

September 14, 2020

Dear Families,

Even in the face of so much change, September is still the most exciting time of year. There's a back-to-school energy in the air as all over the city, educators, students, and families are getting ready for the school year to begin.

And all of us at the Department of Education have been busy too. In this Reopening Update for Families, I am happy to share important information on:

- The 2020–21 School Calendar
- Ensuring your school's ventilation is in good working order
- How to get tested for COVID-19 before the school year begins
- How to stay informed on confirmed COVID-19 cases in your school community

As we prepare for the new school year, I want to reassure you that we are leaving no stone unturned to protect our students, educators, and families. That is why we are doubling down on all our health and safety protocols—from ventilation to face coverings, physical distancing, nightly cleaning, and frequent hand washing/sanitizing. It's why we will make all information available to the public.

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

I also want to remind you about an important way you can help protect your school community regarding travel. Several states are still seeing high transmission rates of COVID-19 - you can find the list at ny.gov/traveladvisory. All New Yorkers are strongly advised to avoid travel to these states, but if you must travel to one of these areas, you will have to fill out the New York State Traveler Health Form and quarantine for 14 days when you return to New York City—it's required by New York State. For more information on COVID-19 testing, tracing, and how to safely quarantine, visit testandtrace.nyc.

These next few days are about getting everything ready for the incredible school year that lies ahead. We look forward to welcoming your child back for partial-day instructional orientation starting September 16, and for full-day instruction for both blended learning and remote learning on September 21!

Sincerely,



Richard A. Carranza
Chancellor
New York City Department of Education

Reopening Update for Families: September 14, 2020

School Calendar

We recently announced that the school year will begin for students on Wednesday, September 16 with a part-time instructional orientation period. Full-time learning will begin on Monday, September 21. I am pleased today to share with you a calendar for the full 2020-21 school year at schools.nyc.gov/calendar.

There are some important differences for this school year that we want to highlight:

- September 16–18 will be remote partial instructional days for students focused on getting your child ready for learning this year. All students are expected to participate and engage. Your school will confirm your child’s exact schedule and provide log-in instruction for these three days.
- September 21 is the first full-time day of teaching and learning for students in both fully remote and blended learning (in which they are learning in school buildings for part of the week, and remotely for the rest of the week).
- November 3, Election Day, will be a fully remote learning day for all students. In past years, students did not attend school on Election Day.
- On “snow days” - or days in which school buildings are closed due to an emergency - all students and families should plan on participating in remote learning.

Please reach out to your school with any questions you may have about the school calendar for this year.

Ventilation Inspections

Ensuring proper ventilation is an important part of our health and safety protocols. Proper ventilation can reduce the level of viruses, including COVID-19, inside buildings. According to our City and federal public health experts, a room is safe when air is able to flow in and out - whether through an open window or mechanical means, such as HVAC systems or air handlers. I am pleased to report that we have completed ventilation inspections in every New York City public school building.

Here are our findings:

- Of over 64,000 classrooms inspected, 96 percent have been confirmed to have ventilation that meets City health and safety standards.
- Where a ventilation issue was identified, the DOE is swiftly implementing repairs. Many issues have already been addressed and fixed.
- Per federal guidance, we are also inspecting and ensuring proper ventilation in restrooms, kitchens, and other areas used by students and staff.
- Any rooms with ventilation issues that haven’t been repaired before the first full-time day of teaching and learning on September 21 will not be used by staff or students.
- You can see the inspection results for your child’s school by visiting schools.nyc.gov/ventilation.

How to Get Tested for COVID-19 Before the School Year Begins

It's up to all of us to keep our school communities and families safe by wearing face coverings, keeping our distance, washing hands frequently, and getting tested! Help us keep our schools open and school communities healthy by getting tested for COVID-19 before buildings reopen for learning. It's safe, free, and easy for everyone, regardless of immigration or insurance status. To find a testing site near you, visit nyc.gov/covidtest.

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

It's important that your school can reach you to share crucial information quickly, including alerts about confirmed COVID-19 cases in your child's school. Please sign up for a **NYC Schools Account (NYCSA)** so we can contact you via phone, email, or text message. With NYCSA, you can access your child's grades, test scores, schedules, transportation information, and more—from anywhere, and in all nine standard DOE language translations. In order to see your child's records, request an Account Creation Code from your school. I encourage you to keep your contact information up to date, so your school 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!

To view a copy of this document in your language, visit schools.nyc.gov/messagesforfamilies

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