

DOE Homecoming 2021

Our Commitment to Your Health and Safety

AUGUST 2021



August 2021

We are excited to welcome your student back to school buildings on Monday, September 13, 2021! We know nothing is better for student learning than being face-to-face in a classroom with a dedicated and caring educator—and our teachers, principals, and school staff cannot wait to welcome you back to an exciting year of learning, connecting, and creating community.

As we prepare for your child's return, we would like to share information about the gold standard health and safety precautions that will be in place at New York City's schools to support a safe and healthy in-person learning experience for all. Many of these measures were the ones that made our buildings among the safest places to be during the pandemic, and that helped us to end last school year with a 0.03% COVID-19 positivity rate. This guide also includes tips for families as you prepare your child for returning to school this fall.

We're committed to continuing and enhancing our health and safety measures to ensure that we are doing all we can to create conditions in our buildings and classrooms that keep our students safe. Our efforts, including our vaccination mandate for all staff, are important measures that we are taking to keep our track record of low positivity rates and transmission in our schools.

We look forward to kicking off this "Year of Homecoming" and partnering with you throughout the year to make sure your child has the best learning experience – one where they feel welcomed, affirmed, and excited about learning and all the possibilities before them.

In partnership,

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Meisha Porter". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Meisha" being more prominent than the last name "Porter".

Meisha Porter

Chancellor

New York City Department of Education



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Before the School Year Starts

As you prepare for September 13, families should take two important actions before the school year starts:

1. **Get your children vaccinated if they are aged 12 and older**
2. **Submit consent for COVID-19 testing**

COVID-19 Vaccines for Children Ages 12 and Older

Vaccination is the most important step you can take to protect you and your family from COVID-19, and all New Yorkers aged 12 and older are now eligible to receive the COVID-19 vaccine.

Vaccination is safe, free, and available regardless of immigration status.

If you have a child who is at least 12 years old, the Department of Health and Mental Hygiene and the New York City Department of Education strongly encourage you to make a vaccination appointment for them as soon as possible by visiting vaccinefinder.nyc.gov.

You can also call **877-VAX-4-NYC (877-829-4692)** for help making an appointment at a City-run vaccination site. Many sites now have walk-in appointments.

For answers to frequently asked questions about the COVID-19 vaccine, visit nyc.gov/vaccinefacts.

Public Schools Athletic League (PSAL) Vaccination Policy

COVID-19 vaccination will be **required** this year for DOE students and staff participating in Public Schools Athletic League (PSAL) sports considered high-risk for potential COVID-19 transmission. High-risk sports include football, volleyball, basketball, wrestling, lacrosse, stunt, and rugby. Vaccination will also be required for participation in bowling because it takes place in spaces that require vaccination.

Participants in fall high-risk sports must get their first dose of the COVID-19 vaccine by the first day of competitive play, which varies by sport. Winter and spring PSAL participants have until the beginning of their season to be fully vaccinated. For additional information about health and safety protocols for PSAL in the 2021-22 school year, please visit schools.nyc.gov/PSAL.

Providing Consent for COVID-19 Testing

It is important that you provide consent for your child to participate in the in-school testing program. You can fill out the testing consent form in your NYC Schools Account (NYCSA) or download a printable version at schools.nyc.gov/covidtesting. Don't have an NYC Schools Account? Learn how to get started at schools.nyc.gov/NYCSA.

Health and Safety in Our Schools

Your child's school is taking many important precautions to help keep students and staff healthy and safe this school year. These include:

Vaccination

All DOE employees, including school-based staff, will be required to be vaccinated. DOE employees will be required to provide proof that they have received at least one dose of the COVID-19 vaccination by September 27, 2021. We also strongly encourage vaccination for all students 12 and over. Visit vaccinefinder.nyc.gov for more information.

Health Screening

Every student and staff member must complete the Health Screening Form (healthscreening.schools.nyc) prior to entering the school building each day. Anyone entering the building must confirm that they are not experiencing any symptoms of COVID-19, have not recently tested positive, and are not currently required to quarantine based on close contact with an infected person. If you need a thermometer to check for a fever, you can request one from your school.

If a student or staff member is feeling ill, they must stay home and get tested, which is an effective way of protecting the whole school community. Every school will have a nurse on staff to whom students can report if they are feeling ill.

Face Coverings and Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)

All students and staff must wear a face covering when riding on school buses and anywhere on school property, indoors and outdoors, regardless of vaccination status, unless they have a medical exemption. Forgot a mask? No problem—every school will have a supply on hand for children and adults.

During lunchtime, masks may be removed so students can eat comfortably at a safe distance from one another. Masks may also be removed during designated “mask breaks”, during which students will maintain physical distance from each other.

Students who are not medically able to tolerate masks will be provided with alternative accommodations.

Hand sanitizer will also be available in every classroom.

