Law Section 2801-a.
- Full copies of the District-wide School Safety Plan and any amendments will be submitted to the New York State Education Department within 30 days of adoption.
- This plan will be reviewed periodically during the year and will be maintained by the District-wide School Safety Team. The required annual review will be completed on or before July 1 of each year after its adoption by the Board of Education. A copy of the plan will be available at the district office: 20 Jay Street | Brooklyn, NY 11201.

III. Risk, Reduction, Prevention, and Intervention

A. Prevention/Intervention Strategies

Program Initiatives

Explore Schools has established a multitude of programs to create a positive, safe learning environment for students and staff and strives to minimize conflicts and altercations

- **Character Education:** Explore Schools aims to create self-aware, reflective and disciplined learners. Character Education, both the articulation of the school's core values and the day to day demonstration of these values is an essential component of our approach.
- **Mandated Counseling:** For students that have this service on their Individualized Education Program (IEP).
- **Counseling:** For students that do not have an IEP. Counselor observations and parent reports inform the effectiveness of the counseling sessions. The frequency of the observations is determined by the counselor based on each individual case.
- **Preventive Groups:** For students that do not receive mandated counseling but who have been identified to need additional support by their parent, counselor and/or teacher. These groups are designed for students that exhibit behaviors that can often be remedied through short-term intervention, as opposed to requiring year-long counseling
- **Monthly Parent Events:** The school based academic and dean teams hold monthly events throughout the school year to increase parent participation and involvement and work as a way to inform our community of additional ways they can help support outside of the school.





- **Community Meetings:** These assemblies are used as a platform to teach and reinforce Explore's core values. These meetings are also an opportunity to create dialogue about current cultural and/or social issues that affect our community.

Training, Drills, And Exercises

The Network Director of Operations completes the required Emergency Management Training provided by the NYC DOE, or sends a qualified designee. The information received during this training is presented to the whole staff as part of the professional development that occurs prior to the start of each school year. In addition, operational and administrative staff participate in First Aid/CPR/AED training on a biannual basis.

Explore Schools practices the following drills through the school year.

- Emergency Evacuations
- Soft Lockdown Drills
- Medical Emergencies and Code Blue
- Shelter In Drills
- Bus Evacuation Drills

The Code Blue Drill is put in effect by a contracted member of the NYC Department of Education. This member observes the drill and provides feedback to all participants.

The Building Response Team (BRT) meets throughout the school year to review the school safety plan, perform safety drills and evaluate the effectiveness of the response to practice safety drills.

Vital Education Agency Information

Explore Schools uses a student database to maintain accurate student and staff population information. Explore Schools maintains information on:

- School population
- Number of staff
- Transportation Routing
- Emergency Contact information for students and staff
- Telephone numbers of key officials

This information is stored electronically and can be accessed using a computer or phone. There is also an emergency binder in main offices, included in the Emergency Go Bag, to use during an incident.

B. Early Detection of Potentially Violent Behaviors

The Explore Schools Code of Conduct is reviewed annually with staff members and provides information to identify and respond to bullying and potentially violent behavior and harassment.

C. Hazard Identification

Sites of potential emergency within Explore Schools are:

- School buildings and surrounding sidewalks
- School Buses



EXPLORE
CHARTER SCHOOL



EMPOWER
CHARTER SCHOOL



EXCEL
CHARTER SCHOOL



EXCEED
CHARTER SCHOOL

- Off-Site Field Trip Locations
- Parks and Playgrounds on or near school sites
- Online/Cyber Forums

IV. Response

A. Notification and Activation (Internal and External Communications)

Staff members of Explore Schools have been instructed to contact the Dean Team and School Leaders if they are faced with a situation that they believe requires interventions by the local law enforcement. A School leader will take lead on the incident. If necessary, the following steps will be taken in the order listed:

1. The Principal or Director of Operations will instruct a member of the BRT to call 911 to request law enforcement intervention, if not already done so.
2. The School Leader will inform the School Safety Agent or Office Team Member to use the school-wide PA system to announce any actions that need to be taken (soft lockdown, hard lockdown, emergency evacuation, shelter in).
3. The School Leader will send members of the BRT to respond to the location of the incident to isolate any members displaying unsafe, violent behavior and/or any members requiring medical assistance.
4. Any siblings of involved parties will be escorted to the Leadership Office where they will be held until the situation is resolved.
5. A member of the BRT will print out any contact and guardian information for all students directly involved for those that require law enforcement intervention and those that require medical assistance. This information will be provided to emergency personal.
6. A member of the BRT will contact the parent/guardian of the involved parties.
7. School counselors or a member of the Dean Team will call the guardians of any students that are directly involved.
8. A member of the operational or leadership team will stand by the school entrance to provide support to any families that may be in the area during the time of the incident. This staff member will be informed of all involved scholars so that s/he is equipped to respond to families in the following ways:
 - i. If they are a parent/guardian of a scholar that is not involved: "We are dealing with a situation within the school. Emergency services have been called and the parents of any involved scholars are being contacted. Please be patient as we work to resolve this.
 - ii. If they are a parent/guardian of a scholar that is involved:
 1. Escort them to the designated location within the building
 2. Connect them with emergency personnel
 3. Reunite them with any siblings of the involved party
 4. Connect them with a school counselor, if necessary
9. A member of the BRT will wait in the lobby ready to escort emergency personnel to the incident.



