

**The Bronx Charter Schools for Better Learning**

**Re-Opening Plan 2021-2022**

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**Executive Director**

**Thomas Howard, Jr., Ed.D.**

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## Executive Summary

### Overview

Founded in 2003, the Bronx Charter School for Better Learning (BBL) runs two community-based schools, currently serving over 1,000 students. Our performance history shows that BBL provides students with a solid academic foundation that exceeds citywide averages and meets New York State standards. In 2019, BBL schools scored 60% and 67% in English Language Arts, and 75% on average in Mathematics. Approximately 80% of BBL students are from low-income to moderate-income families and are primarily (95%) comprised of Hispanic or African American families.

The data associated with COVID-19 shows that communities of color, such as ones in the Bronx, NY (New York), are experiencing a disproportionate rate of severe illness and other adverse effects. Some of the families we serve share similar social and economic factors already in place prior to the pandemic. Our aim with this reopening plan is to sustain a high-quality educational program and exceed the *Interim Guidance for In-Person Instruction at Pre-K to Grade 12 Schools*, published by the New York State Department of Health (NYSDOH).

BBL values equity in education as well as the health and safety of staff and students. As such, the reopening plan not only demonstrates accountability to NYSDOH requirements but remains true to the mission of our organization.

*The Bronx Charter Schools for Better Learning provide their students with a solid foundation for academic success through achievement that exceeds citywide averages and meets or exceeds New York State Standards and national norms in all curriculum areas tested, especially in mathematics and language arts.*

*Our teaching continually adjusts to our students' needs, leading to independence, autonomy, responsibility, and a sustained love of learning, all of which contribute directly to high academic achievement.*

### Opportunity

The plan, following ten nonconsecutive months of remote teaching and learning, demonstrates how BBL can now continue a high-quality educational approach while embracing new guidelines of the NYSDOH and the New York State Education Department (NYSED). The plan maintains accountability to our authorizer, the State University of New York (SUNY), Charter Schools Institute in the following areas:

1. Educational Program – Implement a reopening program with high-quality in-person instruction
2. Safe and Equitable Teaching and Learning Environment – Monitor the health conditions for all constituents in two collocated public-school buildings

3. Enhanced Safety and Hygiene Practices – Take assertive measures to contain the potential transmission of the 2019 novel coronavirus (COVID-19)
4. Contingency Planning – Use a data-driven decision-making mode to address instructional and institutional needs that arise because of the pandemic.

**Core Elements**

BBL’s reopening plan builds on discussions with stakeholders, including parents, staff, faculty, school administration, and board of trustees. The plan considers different input in the following areas:

Core Focus	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• PPEs and Face Coverings</li> <li>• Social Distancing</li> <li>• Classroom Configurations</li> <li>• Restructuring Space to Maximize In-Class Instruction</li> <li>• In-person instruction</li> <li>• Transportation</li> <li>• Food Service</li> <li>• Ventilation</li> <li>• Vaccination</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Aftercare</li> <li>• Extracurricular Activities</li> <li>• Screening</li> <li>• Contact Tracing</li> <li>• Hygiene, Cleaning, and Disinfection</li> <li>• Staffing</li> <li>• Academic Program</li> <li>• Cohorts</li> <li>• Return to school protocol</li> </ul>

**Collocated Schools**

As an organization with two collocated schools, the plan demonstrates the flexibility necessary to implement a unique solution in two public school facilities. Currently, BBL administrators serve as active participants of the Building Councils at PS 111 and MS 144. The councils will continue to meet often to approach issues and advance strategies with health and safety as a shared priority.

Collocated School Locations

School	Building Address	Collocated School
BBL1	3740 Baychester Ave-Annex, Bronx, NY 10466	PS 111
BBL2	2545 Gunther Ave, Bronx, NY 10469	MS 144

**Educational Environment**

BBL derives a high-quality environment for teaching and learning from an investment in human capital. Throughout the reopening period and beyond, staff will receive coaching to help create a trauma-informed organization and trauma-sensitive classrooms. We judge that a trauma-

informed organization can best serve the social-emotional needs of students by also supporting the needs of staff.

We further believe that a healthy adult, following COVID-19, is better suited to provide a caring and nurturing environment for students whose families may be suffering from the impact of the pandemic. As such, each staff member will have a network of support that may include one-on-one coaching or peer-to-peer engagement in teams. Also, BBL will maintain a team of academic leaders and professional development staff to further offer their support in a time of need or opportunity for growth.

