

August 17, 2020

Dear Families,

In good times and in challenging times, I know that you want the best for your children. You want them to be safe, healthy, and happy. And you want them to always be learning, growing, and getting ready to take on the world. Our schools play such an important role in that, especially now, when the children of our city have been through so much.

For us, health and safety always lead the way. Our vision for the fall is a safe, strong, and supportive learning environment and an excellent education for every one of our students. Schools will be in session and students will be learning five days per week—no matter where they are.

We know a lot more now about how the learning experience is going to work. In this week's Reopening Update for Families, you will find:

- The latest health and safety information, including on ventilation, school nurses, and testing and tracing in schools
- How to stay informed on confirmed COVID-19 cases in your school community
- How families can change their children's learning preference to/from fully remote learning
- What happens if students attend school in-person on a day they are not scheduled to attend
- Supports for students with Individualized Education Programs
- Supports for students in temporary housing and foster care

We know that planning for the new school year isn't easy—for you, for our educators, for school staff, and for our communities. But I believe that by working together we can start the school year strong. I want to acknowledge the tireless work of your principals and school leaders, who have been hustling all summer to be ready for the first day of school.

I also want to thank you. Your partnership has made it possible for us to consider and plan for both in-person and remote learning. Your continued investment and engagement in your school communities is a vital part of ensuring our students' success not just during this upcoming school year but for years to come. We are privileged to serve you and your children, the young people who not long from now will be the ones leading our city.

If you have questions regarding the information in this letter, please contact your principal. You can find principal contact information by searching for your child's school on Find a School: schoolssearch.schools.nyc.gov. Principal information is on each school's web page at schools.nyc.gov, in the "School Contacts and Information" section. And as always, all information regarding back to school can be found at schools.nyc.gov/returntoschool2020.

Sincerely,



Richard A. Carranza
Chancellor
New York City Department of Education



Reopening Update for Families: August 17, 2020

The updates below are included on our school reopening webpage at schools.nyc.gov/returntoschool2020, available 24/7 to help you find information about the upcoming school year.

The Latest Health and Safety Information

For school buildings to open in September and remain open, the city must see fewer than 3 percent of all COVID-19 tests come back positive on a weekly average. Since June, the city positive test rate has been between 1 and 2 percent. We have strict protocols for testing, tracing, and quarantining if there is a confirmed case in school, and we will use every effort to prevent the spread of infection in schools if a student or staff member is feeling sick or has a confirmed case of COVID-19.

Many families have questions about ventilation. Our commitment is simple: if a room does not have adequate ventilation, it will not be used by students or staff. We are assessing and performing maintenance in buildings to maximize ventilation with outdoor air to the greatest extent possible. We expect maintenance to be completed by the opening of school.

Finally, this fall, every school building in New York City and all early childhood programs across the city will have access to nurses. Through a partnership with NYC Health + Hospitals, in addition to our established nursing workforce, every student will have access to a qualified nurse every day as we reopen schools safely and continue to stop the spread of COVID-19. Nurses will be in-place by the first day of school.

How to Stay Informed on Confirmed COVID-19 Cases in Your School Community

When the school year begins, we want to make sure we can contact you quickly and effectively to share information, including about confirmed COVID-19 cases in your child's school. Please sign up for a New York City Schools Account (NYCSA) so we can contact you via phone, email, or text message.

Your NYCSA account can also help you find your child's grades, test scores, schedules, transportation information, and more—from anywhere, and in all nine standard DOE language translations. I encourage you to keep your contact information up to date, so we can get in touch with you in the event of an emergency. If you don't have an account, sign up today at schools.nyc.gov/nycsa. It only takes five minutes!

How to Change a Child's Learning Preference to/from Fully Remote Learning

Your school principals, in partnership with district and central administrators, are continuing to develop school-level plans for every public school in New York City. We are currently planning for around three-quarters of our students (over 700,000 students) to begin the school year in a blended learning mode. This means that they'll learn in-person in a school building part of the school week and continue learning remotely from home for the rest of the week. The remaining families in our DOE community will begin the year in fully remote learning mode.



You can move your child into 100 percent remote learning at any time using the Learning Preference online form: nycenet.edu/surveys/learningpreference. Families who choose 100 percent remote learning can opt back into blended learning on a quarterly basis, beginning in November.

What Happens if Students Attend School In-Person on a Day They are Not Scheduled to Attend

Schools will work closely with families to clearly communicate which days their child will attend school in-person. The DOE encourages you to make alternate childcare arrangements and to build a plan to help ensure that your child does not arrive at school on unscheduled days. If a student arrives at school on days when they are scheduled for remote learning, your child's school will inform you. All children attending on an unscheduled day will need to be picked up or will be sent home, depending on age and other factors. For more information on policies for students who attend school on a mistaken day, visit schools.nyc.gov/returntoschool2020.

Supports for Students with Individualized Education Programs

The DOE will provide students with disabilities access to in-person instruction during blended learning. If your child's IEP recommends related services, you will soon receive a survey where you will be asked to express your preference for in-person or remote therapy. Upon school opening, your child's school will contact you to discuss your child's specific schedule and make every effort to align your request to available services. The DOE will release additional guidance and information for families of students with disabilities shortly.

Supports for Students in Temporary Housing and Foster Care

Students in temporary housing and foster care face unique challenges as a result of COVID-19, including the shift to remote learning. We have been providing additional supports to these students, including ensuring their early receipt of remote learning devices. Any remote learning devices given to students in shelter have cellular capabilities. As possible and appropriate, students in temporary housing and foster care may also receive additional in-person instruction, depending on a school's programming model, overall student needs, and capacity.