If we need to contact all families in relation to the event (e.g. Early Dismissal, relocation) schools will utilize School Messenger to send an automated message via phone (voice/text) and email. If appropriate, we may use our social media to post notifications.

B. Situational Responses

Multi-Hazard Responses

Explore Schools has incorporated response protocols defined by state education department. It establishes definitions of lockout, lockdown, sheltering, hold-in-place and evacuation. Our responses are based upon these guidelines and are included in the Building Level School Safety Plan. These include response to civil disturbances, criminal actions, environmental emergencies, weather emergencies, facility related emergencies, medical and mental health related emergencies, and transportation emergencies. Examples of these emergency events include:

- Hostage/Kidnapping
- Natural Weather Related
- Civil Disturbance
- School Bus Accident
- Gas Leak
- Intruder
- Explosive/Bomb Threat
- Hazardous Material
- Biological
- Radiological
- Epidemic

Responses to Acts of Violence: Implied or Direct Threats

Explore Schools has established policies and procedures for responding to implied or direct threats of violence by students, teachers, other school personnel as well as visitors to the school, including threats by students against themselves, which include suicide.

All threats of violence are taken seriously at Explore Schools. Threats of violence from children will be reported to parent, police and/or ACS based on the situation and appropriateness as determined by the Principal, Director of Operations and Superintendent. The Principal and Director of Operations will take appropriate follow up actions. Threats of violence from adults will be reported to the police

All threats of suicide are considered serious. In emergency situations, school personnel will call 911. Staff must follow up with the person that heard or learned of the threat and gather details. A member of the School Leadership Team should notify the Director of Operations, School Social Worker for risk assessment, and the parents or guardians of the student. School staff will encourage parents to call 911 (if the school has not already called) or take the student to ER for risk assessment. School staff will provide parents with mental health resources including referrals and mental health contact numbers. A link to mental health resources for educators compiled by the New York State Education Department can be found [here](#).

Acts of Violence



EXPLORE
CHARTER SCHOOL



EMPOWER
CHARTER SCHOOL



EXCEL
CHARTER SCHOOL



EXCEED
CHARTER SCHOOL

Explore Schools has established policies and procedures for responding to acts of violence by students, teachers, other school personnel, as well as visitors to the school.

When a student engages in behavior that poses a substantial risk of serious injury to the student or others, schools must determine the appropriate way to manage the behavior and consider whether the situation can be safely de-escalated by school staff as set forth below. In such situations, the following procedures must be followed:

1. The Principal or Director of Operations must be notified of the situation and must attempt to reach the parent.
2. Every effort must be made by responding school staff to safely de-escalate the behavior where possible using strategies and interventions for addressing behavioral crises.
3. In the staff member is unable to de-escalate the behavior, the staff member should seek assistance from other appropriate staff and resources including the Principal, Director of Operations, Deans or a member of the school safety team.
4. Where a student's behavior poses an imminent and substantial risk of serious injury to him/herself or others and the situation cannot be safely addressed by school staff or the support services set forth above, the Principal or Director of Operations must call 911. In such situations where it is not practicable to contact the Principal or Director of Operations, the responding staff member/School Safety Agent must call 911 and immediately thereafter notify the Principal or Director of Operations.

Response Protocols

Mandated Reporting: Members of the Explore Schools staff are known as "Mandated Reporters", in compliance with state law. If a member of the staff suspects that a child is being abused or neglected, they are obligated to report their suspicion to the Administration for Children's Services (ACS). Sign of abuse or neglect may include but are not limited to; patters of lateness to school and absence from school, late pick-up from school or the school bus, consistently unkept or dirty, signs of physical abuse. If a staff member suspects abuse or neglect, they should inform their supervisor and consult with the school based counseling teams to help facilitate next steps

Arrangements for Obtaining Emergency Assistance from Local Government

- The Superintendent in an emergency contacts dispatch point or 911 center for fire or EMA response
- The Superintendent contacts highest-ranking local government official for notification and/or assistance

Procedures for Obtaining Advice & Assistance from Local Government Officials

- The Superintendent in an emergency contact will contact emergency management coordinator and/or the highest-ranking local government official for obtaining advice and/or assistance
- The district has identified resources for an emergency from the following agencies: NYPD and NYFD



V. Recovery

Following an emergency situation, the following steps will be taken:

- The Board of Trustees will be notified.
- The Director of Finance will be notified so that s/he can determine any costs resulting from the emergency and any investments we will need to apply to the recovery phase.
- A letter will be drafted to the school community to acknowledge and address the incident.
- A press release will be created and the Principal, Director of Operations and Network Leadership Team will prepare to answer questions.
- Counseling services will be made available to the victim(s) of the incident and to the school community at large.
- The BRT will meet to reflect on actions taken during the incident and identify areas for improvement.
- If needed, a community meeting will be held in order to address questions or concerns of our families.

VI. School Health Policy

See Appendix B for formal DOE policy, which is followed by all Explore Schools as they are in co-located buildings.