Physical Distancing in Schools

Physical distancing is another important part of our multi-layered strategy to keep our school communities safe. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) “recommends schools maintain at least 3 feet of physical distance between students within classrooms to reduce transmission risk. When it is not possible to maintain a physical distance of at least 3 feet, such as when schools cannot fully re-open while maintaining these distances, it is especially important to layer multiple other prevention strategies, such as screening testing.” Additionally, wherever possible, elementary schools will keep groups of students consistently together or have teachers move between classes in order to minimize movement of students. It is important to note that the CDC emphasizes that schools should not exclude students from in-person learning to keep a minimum distance requirement.

During meal service, schools will use outdoor spaces and additional spaces in school buildings where possible to support physical distancing. Meals may be served in multiple locations and during multiple time periods.

Ventilation

Good ventilation is essential to prevent COVID-19. Over the past year and a half, ventilation in every single classroom across the city has been inspected, updated, and repaired as needed. Every DOE room in use by students and staff for extended periods of time will have fully operational ventilation through either natural, mechanical, or a combination of means.

As an added precaution, every classroom across New York City has been provided with two HEPA purifiers. Cafeterias in bigger schools will be provided with large HEPA units for added protection and window-based exhaust fans to provide additional air circulation, and we continue to increase ventilation in classrooms and schools. These measures meet or exceed guidance from the CDC.

You can check the ventilation status of your child's school online: enter the school name or address at nycenet.edu/schoolsearch to search for your school's information page, which includes a section on Building Ventilation Information. If a room in your child's school does not have adequate ventilation, it will not be used.

Cleaning

All classrooms and common areas, such as auditoriums and gyms will have hand sanitizer and disinfectant wipes available. High-touch" areas such as doorknobs and water fountains will be cleaned multiple times throughout the day, and each classroom will be deep cleaned and disinfected daily using electrostatic technology.

Outdoor Learning Continues

Last year, 840 schools took advantage of the innovative Outdoor Learning Initiative to expand their students' "classrooms". Schools will continue to use school yards, street space, and parks to provide additional space for learning. Schools in areas hardest hit by COVID-19 will continue to receive priority for the program.

COVID-19 Testing in Schools

Regular COVID-19 testing provides school communities and public health experts with valuable information. Continuing the successful safety practices of last year, there will be regular testing for COVID-19 in our schools.

Every school will have ten percent of unvaccinated individuals who have submitted consent for testing in their school population tested biweekly. This way, if there is a positive case, action can be taken right away to protect the school community. Students and staff who are fully vaccinated are not required to be tested.

It is important that you provide consent for your child to participate in the in-school testing program. You can fill out the form in your NYC Schools Account (NYCSA), or download the form online at schools.nyc.gov/covidtesting. Don't have an NYC Schools Account? Learn how to get started at schools.nyc.gov/NYCSA.

Positive Cases of COVID-19 in Schools

We know how important it is to keep our schools and classrooms open for learning, and we have done everything we can to make sure our classrooms are equipped to be safe learning environments, including mandating that all staff are vaccinated and ensuring increased ventilation in all school buildings and classrooms. These measures will mean fewer disruptions in your child's education.

There may be times when your child is asked to quarantine due to exposure to COVID-19. Here are the quarantine protocols for students in:

- **Elementary Schools:** In the event there is a positive case in a classroom, all students in the class will be instructed to quarantine for 10 calendar days. Students will continue to receive instruction while they quarantine.
- **Middle and High Schools:** In the event there is a positive case in a classroom, students who are:
 - At least 12 years old, vaccinated, and not showing symptoms will continue to attend school in-person. Out of an abundance of caution, these students are encouraged to take a COVID-19 test 3 to 5 days after exposure.
 - At least 12 years old, vaccinated, and showing symptoms will be directed to quarantine for 10 calendar days. These students will have access to remote learning while quarantining.
 - Unvaccinated will be directed to quarantine for 10 calendar days. These students will continue their learning remotely. On Day 5 of their quarantine, students may take a COVID-19 test, and with a negative result, return to attending school in-person after Day 7.

Schools will be closed only when it is determined by the Department of Health and Mental Hygiene (DOHMH) that there is widespread transmission in the school. With the health and safety measures in place, we expect that school closures will be limited.

Medically Necessary Instruction

Every year, there are some students with medical conditions that necessitate interim educational services outside of the school building. These services are offered for school-aged children (from 3K to grade 12) in all five boroughs, and can include individual in-person instruction by a certified teacher, or individual and small group instruction through digital platforms.

Taking COVID-19 into consideration, the New York City Department of Health and Mental Hygiene (DOHMH) has determined that students who have one of the following conditions would be approved for home instruction:

- Active Cancer
- Chronic Renal Diseases
- Sickle Cell
- Gastro/Crohn's Disease
- Thalassemia
- Leukemia
- Metabolic Disorders
- Heart Conditions
- Muscular Dystrophy
- Adrenal Disorder
- Cystic Fibrosis
- Liver Disease
- Tumor
- Congenital Lung Disease
- Congenital Heart Condition
- Lymphoma
- Cerebral Ataxia
- Seizures
- Stroke
- Multiple Sclerosis

Any family with a student who is immunocompromised due to a medical condition or treatment for a medical condition may apply for medically necessary instruction. Applications from families with any condition not listed will undergo review to determine eligibility.

