



DR. RICHARD IZQUIERDO HEALTH & SCIENCE CHARTER SCHOOL

2021-2022 School Reentry Plan

(Updated January 4, 2022)

Our goal this year is to maximize in person learning while keeping everyone in our school community safe. For this reason, we have taken a layered approach to mitigating strategies based on the guidance from the NY State Education and the CDC. Our school reentry plan is aligned to the CDC's Guidance for COVID-19 Prevention in K-12 Schools and American Academy of Pediatrics' COVID-19 Guidance for Safe Schools.

In order to keep the school open and keep our scholars and staff safe, we will continue to implement *key mitigation strategies* outlined by the CDC and NYSED. Consistent implementation of these strategies during all school-related activities is critical to keeping schools open.

Updated Reopening Plan - SY 21/22

Scholars and staff members must continue to complete the [NYC DOE Health Screening \(schools.nyc\)](https://schools.nyc.gov/health-screening) prior to entering the school building each day. Please note that the health screening has been updated to align with the new guidelines.

Although temperature checks are not required, there are several thermometers at entry and these can also be used for a temperature check. If you do not want to take your temperature at entry, please complete [Health Screening](#) Form prior to coming to the school building. Anyone entering the building must confirm that they are not experiencing any symptoms of COVID-19, have not recently tested positive for COVID-19, and are not currently required to quarantine based on close contact with an infected person.

Prevention Strategies to Reduce Transmission of COVID-19 in Schools

CDC recommends that all teachers, staff and eligible students be vaccinated as soon as possible. However, we do have a mixed population of both people who are fully vaccinated and people who are not fully vaccinated. This requires using COVID-19 prevention strategies and this is why the CDC recommends universal indoor masking regardless of vaccination status at all levels of community transmission.

Since schools typically serve their surrounding communities, our decisions are based on the school population, families and students served, as well as their communities. The primary factors to consider include:

- Level of community transmission of COVID-19.
- [COVID-19 vaccination coverage](#) in the community and among students, teachers, and staff.
- Strain on health system capacity for the community.
- Use of a frequent COVID-19 screening testing program for students who are not fully vaccinated. Testing provides an important layer of prevention, particularly in areas with substantial to high community transmission levels.
- COVID-19 outbreaks or increasing trends in the school or surrounding community.

- Ages of children served by K-12 schools and the associated social and behavioral factors that may affect risk of transmission and the feasibility of different prevention strategies.

The **CDC K-12 Operational Strategy** continues to emphasize the importance of using a combination of mitigation strategies to avoid COVID-19 transmission in schools, including:

Prevention Strategies

- Promoting vaccination
- Consistent and correct mask use
- Physical distancing
- Screening testing to promptly identify cases, clusters, and outbreaks
- Improved ventilation
- Handwashing and respiratory etiquette
- Staying home when sick and getting tested
- Contact tracing, in combination with isolation and quarantine
- Cleaning and disinfection

CDC recommends universal indoor masking, physical distancing to the extent possible, and additional prevention strategies to protect students, teachers, and staff. Schools should not exclude students from in-person learning to keep a minimum distance requirement; layering multiple prevention strategies is essential when physical distancing of at least 3 feet is not possible at all times.

[Guidance for COVID-19 Prevention in K-12 Schools | CDC](#)

Distributing At-Home Test Kits (New)

- The number of test kits per site will be based on enrollment at each site.
- Schools may distribute these test kits on an **as-needed** basis to any student who exhibits COVID-like symptoms OR who has been exposed to COVID-19 in a classroom setting beginning January 3.
 - These tests are not intended to serve other purposes, including pre-screening students and staff to re-enter schools following holiday breaks, and they are not intended to serve as surveillance testing.
 - All test kits will be distributed with the [DOHMH fact sheet](#) with guidance on how to take the test.
- At-home rapid test kits should only be used at home and are not intended for use at schools.
- The school will distribute tests by kit. Each kit contains one or two tests, depending on brand, and should be only opened by the person who will use it at home. Schools should not open the kits upon receipt.

Using At-Home Test Kits

These at-home rapid test kits will be distributed:

- **To all students in a class where a positive case is identified. Students in that class can use the take-home tests to monitor for COVID.**
 - Students can remain in school during this time as long as they do not test positive, can wear their masks and they remain symptom-free. Those who have an at-home rapid test kit will need to take the test two times over the course of several days (each kit includes two tests).
 - It is recommended that exposed individuals take one test that evening and one test on Day Five after exposure.

- If an exposed individual starts experiencing COVID symptoms before Day Five, they should stay home, isolate and use the second test.
- **To any student who is exhibiting symptoms of COVID-19.**
 - These individuals should be isolated, go home, and take this test at home.

Anyone who tests positive from an at-home rapid test should immediately report it to the school and begin isolating per current DOHMH guidance, as applicable.

- Positive at-home test results should be called into the DOE situation room or DOHMH as appropriate, similar to positive PCR or rapid tests.

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. The school currently does biweekly random testing of unvaccinated students, who have submitted consent for testing, at a threshold of ten percent of unvaccinated students per school population. 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.