Appendices

A. School Site Information

School Name	Address	Phone Number	Principal
Explore LS	655 Parkside Ave, Brooklyn, NY 11226	(718) 703-4484	Casey Kean, Principal
Explore US	655 Parkside Ave, Brooklyn, NY 11226	(718) 703-4484	Karen Hicks, Principal
Excel LS	1077 Remsen Ave, Brooklyn, NY 11236	(718) 303-3245	Anna Bear Dallis, Principal
Excel US	956 E 82 nd St, Brooklyn, NY 11236	(347) 289-9555	Brian Gligio, Principal
Empower LS	188 Rochester Ave, Brooklyn, NY 11213	(718) 771-2090	Jonathan Carrington, Principal
Empower US	188 Rochester Ave, Brooklyn, NY 11213	(718) 771-2090	Janelle Samuel Baker, Principal
Exceed LS	443 St. Marks Ave, Brooklyn, NY 11238	(718) 989-6702	Marcus Findlay, Principal
Exceed US	46 McKeever Place, Brooklyn, NY 11225	(347) 689-0200	Maureen Ferry, Principal

- B. **DOE COVID-19 School Health Policy** – please note that this is the current NYC DOE policy published for the 21-22 school year. As of 6/30/2022, the 22-23 COVID-19 School Health Policy has not been published.

Appendix B

NYC DOE COVID-19 School Health Policy

This page was last updated on June 24, 2022 at 12:57 PM.

Please visit the [FAQ page](#) for more information on COVID-19 policies in schools. Developed collaboratively with labor unions, the Department of Health and Mental Hygiene (DOHMH), and NYC Test + Trace Corps (T2), this policy provides guidance for schools regarding:

- Staying healthy while at school
- Daily health screenings for students and school-based staff
- What to do if a student or staff member shows signs of COVID-19 while at school
- Outreach to the Situation Room

Vaccinations Pop-up Sites

If your school has been identified for a vaccine pop-up for students ages 5-11, you can find the schedule on the [Vaccination Pop-up Site location document\(Open external link\)](#).

Please backpack home the letter to families in the appropriate language.

The pop-up sites will operate from 8AM to 5PM.

- **Vaccination Pop-up Sites** available in:
 - [Vaccination Pop-up Sites -- English](#)
[English](#)

Staying Healthy While at School: Vaccinations

Vaccination is currently the leading public health prevention strategy to end the COVID-19 pandemic. People who are fully vaccinated against COVID-19 are at low risk of symptomatic or severe infection.

Currently, people five years and older are eligible for COVID-19 vaccinations and those 12 and older are eligible for a COVID booster. Schools can promote vaccinations among eligible students by providing information about the COVID-19 vaccination, encouraging vaccine trust and confidence, and establishing supportive policies and practices that make getting vaccinated as easy and convenient as possible.

NEW! The DOE is committed to increasing the COVID-19 vaccination rate among students. Please print these [fliers\(Open external link\)](#), which encourage vaccination, and post in highly visible locations in your school.

In partnership with the DOHMH, the NYCDOE is emphasizing the use of multiple layers of protection against COVID-19 and encouraging those who are eligible to get vaccinated. Strategies to prevent the spread of COVID-19 include:

- Properly wearing a face covering when returning from isolation after COVID;
- Increasing ventilation, wherever possible;
- Washing and sanitizing hands regularly;
- Staying home when sick, after being in close contact with a person with COVID-19, or if someone in your household is exhibiting COVID-19 symptoms;
- If eligible for the COVID-19 vaccine or booster, getting the vaccine or booster.

Updates for June 10: Face Coverings for Students In Early Childhood Programs

Mayor Adams announced that, starting Monday, June 13, face coverings will be optional for students and staff in early childhood schools or programs.

To maintain the safety of our staff and students, early childhood programs will continue to practice strict COVID-19 protocols, including increased ventilation, a daily health screening, and test kit distribution.

As of June 13, face coverings for early childhood students and staff will become optional indoors, outside, and on school buses. Anyone who chooses to wear a face covering



may continue to do so, and students and staff members may request a face covering from their school or program if they need one.

Face coverings are strongly recommended for any staff member or student who knows they have been exposed to COVID-19 within the previous 10 days. Wearing a face covering is still required in medical rooms and nurses' offices. Nurses will have masks on hand for anyone entering who may need one.

Updates for April 26: Continuation of Home Test Kits

As shared in the April 26 edition of [Principals Weekly\(Open external link\)](#), the distribution of home test kits will continue:

- Any student who exhibits COVID-like symptoms at school or has been exposed to COVID-19 in a classroom setting should continue to receive a home test kit for use at home.
- Please continue to give all staff members two test kits per week, and all students four test kits per week, until further notice.
- Please remember that if an individual is exposed multiple times in a week, they need only one test kit (2 tests) for the week; the two tests are sufficient for multiple exposures.

Updates for March 7: Face Coverings

Beginning March 7, face coverings will become optional, indoors and outdoors on NYC public school grounds and on school buses, for all K-12 students and staff with a few exceptions. Please note that while wearing a face covering will no longer be required, anyone who chooses to wear a mask may continue to do so. Face coverings will continue to be available through your school's custodian engineer. Teachers may continue to ask for a KN95 mask; school should give one to any staff member who asks. These masks are to be used for five days. Custodian engineers have adult-sized KN95 masks available for staff and for students who can tolerate a high-grade mask; they also have three-ply surgical masks for students who cannot tolerate a high-grade mask, including younger students. For more information on face coverings, please see below and visit the updated [Face Coverings InfoHub page](#).