For additional information about the application process and eligibility, please visit homeinstructionschools.com.

Other Important Information

Enrollment

New to New York City schools, or need help with the enrollment process? Visit schools.nyc.gov/newstudents for detailed information about enrollment in NYC public schools for grades from 3-K through 12.

New York City Schools Account

Make sure that your school can reach you with important information and alerts by updating your contact information in your NYC Schools Account (NYCSA). If you do not have an NYC Schools Account, you can sign up for an account by entering a few basic details. This will allow you to begin receiving notifications from the DOE. Learn more about the NYC Schools Account and how to create an account and confirm your information at schools.nyc.gov/NYCSA.

Language Access

Parents have the right to receive information or communicate with a staff member at their school or Department of Education (DOE) office in their language. If you or someone you know needs help, tell your school's principal or parent coordinator, call the DOE at **(718) 935-2013** or email Hello@schools.nyc.gov. You can find more information and important resources, including the Parent Guide to Language Access, at NYC Public Schools Speak Your Language: schools.nyc.gov/hello.

2021–2022 School Year Calendar

This is the 2021–22 school year calendar for all K–12 NYCDOE public schools. If your child attends a private, parochial, or charter school, please contact your child's school for information about their calendar. Please note the following reminders:

- November 2, Election Day, will be a fully remote, asynchronous instructional day for all students.
- On “Snow days” or days when school buildings are closed due to an emergency, all students and families should plan on participating in remote learning.

- Parent-teacher conference dates are tentative. Please confirm with your individual schools as dates might differ from those below.

DATE	WEEKDAY	EVENT
September 13	Monday	First day of school for students
September 16	Thursday	Yom Kippur , schools closed
October 11	Monday	Italian Heritage Day/Indigenous Peoples' Day , schools closed
November 2	Tuesday	Election Day , fully remote, asynchronous instructional day
November 3	Wednesday	Evening parent-teacher conferences for elementary schools and K–8 schools.
November 4	Thursday	Afternoon parent-teacher conferences for elementary schools and K–8 schools; students in these schools dismissed three hours early.
November 10	Wednesday	Evening parent-teacher conferences for high schools, K–12, and 6–12 schools.
November 11	Thursday	Veterans Day , schools closed
November 12	Friday	Afternoon parent-teacher conferences for high schools, K–12, and 6–12 schools; students in these schools dismissed three hours early.
November 17	Wednesday	Evening parent-teacher conferences for middle schools and District 75 school programs.
November 18	Thursday	Afternoon Conferences for middle schools and District 75 school programs; students in these schools dismissed three hours early
November 25–26	Thursday– Friday	Thanksgiving Recess, schools closed

DATE	WEEKDAY	EVENT
December 24–31	Friday– Friday	Winter Recess, schools closed
January 17	Monday	Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Day , schools closed
January 25– 28	Tuesday– Friday	Regents Administration
January 31	Monday	Professional Development day for 9–12 and 6–12 schools, students in these schools do not attend
February 1	Tuesday	Lunar New Year , schools closed
February 2	Wednesday	Spring Term begins for semester-based schools
February 21– 25	Monday– Friday	Midwinter Recess, schools closed
March 2	Wednesday	Evening parent-teacher conferences for elementary schools and K–8 schools.
March 3	Thursday	Afternoon parent-teacher conferences for elementary schools and K–8 schools; students in these schools dismissed three hours early.
March 9	Wednesday	Evening parent-teacher conferences for middle schools and district 75 schools and programs.
March 10	Thursday	Afternoon parent-teacher conferences for middle schools and district 75 schools and programs; students in these schools dismissed three hours early.
March 16	Wednesday	Evening parent-teacher conferences for high schools, K–12, and 6–12 schools.
March 18	Friday	Afternoon parent-teacher conferences for high schools, K–12, and 6–12 schools; students in these schools dismissed three hours early.
March 29–31	Tuesday– Thursday	3–8 ELA Assessment administration

DATE	WEEKDAY	EVENT
April 15–22	Friday– Friday	Spring Recess (includes Good Friday and Passover), schools closed
April 26–28	Tuesday– Thursday	3–8 Math Assessment administration
May 2	Monday	Eid al-Fitr , schools closed
May 30	Monday	Memorial Day , schools closed
June 7	Tuesday	Clerical Day, K–5, K–6, 6–8, and K–12 schools and D75 programs, students in these schools do not attend
June 9	Thursday	Anniversary Day, Chancellor’s Conference Day for staff development, students do not attend
June 15–24	Wednesday –Friday	Regents Administration
June 20	Monday	Juneteenth (observed), schools closed
June 27	Monday	Last day of school for students

Find printable files in multiple languages for the 2021–22 school year at schools.nyc.gov/calendar