We will also continue the Situation Room reporting. The Situation Room remains your main point of contact for any possible cases of COVID-19 in the school building.

Mandatory MASK Mandate:

The CDC and the American Academy of Pediatrics recommend universal indoor masking for all teachers, staff, students, and visitors to K-12 schools, regardless of vaccination status and community transmission levels. In accordance with the Commissioner's determination issued pursuant to 10 NYCRR 2.60, all students, personnel, teachers, administrators, contractors, and visitors must wear masks at all times indoors, regardless of vaccination status.

- a) People with medical or developmental conditions that prevent them from wearing a mask may be exempted from mask requirements, as documented by a medical provider.
- b) People do not need to wear masks when eating, drinking, singing, or playing a wind instrument; when masks are removed for these purposes, individuals must be spaced six feet apart. This may mean that meals cannot be eaten in classrooms that have been arranged to accommodate shorter distances between students during instruction time.
- c) All mask requirements must be applied consistently with any state and federal law (e.g., Americans with Disabilities Act).
- d) Information on how to properly wear a mask can be found here:

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/prevent-getting-sick/about-face-coverings.html>

Physical distancing

This 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.” 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* air purifiers. Cafeterias in bigger schools will be provided with large air 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: use Find a School to locate your school’s 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

In addition to these mitigating strategies, continued daily health screenings, and prioritizing testing for staff and scholars will be necessary. Screen testing can help to identify those individuals that may be positive for COVID, but may not have any symptoms. Dr. Richard Izquierdo Health and Science Charter School can partner with Urban Health Plan to support staff and community vaccination.

School Meals:

Grab and Go Meals will still be provided for Remote Students as they were in the past. Please let us know if you are interested in coming in for Grab and Go breakfast or Lunch.

All visitors must show proof of at least one dose of the COVID-19 vaccination to enter a DOE school building. Visitors do not include students attending school or school related activities in a DOE school building.

Acceptable proof of vaccination is one of the following:

- A [CDC Vaccination Card](#); a photo or photocopy is also acceptable.
- A [NYC Vaccination Record](#) or other official immunization record from within or outside the US, including from a health care provider. A photo or photocopy of this card is also acceptable.
- NYC COVID Safe App
- [DOE COVID-19 Vaccine Portal](#)

Positive Cases: Closure and Quarantine

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:

- For 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 seven.

Schools will be closed only when it is determined by the New York City 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.



Possible Reopening Options:

Option #1 Full In Person Learning for both middle school and high school.

For this option, the school will provide a full schedule to students and the entire school population would return to in person learning. The school conducted a survey to families to ascertain how they feel about returning to school and whether they would be interested in a partial or fully remote option for their children.

Option #2 Hybrid Model:

In the case of increased transmission rates and/or the need for reduced student population, the school may move to a hybrid model. This may be due to increased transmission rates or due to DOE mandates. With a Hybrid Model, we would stagger our schedule with some students remote while others are in person. During the time they are home, they would engage in asynchronous learning. During the time they are in person, teachers can engage in lessons and be available for questions. The Hybrid model would have a staggered schedule to allot for social distancing and reduced population. For example, Group 1: 8 am -12 pm and group 2: 1 pm - 5 pm (with one-hour break in between sessions for cleaning). Another hybrid model can be alternating days. For example, 50% of our student population can attend on Mon and Thursday, 50% on Tuesday and Friday. Wednesday would be remote for all.

Option #3: Fully Remote:

This option would only be if we must return to full remote instruction due to high transmission rate or due to too many COVID cases in the school building. In this case, we would follow the established eight period schedule for all scholars grades 6-12.

Next Steps, if we move to hybrid or remote instruction:

- 1) Contact Families
- 2) Inform School Custodians, School Safety Officers, School Transportation (for students that are bussed to school), School Foods (generally require 10 day notice), etc.
- 3) Prepare for in person learning by providing training for staff members.
- 4) Ensure proper training of staff and students.
- 5) Prepare classrooms (installation of plastic shields, proper ventilation), hallways, restrooms, etc.
- 6) Put up safety posters/reminders and 6ft markings, etc.
- 7) Purchase of proper PPE for staff and students (which we have done already).

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 group instruction by certified teachers 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 provisionally approved for medically necessary 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 an orthopedic, non-orthopedic/medical, or psychiatric reasons a medical condition may apply for medically necessary instruction. Applications from families with any condition not listed will undergo review to determine eligibility. Visit the [Medically Necessary Instruction](#) page to get additional information about the application process and eligibility.

Please Note: If transmission levels rise, we are prepared to take steps such as switching to hybrid learning for a reduced population of scholars in the building and/or increased physical distancing. We are also prepared to pivot to remote instruction as necessary.

Communication with families:

As we plan to reopen schools, we must work together with families to instill trust and confidence. Building these relationships requires two way communication with our school community. Communication will be clear and consistent, and any developing changes must be shared in a timely manner.