Face coverings are required:

- **Face coverings are required after returning from 5-day isolation or quarantine:** Anyone returning on Day 6 after a positive COVID-19 diagnosis or after having COVID-19 symptoms without testing is still required to wear a well-fitting face covering (such as a KN95, KF94, or a surgical mask under a cloth mask) at all times on school property through Day 10. If the individual is unable to wear a well-fitting face covering for the duration of the school day, the individual must continue to isolate for 10 days.
- **Face coverings are required when experiencing symptoms:** If an individual is symptomatic but has a negative COVID-19 diagnostic test performed by a provider OR two negative results from an at-home test taken at least 24 hours apart since the onset of symptoms, and has been fever-free for the past 24 hours without the use of fever-reducing medicine, the individual must wear a face covering through Day 10.
- **Face coverings for Early Childhood:** The indoor face covering mandate is still active for LYFE, EarlyLearn (Infants & Toddlers), 3-K, Pre-K, and 4410 classrooms. Children two years old and older, and all staff in these classrooms, must continue to follow the same masking requirements whether they are in a district school, CBO, or home-based program. Since children under the age of five are not yet eligible to receive the vaccine, face coverings remain our strongest defense against COVID-19 for early childhood populations.
- **Face coverings in medical rooms/nurses' offices:** Wearing a face covering is still required in medical rooms/nurses' offices, as well as in School Based Health Centers. Nurses will have face coverings on hand for anyone entering who needs one.

Face coverings are strongly recommended:



- **Face coverings following exposure:** It is strongly recommended that face coverings be worn when an individual has been exposed or potentially exposed at school (in the same room for 15 minutes or longer with a person who tested positive for COVID-19). Face coverings are also strongly recommended if an individual knows they have been exposed to COVID-19 in any setting within the previous 10 days.

Updates for February 3, 2022

Continuation of Home Test Kits

As mentioned in an email from the First Deputy Chancellor, the distribution of home test will continue:

- Any student who exhibits COVID-like symptoms at school or has been exposed to COVID-19 in a classroom setting should continue to receive home test kit for use at home.
- Please continue to give all staff members a home test kit, once a week, until further notice.
- Please remember that if an individual is exposed multiple times in a week, they need only one test kit (2 tests) for the week; the two tests are sufficient for multiple exposures.

Home Test Kits for Return from Midwinter Recess

The DOE wants to ensure that everyone (students and staff) has a test kit to use prior to returning from the midwinter recess. Students and staff can use this kit to test on the evening of Saturday, February 26 and the evening of Sunday, February, 27 before returning on Monday, February 28. Please note that while use of the test kit is *strongly encouraged*, participation is voluntary, and staff and students are not required to show proof of a negative test result before being allowed to return to work or school.

Distribution to Staff: For the week of February 14, schools should distribute home test kits to all staff on Monday, February 14 and again on Friday, February 18. This is to ensure staff have a second kit (2 tests) to use before they return from the midwinter recess on February 28.

Distribution to Students: All students should receive home test kits (2 tests) on Friday, February 18, even if they were exposed earlier in the week. A family letter to accompany the February 18 distribution of test kits will be available on the [Messages for Families\(Open external link\)](#) page on February 11.

Updates for January 31, 2022

Shortened Isolation Periods

As a reminder, anyone who tests positive for COVID-19 must isolate. This means the individual cannot go to school or work and should not leave their home, except to seek medical care.

Staff, Students in K-12 Classrooms: The isolation period for all staff and students in Kindergarten and above who test positive for COVID-19 has been shortened to five days (from ten), regardless of age or vaccine/booster status. Individuals who have tested positive for COVID-19 do not need a negative COVID test to return to school or work on Day 6.

If an individual has COVID symptoms and tests positive (on any kind of COVID test), the individual must isolate for a minimum of five days with Day 0 being the day that symptoms started. After five days the individual may return to school/work so long as they have been fever-free for 24 hours without fever-reducing medication and symptoms are improving.

If an individual has no symptoms but tested positive (on any kind of COVID test), the individual must isolate for five days, with Day 0 being the day the test was collected. If symptoms develop within five days of testing positive, the five-day isolation count must restart, with Day 0 being the day symptoms started.

If an individual has COVID-like symptoms and is awaiting a test result, the individual must isolate until the test result is received OR for five days, whichever comes first. If the test



result is negative, the individual can end isolation. If the test result is positive, the individual must complete the five-day isolation period and may return to school/work so long as they have been fever-free for 24 hours without fever-reducing medication and symptoms are improving.

Anyone who has tested positive and returns to school or work after Day 5 must wear a well-fitting face covering from Day 6 through Day 10. DOHMH recommends a high-grade well-fitting mask such as a KN95 or KF94, or a surgical mask worn under a cloth mask. Schools' Custodian Engineers have adult-sized KN95 masks available for staff and for students who can tolerate a high-grade mask; they also have three-ply surgical masks for students who cannot tolerate a high-grade mask, including younger students.

Anyone who experienced symptoms and tested negative for COVID but is returning to school or work must also wear a well-fitting face covering from Day 6 through Day 10. If the individual cannot wear a well-fitting face covering for the duration of the school day, the individual should continue to isolate and can return on Day 11.

Children in LYFE, 3K, Pre-K, and DECE-Contracted Providers: Isolation periods for infants, toddlers, 3-K and Pre-K children who test positive for COVID-19 will remain at 10 days.