BBL continues its practice in engaging the school community through various methods of communication, including the use of the Parent Portal, coordinated virtual parent meetings, and weekly family check-in calls from teachers and a seasoned team of Guidance Counselors. Further, BBL created a Parent Resource Center page on our website. The tool provides parents with timely information on social-emotional learning, parent-webinars hosted by our Guidance Department, and content related to e-learning and community resources. Thus, we will sustain a partnership with families in their children's education, through and beyond this period of COVID-19.

### ***Responsible Parties***

As a collaborative organization, BBL involved a cross-section of groups in the planning process. A panel of educators had an opportunity to contribute ideas to the plan and added subsequent feedback as we sought to improve the plan. Staff described feeling like their input mattered and being part of the strategic management process was motivating.

The process of gathering information and ideas from the following means: small group meetings, anonymous online surveys, assessment data, parent meetings, and staff meetings. The contributors to the plan included the Executive Director, Principals, Assistant Principals, Director of Professional Development, Director of Students Services, Academic Leaders, Assessment Team, and Board of Trustees.

### **Reopening of School Facilities for In-person Instruction**

Our plan builds on the discussions that we have been having with the various BBL stakeholders, including parents, staff, faculty, school administration and the board of trustees. Based on these discussions, we intend to implement a fully in-person learning model with comprehensive safety measures for the 2021-2022 school year.

To prepare students for this transition, we offered a 2-day orientation for students with a focus on reacclimating them to in-person learning. For our more vulnerable populations, including

students with disabilities and those identified as academically at-risk through the Response to Intervention (RTI) screening process, we offered a comprehensive 6-week summer program. This program targeted social-emotional health and English Language Arts to specifically address learning and social-emotional challenges experienced during the remote learning period.

- **Capacity**

BBL has created a comprehensive plan that adheres to state and local health and safety guidelines and ensures social distancing practices. Our schools are working collaboratively with the district schools with whom we share space. We have onsite nurses and have also created isolation rooms for students experiencing symptoms of COVID-19. Principals and United Federation of Teachers chapter leaders at the district schools conducted walkthroughs to determine how many people each school building could safely accommodate. Responsible Parties considered key safety factors including, but not limited to, physical distance, availability of personal protective equipment, local medical capacity, and availability of safe transportation. Then, given the school's projected enrollment of students and staff, we have calculated that we can safely accommodate a fully in-person instructional program.

- **Physical Distancing**

BBL has developed a plan for physical distancing which it will implement and enforce in all school facilities and on school grounds. Feedback on physical distancing requirements was collected from various stakeholders through different means, including surveys, phone calls, emails, Coffee and Conversation meetings, parent meetings, and staff meetings. The feedback from various community stakeholders, including staff, families, and local departments of health, was integral to the process of designing a physical distancing plan for BBL. Based on community feedback and the square footage of the classrooms, we have determined we can adhere to the 3-foot distance guidelines in our instructional spaces.

Since we operate in co-located facilities, we are working with our district partners to stagger arrival and dismissal times and to allow for appropriate social distancing in instructional and noninstructional spaces, such as the cafeteria and the school yard. Arrival and dismissal are staggered and utilize additional entry and exit points, as necessary, to maintain safe distancing. Bathroom times and transitions are scheduled to minimize close contact in high traffic areas, such as hallways.

All additional entrances/exits will be monitored by security or non-instructional staff to ensure that all safety requirements are followed. All staff being considered for such assignments will be trained by the Building Response Team (BRT). Designated areas for student drop-off and pick-up have been established to limit contact and entry of parents/guardians into the building.

Building visitors, such as outside consultants, are vaccinated and have consistent schedules. All visitors will be required to sanitize their hands, check their temperature, and wear a face mask. Hand sanitizing stations will be set up at the security desk and in the main office.

To maximize physical distancing in our school areas, the classes are kept in cohorts. A cohort of students will have the same teachers each day and special area teachers (Music, Art) will go to individual classrooms to teach. Physical Education classes will be held outside, weather permitting. Bathroom use will be staggered and be monitored by Teaching Assistants to ensure proper distancing, to make sure the bathrooms are clean, and that students are washing their hands after use. Individual student belongings will be separated, and shared supplies will be limited to one group of students only. If for any reason, there must be sharing across groups, cleaning will take place between use. These cleanings will be done by Teaching Assistants. Visual aids (pre-made banners/posters, painter's tape, stickers, posters, cones etc.) will be used to illustrate traffic flow and appropriate spacing to support social distancing. Both breakfast and lunch will be served in classrooms and each room will be supervised by Teaching Assistants to ensure that all guidelines relating to social distancing are maintained and that the room is appropriately cleaned/sanitized before the children transition to the next activity. We adhere to the most current guidelines with regards to physical distancing during lunch periods.