We will continue to communicate with families as in the past in the following manner:

- We will continue to inform families on the various factors that have been identified and implemented. This includes specific health and safety protocols for staff and students.
- The school will share protocols and safety measures taken with all relevant parties including parents/legal guardians, faculty, staff, students and the local community.
- Continued Zoom meetings with both staff and families will be held to provide guidance regarding school reopening, changes in plans, training and professional development opportunities
- Robo calls parents with announcements.
- Weekly newsletters by family engagement coordinators will continue to be shared.
- Updates will be on the school website.
- Written and verbal communication will be provided in the appropriate home language
- Continued parent/guardian and student outreach regarding student progress on academics, attendance and social emotional wellness and concerns, by counselors, the school culture team, the operations team, deans, counselors, and/or teachers.
- Teachers will be able to schedule Zoom meetings with parents to discuss progress

and/or concerns.

- Progress reports will be sent to parents during report card marking period
- Ongoing communication with students with IEPs and their families, regarding special education services.
- A minimum of two Town Hall meetings will be held for families and one for Dr. Richard Izquierdo Health and Science Charter School staff members, as per the Governor's recommendation. Two additional Town Halls will be held, one in February and one in March.

Prior to school opening:

- School has purchased and will sustain adequate supply of PPE for staff and students
- Established procedures for what to do in the case that a member of the school community becomes ill (holding room, parental contact, contact tracing/reporting, etc.).
- All staff and students would have been provided with training on health and safety procedures, prior to *students* returning to the school building.
- School would have limited visitors to the school building.
- Custodial staff would have ensured that the school has been properly cleaned and disinfected. Training on enhanced cleaning procedures will be provided to custodial staff.
- Educate parents and staff about the safety measures and observation of Covid-19 Vaccinations, symptoms, and health screenings that must be conducted every morning before students come to school.
- The school will provide students and staff information on COVID-19 testing sites, and Vaccine Sites ([NYC COVID-19 Vaccine Finder](#)).

School Schedules:

Students in Middle and High school will receive schedules per PowerSchool. Along the year, we will continue to monitor the infection rate, guidance from the CDC, NYSED, and DOHMH, inform staff and families with any new updates, and adjust guidelines accordingly.

Health and Safety:

In the event of a return to in person learning, all staff will participate in training on Covid-related safety protocols. These include: universal and correct use of masks, social distancing, hand washing procedures and respiratory etiquette, cleaning and maintaining healthy facilities, contact tracing and reporting requirements as well as isolation and quarantine procedures. These trainings would include all staff present in the building (i.e. custodial staff, kitchen staff, safety officers, etc.)

Students and staff must adhere to the following:

- 1) Practice social distancing; maintain 3 ft. or more apart from each other.
- 2) All students and families must complete health screenings before coming into the school building.
- 3) Daily temperature checks before entry.
- 4) PPE and face coverings while indoors.
- 5) Healthy hygiene practices- frequent hand washing and/or use of hand sanitizer
- 6) Coughing into the elbow.
- 7) Students and staff will not be permitted to share school materials and supplies. For example,

each student will have an assigned Chromebook or laptop, and no pencils and/or handouts may be shared among students. **All assignments should be submitted electronically.

- 8) Students must maintain social distance during transitions. Floor marking should be in place for morning entry, movement during transitions, school cafeteria, classrooms or common spaces.
- 9) Proper signage will be displayed throughout the school building reminding students and staff of safety guidelines.
- 10) Particular avoidance of physical proximity in cases of increased exhalation (singing, exercise); these activities are likely safest outdoors and spread out. Use of outdoor spaces for physical education as much as possible.
- 11) Special schedules for use of the cafeteria, and common spaces or eating will take place in the classroom. There will be no physical education classes or assemblies of students in the auditorium.
- 12) As noted in the Nutrition and Meals section, students will be encouraged to bring in their own personal water bottles. Sharing of food and beverages will not be allowed.
- 13) For families that require remote learning, the school will continue to provide free meals (Free Meals Hub). Information has been shared on the school website and is available upon request.

Management of ill persons:

In case a student, staff or visitors become infected, the following procedures will be implemented:

- Students that become ill during the school or develop symptoms while at school will be escorted to a holding room until the parent has been contacted for pick up of the student. Proper PPE and social distancing protocols will be maintained.
- Temperature checks and health screenings should be conducted daily prior to coming to school. If and when students or staff members have not conducted the health daily health screening, temperature checks will be conducted at entry.
- Any person with a temperature of 100.0 degrees or above will be restricted from entering the facilities, if possible.
- If a student cannot be picked up immediately, a designated staff member will accompany the student to the isolation room (room 134) where they will await pick up. Proper PPE and social distancing will be maintained within this room.
- Any staff member that has a temperature at entry will not be allowed into the building. The staff member will be provided the information for Urban Health Plan and DOHMH test sites. For any confirmed positive test, staff members must quarantine for 10 days.
- Individuals who were exposed to the COVID-19 virus must complete quarantine and have no symptoms before returning to the school building. Discharge from quarantine and return to school will be conducted in coordination with the NYC DOH.

It is our mission and our commitment to meet the needs of all the members of our school community and do so safely and equitably during these very challenging times. If it is safe, we will continue to focus on our scholars' wellbeing and learning. We feel that with careful safety measures and precautions, we can return to in-person instruction at a reduced capacity. We hope to see scholars and their families soon!