Shortened Quarantine Periods

Staff, Students in K-12 Classrooms: All staff and students in grades Kindergarten and higher, when exposed to COVID-19 at school, do not need to quarantine and should continue to use the home test kits provided by their schools. Following an exposure at school, an individual should test that evening and test again five days later.

If an individual is not fully vaccinated and exposed to COVID-19 outside of a school setting, the individual must quarantine for five days; this has been reduced from ten days. An unvaccinated student who is exposed in the home must continue to quarantine for an additional five days after a household member's isolation period has ended, if the household member and student are staying in the same home during that time.

Anyone knowingly exposed to COVID and returning to school or work after Day 5 must wear a well-fitting face covering from Day 6 through Day 10.

Please note that if a staff or student has recovered from COVID-19 within the last three months, they do not need to quarantine or receive an at-home test kit following exposure unless they become symptomatic (new fever of 100 degrees F or higher, new cough, new sore throat, new loss of taste or smell, new shortness of breath).

Children in LYFE, 3K, Pre-K, and DECE-Contracted Providers: Children ages 2 through 5 years of age can now return after five days of quarantine if they are asymptomatic and test negative for COVID-19, regardless of where the exposure occurred.

They can return to school on Day 6 using a diagnostic test administered by a healthcare professional on Day 5 or they can use two at home rapid tests on Day 4 and Day 5. Any child returning from quarantine on Day 5 must wear a well-fitting face covering (such as a KN95) from Day 6 through Day 10.

NEW! Fully vaccinated children aged 5 in Pre-K settings do not need to quarantine after an exposure.

Children under 2 years old can return after eight days of quarantine if they are asymptomatic, and test negative for COVID-19 on Day 5 (or later) with a diagnostic test administered by a healthcare professional ONLY. Please note that at home tests are not considered valid for children under 2 years old unless used at the direction of a healthcare provider.

Please note that if a staff member or student has recovered from COVID-19 within the last three months, they do not need to quarantine or receive an at-home test kit following exposure unless they become symptomatic (new fever of 100 degrees F or higher, new cough, new sore throat, new loss of taste or smell, new shortness of breath).



Children in 3-K, Pre-K, DECE-Contracted, and LYFE classrooms that do not get tested can return to the school/program on Day 11 after completing a ten-day quarantine. If they become symptomatic during quarantine, please refer to the isolation guidance above.

Home Test Kits for Students Age 2 through 5 in LYFE, 3K, Pre-K, DECE-Contracted Providers

Beginning the week of January 31, home test kits should now be distributed to children age 2 and older when exposed at their school/program, as well as when they are sent home with symptoms. These children who have been exposed to COVID-19 in a classroom setting will still need to quarantine for at least five days but may choose to use the home test kit to test on Day 4 and Day 5 in order to return on Day 6. Any child returning from quarantine on Day 5 must wear a well-fitting face covering (such as a KN95) from Day 6 through Day 10.

Previous Updates

Home Test Kits

Beginning January 3, schools will distribute free, take-home COVID-19 test kits to:

- A student who exhibits COVID-like symptoms
- A student who has been in a classroom where a positive case has been identified
- Staff should receive a test kit once a week, even if they do not fall into the categories above. Should a staff member need an additional test kit due to extenuating circumstances, the staff member should request one from the principal.

Beginning January 10, schools with 3-K and Pre-K classes will distribute these take-home COVID-19 rapid test kits to any 3-K or Pre-K student who exhibits COVID-like symptoms.

Individuals Experiencing Symptoms

A student experiencing COVID-like symptoms at school should be isolated and have the guardian called for pick up. The school should give the guardian a home test kit (two tests), along with the [Family Notification of a Case letter](#).

A staff member experiencing COVID-like symptoms at school may be given a home test kit (two tests) and leave work immediately.

Please note, test kits are for use at home and not on school property.

Students and staff experiencing COVID-like symptoms should use both tests within 24 hours.

Symptomatic students should receive the [Return After Symptoms letter](#).

How to Use Home Test Kits for Symptomatic Individuals:

- The first test should be used immediately upon returning home, and the second test should be used 24 hours later.
- The symptomatic individual must stay home until two negative home rapid test results have been received.
- The individual may return to school/work after two negative test results and if they are fever free for 24 hours without fever-reducing medication.

If the individual tests positive on either home test, the individual must isolate.

Individuals Exposed to COVID at School (All Staff and Students in K-12)

Exposure is considered any student or teacher who was in a classroom with a positive case.

Students may have been exposed to COVID at school should be given a home test kit for use at home. Students should receive one test kit (2 tests) after exposure and they do not need an additional kit if they experience multiple exposures during the week.

The individual should administer the first home test on the day they receive the test kit and then again on Day 5.

If an individual begins to show symptoms of COVID before Day 5, they should use the test kit immediately, treating themselves as a potential positive case and isolate. It is



recommended that the individual also seek a PCR test.

As mentioned above, if a student was exposed multiple times in the same week (i.e. on Monday, Wednesday, and Friday), the student should receive ONLY one kit (two tests) that week. The student should test on Monday and then use the second test after the second exposure. If an individual is exposed multiple times in a week, they don't need another kit until next week; the two tests should be able to pick up any infection. Please note that this home testing program applies only to school exposures; it does NOT apply to individuals with household exposures. Students and staff who are not fully vaccinated and experience an exposure outside of the classroom must still quarantine at home for 10 days. If those individuals obtain a COVID-19 test result (a rapid home test is acceptable) on or after Day 5 from exposure, they can return to school from quarantine on Day 8. If a student begins to have COVID-like symptoms overnight, an adult guardian can pick up a test kit from the school for use on the student.

Quarantine/Close Contacts

Beginning January 3, the DOE and Situation Room will no longer ask for close contacts or implement partial class quarantines. Using the Test to Stay policy, all students in Kindergarten onwards and all school-based staff may return to school so long as no one experiences symptoms and continues to test negative after exposure. Principals must still call the Situation Room to report a positive case. However, schools DO NOT need to call the family of every student that would have been a "close contact." Schools should send home test kits to students and staff in the class with the relevant [Situation Room letter](#). Please note that full classroom closures still apply to classroom serving students in Pre-K and younger. Students impacted by classroom closures due to COVID-19 may test out of quarantine (see January 31 updates.)

Individuals Recovered from COVID-19 in the Last 90 Days

Students or staff who have recovered from a confirmed case of COVID-19 within the past 90 days do not have to quarantine or test following an exposure unless they show COVID symptoms. Starting on January 31, the health screener will be revised to address this scenario. Students or staff who have recovered from a confirmed case of COVID within the past 90 days should not receive at-home test kits following exposure and should not participate in school-based PCR testing.

COVID-19 Surveillance Testing

Regular COVID-19 testing provides school communities and public health experts with valuable information. Please visit [the COVID-19 Testing page](#) for the most up-to-date information. Families can give consent for testing through their student's [New York City Schools Account \(NYCSA\)](#) ([Open external link](#)).

Daily Health Screenings

Operationalizing Health Screenings

To ensure that staff and students do not report to school if they have or potentially may have COVID-19 or are feeling ill, a health screening must be completed, ideally at home, by all students, staff, and visitors before entering NYCDOE school facilities. Principals must have procedures in place to ensure that everyone who enters the building each day has passed the health screening at home or prior to entry to the school building. Schools should have a designated staff person to review the incoming reports of screening by staff and parent/guardian and to attest that they are completed.



To operationalize this guidance please note that as per [NYSDOH\(Open external link\)](#), schools are prohibited from keeping records of student, faculty, staff, and visitor health data (e.g., the specific health data of an individual), but are permitted to maintain records that confirm individuals were screened and the result of such screening (e.g., pass/fail, cleared/not cleared). Any paper questionnaires that are collected for purposes of completing the daily screening attestation requirement must be immediately shredded to protect student, faculty, staff, and visitor health data. Students and school-based staff can or cannot report to school based on their results of the following questions in the NYCDOE's [daily health screener\(Open external link\)](#). Translations will be available shortly.

Using the Online Health Screening Tool

NYCDOE families/students are encouraged to use [the online health screening tool\(Open external link\)](#) to pre-screen themselves before entering a NYCDOE building. Upon entering the school facility, families/students will be asked to provide the results of their screening either by showing the email on their smartphone or a printout of the results. Families should support students as needed with this online screening questionnaire and should ensure students have proper documentation for morning entry.

For students who travel via school bus, families must complete the screening, including checking their child's temperature prior to boarding a school bus to make certain that their child is well enough to ride on the bus and attend school. Bus personnel will not be conducting screenings of children prior to boarding the bus. School site designated staff will be checking for completion of student health screening at entry. Students without a daily screening clearance will need to be supported in completing this process at the school, particularly young children.

For morning student drop off, every effort should be made to ensure that student health screenings are completed prior to families dropping off their children to school, especially for younger students.

NYCDOE employees are strongly encouraged to use the online tool to pre-screen themselves before entering a NYCDOE building. Upon entering the facility, staff will be asked to provide the results of the screening either by showing the email on their phones or a printout of the results. The screening results for school-based staff are valid until midnight of the same day. School-based staff must show clearance every time they reenter a NYCDOE building.

Paper Copy of Health Screening Questionnaire

If students are not able to pre-screen using the online tool, schools must provide families with several copies of the health screening questionnaire so families can complete the questionnaire at home. If staff are not able to pre-screen using the online tool, staff should print and complete the [Health Screening Questionnaire \(Open external link\)](#) document for completion on a daily basis at home.

In-Person Health Screening at School

If NYCDOE families are unable to pre-screen their child(ren) at home using either the online tool or paper questionnaire, families will need to complete their child's screening in-person at the school building prior to their child's entry. Schools should determine the best way to implement on-site screening for students using either the online health screening tool or paper copies of the screening questionnaire. Young children may require additional support from a staff member.

If NYCDOE school staff are not able to pre-screen themselves prior to coming to work, they will be required to complete an in-person screening assessment prior to entering the building. The screening results for school-based staff are valid until midnight of the same day and school-based staff must show clearance every time they reenter a NYCDOE

Supporting Younger Students and District 75 Students with In-Person Health Screenings

For younger students who arrive at school without a completed questionnaire and are unable to respond to the health screening questions, the school should make an effort to contact a family member for support with screening. However, if a parent/guardian is unable to be contacted, the school should check the student's temperature to ensure that it is below 100.0 degrees F and ask the student about their well-being (e.g., "How are you feeling today?").

For District 75 students who arrive at school without a completed questionnaire, the school should make an effort to contact a family member for support with screening. If it is not feasible to contact the student's family member prior to the student's entry, the school should check the student's temperature to ensure that it is below 100.0 degrees F and ask the student about their well-being (e.g., "How are you feeling today?"). In District 75 schools, temperature check alone prior to entry is acceptable if a student is not developmentally able to answer questions regarding their well-being. In the event that contact with the family was not possible prior to the student's entry, once the student is in class the school should conduct outreach to the family to complete the screener as well as remind the family that the screening must be conducted at home before the student leaves for school.

Student Pick Up

If a student fails a health screening or shows symptoms of COVID-19, as mentioned above, the student should be escorted to a school-designated area and the guardian must be contacted to pick up the student. If the guardian cannot be reached, the school must contact the emergency contacts on the student's Blue Card. Please note that failure of the guardian or emergency contact to pick up the student in a timely manner does not warrant a report to the New York State Central Registry (SCR), unless accompanied by additional concerns or suspicions regarding the student's safety which would require that a report be made in accordance with [Chancellor's Regulation A-750\(Open external link\)](#).

Failing a Health Screening: Students

Any unaccompanied student who fails their health screening (i.e., answers yes to any of the health screening questions below) should be escorted to a school-designated room per the guidance below and must be picked up by a family member. For students who fail a health screening and are dropped off by a guardian, these students should be sent home with their guardians prior to entering school, where possible.

Failing a Health Screening: School-Based Staff

Any employee who fails their health screening will be refused entry to the building by the School Safety Agent/NYCDOE Safety Officer.

Symptoms of COVID-19 While at School

Student Shows Symptoms of COVID-19 While at School

For the 2021-22 school year, schools are not required to have an Isolation Room. All schools must have an area designated to hold students who are experiencing symptoms of COVID-19, but this room can be used for other purposes when not holding an ill student. Schools and campuses should decide on space that can be used. Regardless of the designated area, the space must be thoroughly cleaned after holding a student who showed signs of COVID-19. No additional staffing is needed for this designated space, as the nurse or campus health care professional will assess potentially ill students. Should



a school have the space, the school may designate a room to be solely used for holding students who show symptoms of COVID-19.

Schools should follow the steps below when a student shows symptoms of COVID-19 during the school day:

1. A classroom teacher or school aide notifies the nurse that a student is not well and experiencing one or more COVID-like symptoms, including:
 - Fever of 100.0 degrees F or higher or chills,
 - New cough,
 - New loss of taste or smell, and/or
 - New shortness of breath.
2. The student showing symptoms of COVID-19 will be escorted to the designated area in the school by a staff member wearing appropriate PPE.
3. When the ill student is placed in the designated area, the nurse will be contacted and will come to the designated area and assess the student.
 - Should the nurse/health professional be unavailable at that moment to examine the student and the guardian arrives, the student should leave with the guardian. The guardian should receive a home test kit for use on the student.
 - The nurse will assess if the student was vaccinated against COVID-19 within the past three days.
 - If the student was recently vaccinated, the student may be experiencing post-vaccine symptoms which include fatigue, fever, headache, and/or chills.
4. The area/classroom where the student was showing symptoms must be isolated/closed immediately and cleaned prior to re-occupancy.
5. The school calls the student's guardian for pick up.
6. Upon arrival of the student's guardian, a staff member escorts the student to the visitors' entrance for pick-up by the guardian, reviews the NYCDOE's "Sent Home With Symptoms" letter with the guardian and gives the guardian a home test kit.
7. The staff member will report the incident to the principal. The principal or designee will ensure that the incident involving the ill student is reported to the Situation Room by calling 212-393-2780 and is documented in OORS.
8. The Situation Room will provide the principal with a letter to be disseminated to the school community regarding a student exhibiting COVID-like symptoms during the school day.
 - The school may use any communication platform available to disseminate the letter.
 - The principal asks a school designee, such as the Parent Coordinator or nurse, to follow up with the family on the ill student's condition at regular intervals.
 - The principal and/or designee shares any test results or updates with the Situation Room and in the OORS report.

School-Based Staff Member Shows Symptoms of COVID-19 While at School

Schools should follow the steps below when a staff member shows symptoms of COVID-19 during the school day:

1. The ill staff member immediately notifies the principal that they are not feeling well and are experiencing COVID-like symptoms, such as:
 - Fever of 100.0 degrees F or higher or chills,
 - New cough,
 - New loss of taste or smell and/or,
 - New shortness of breath.
 - Note, if the staff member was vaccinated against COVID-19 within the past three days, the staff member may be experiencing post-vaccine symptoms which



- include fatigue, fever, headache, and/or chills. The staff member should go home and can return to work after being fever-free for at least 24 hours without the use of medication.
2. The staff member goes home with a home test kit.
 - If the staff member does not immediately leave the building and needs to wait for transportation assistance, the staff member may report to the designated area.
 3. The area/classroom where the staff member was showing symptoms must be cleaned as soon as possible.
 4. The principal or designee will ensure that the incident involving the ill staff member is reported to the Situation Room by calling 212-393-2780 and files an OORS report.
 - The Situation Room will provide the principal with a letter to be disseminated to the school community regarding a staff member having exhibited COVID-like symptoms during the school day.
 - The school may use any communication platform available to disseminate the letter.
 - The principal and/or designee will follow up with the ill staff member and share any test results or updates with the Situation Room and in the OORS report.

Student or School-Based Staff Member Calls Out Sick With COVID-Like Symptoms Or Because Someone In Their Household Is Sick With COVID-Like Symptoms

Should a student or staff member call out sick because they are experiencing symptoms of COVID-19, the principal or designee must call the Situation Room at 212-393-2780 and await next steps. Individuals who were vaccinated against COVID-19 within the past three days may experience post-vaccine symptoms which include fatigue, fever, headache, and/or chills. In that case, the individual should stay home and can return after being fever-free for at least 24 hours without the use of medication.

Criteria for Returning to School

Beginning January 3, schools will distribute free, take-home COVID-19 test kits to any students or staff who exhibit COVID-like symptoms or have been in a classroom where a positive case has been identified.

Individuals Experiencing Symptoms

The individual experiencing symptoms should use both tests within 24 hours. The first test should be used immediately upon returning home, and the second test should be used 24 hours later. The individual must stay home until two negative home rapid test results have been received. The individual may return to school/work after two negative test results and if they are fever free for 24 hours without fever-reducing medication.

Individuals Exposed to COVID at School

Students and staff who may have been exposed to COVID at school should be given a home test kit to take home. The individual should administer the first home test on the day they receive the test kit and then again on Day 5.

If an individual begins to show symptoms of COVID before Day 5, they should use the test kit immediately, treating themselves as a potential positive case and isolate.

Please note that this home testing program applies only to school exposures; it does NOT apply to individuals with household exposures. Students and staff who are not fully vaccinated and experience an exposure outside of the classroom must still quarantine at home for 10 days. If those individuals obtain a COVID-19 test result (a home rapid test result is acceptable) on or after Day 5 from exposure, they can return to school from quarantine on Day 8.



Testing Positive from a Home Test

Anyone who tests positive, regardless of vaccine status, from a take home test should immediately report it to the school and begin isolating. Students who test positive must isolate for 5 days and can return to school on Day 6 so long as they are able to wear a well-fitting mask while at school from Day 6 through 10. No negative test is required to return to school.

Students and Staff Identified as Close Contacts in a COVID-19 Case

Principals should continue to report all positive cases to the Situation Room. This now includes positive results from at-home rapid test kits that are reported to them.

Beginning immediately, if there is a positive case in a classroom, schools should follow this protocol:

- Students and staff members who were in close contact with a positive case, but who are not symptomatic, should not automatically quarantine.
- Schools should immediately distribute an at-home rapid test kit to each student and staff member who was in the classroom(s) with the individual who tested positive.
- These individuals should use the at-home rapid test kit to test themselves two times within five days. It is recommended that exposed individuals take one test on the day it is received and one test on Day Five after exposure. If an exposed individual starts experiencing COVID symptoms before Day Five, they should use the second test.
- As always, people who are experiencing COVID symptoms should stay home.
- As a reminder, all students, staff and visitors must pass the health screener in order to enter a school building. The health screener will include questions about test results from these rapid tests for those students and staff who receive at home rapid test kits due to possible exposure in a classroom. No other proof of negative result is required.

COVID Response Situation Room

The NYCDOE, T2, DOHMH, and Department of Buildings have collaborated to create the [COVID Response Situation Room](#) (the Situation Room).

Principals (or their designees) should continue to contact the Situation Room to report positive cases to the Situation Room via the [intake form](#)([Open external link](#)) or by calling 212-393-2780.

The Situation Room will continue to:

- Answer questions from school leaders
- Support with school communications and letters to families
- Monitor for widespread transmission and provide guidance on large scale interventions like school closures
- Update summary data and track citywide statistics
- Please visit the [Situation Room InfoHub](#) page for more information.

Nurses

In the event that your school building does not have a nurse on January 3, 2022 or in the future, you should reference the following guidance:

- The principal should escalate this issue to the [nurse supervisor](#).([Open external link](#))
- The principal should inform the superintendent.

If there is a student who requires medicine:

- The principal should reach out to guardians of students requiring medications/treatment and inform them that the school has no nurse coverage for the day.
- Guardians of students requiring medication/treatment may decide how to proceed in absence of a nurse and an option could include the guardian coming into school to give medication.
- Trained unlicensed staff may administer emergency medication (such as epinephrine



and glucagon) consistent with students' medication administration forms, 504 plans, and as allowable by law.

- The school should designate someone at the school to provide non-emergency first aid. The BRT should be informed and assist. The school must call 911 in the case of an emergency.

If there is a student showing COVID-like symptoms:

- The student showing symptoms of COVID-19 will be escorted to the designated area in the school by a staff member wearing appropriate PPE.
- The school must contact the guardian for pick up.
- The area/classroom where the student was showing symptoms must be isolated/closed immediately and cleaned prior to re-occupancy.
- Upon arrival of the student's guardian, a staff member escorts the student to the visitors' entrance for pick-up by the guardian.
 - The staff member reviews the NYCDOE's "Sent Home With Symptoms" letter with the guardian,
 - Gives the guardian a home test kit.
- The staff member will report the incident to the principal.
- The principal or designee will ensure that the incident involving the ill student is reported to the Situation Room by calling 212-393-2780 and is documented in OORS.
- The Situation Room will handle next steps and provide communication.