Students are kept in their cohorts during noninstructional time. Outdoor recess is deliberately planned to stagger playground use. Hand sanitizing will be required before and after touching play structures and three feet of space will be maintained between children as much as possible while on the playground. When possible, built-in visual cues that demonstrate physical spacing will be posted. All student assemblies, school-wide parent meetings, field trips, and enrichment activities will be virtual for the duration of the plan.

- **PPE and Face Coverings**

According to the Centers for Disease Control, herein CDC (Centers for Disease Control), ***“COVID-19 spreads mainly from person to person through respiratory droplets produced when an infected person coughs, sneezes, or talks. These droplets can land in the mouths or noses of people who are nearby or possibly be inhaled into the lungs.”*** Our staff and students will wear face coverings to limit the spread of the virus and slow unknowingly infected people from transmitting it to others. All individuals in school facilities and on school grounds will be required to put on a face covering.

BBL will provide acceptable face coverings to employees and students and have an adequate supply in case of the need for replacement per Executive Order 202.16. BBL will allow an employee to wear his/her own acceptable face covering but will not require they supply their own face coverings. Face coverings will not be placed on students when it is determined that such covering would impair their health or mental health, or where such covering would



present an obstruction to educational services and instruction. Face shields will be made available to individuals, staff and students who are unable to medically tolerate a face mask.

BBL will instruct staff, students, parents/guardians, contractors, and vendors on the proper way to wear face coverings, and to wash hands before putting on and after removing their face covering.

The DOE and/or the New York City Department of Health and Mental Hygiene (herein DOH) will provide additional PPE for staff whose interaction with students requires additional protection. For example, school nurses will be fit-tested for N95 masks, gloves, gowns, and face shields. Face coverings will be made available for those who need before entering the building.

- **Operational Activity**

Based on the square footage of our classrooms and the three-foot social distance guideline, we determined that we will be able to safely operate at full capacity during the 2021-2022 school year. Students under quarantine will receive live instruction remotely. We will appoint COVID Liaisons who will coordinate remote instruction and serve as added support to students, teachers, and families with regards to troubleshooting, oversight, and communication.

We are in a shared facility and the Building Council collaboratively determines how to use the larger spaces such as the gym, cafeteria, library, and auditorium. Discussion is centered around safety protocols and ensuring all students have access. All field trips will be conducted virtually until further notice. All in-school large group meetings, i.e., staff meetings, parent meetings, will be online.

Daily deep cleaning will be done by custodial staff and daily cleaning of our technological tools and shared materials will be done by Teaching Assistants.

Where appropriate, we will be making accommodations for those among us who, for several reasons, medically require working offsite. There is administrative work that can be done from home, e.g., in the areas of HR/Finances and professional development, and this will help to create additional space to accommodate instruction. Masks will be made available to everyone and for those who have an intolerance for wearing masks, shields will be provided. Everyone will be expected to do safe distancing of three feet apart even with masks designed to minimize COVID-19 risks.

Exposure between classes will be minimized through the creation of cohorts. For example, students will attend gym and have recess in cohort groups.

- **Restart Operations**

BBL operates at two locations (BBL 1 and BBL 2) that are collocated facilities. School-wide cleaning of classrooms, restrooms, cafeterias, libraries, playgrounds, and all other school facilities, as well as operations such as restarting building ventilation, water systems, and other key facility components are all managed by the DOE through its custodial engineers and staff. Since we reopened our buildings, there have been various operations carried out by these staff members and other related contracted services, to ensure that all buildings are deep cleaned, fumigated, and disinfected. There has been lead testing on the water supply. The heating and cooling systems have been inspected and repaired where necessary. Hand sanitizer dispensers have been installed in all classrooms. Additionally, special attention has been paid to ensure proper ventilation and all classrooms will be provided with air filters.

BBL is currently ensuring that academic and social emotional support is given to our most vulnerable and needy populations. We performed training and promotion of hand and respiratory hygiene for all staff. Additionally, all school staff members were trained in trauma-informed instruction. All students received lessons centered around social-emotional growth and communication skills from in-house guidance staff.

- **Hygiene, Cleaning, and Disinfection**

Parents/guardians who transport their children to school will be asked to take their children's temperature either before coming to the facility or upon arrival at the facility and to complete the daily health screening questionnaire provided by the DOE. Parents whose responses indicate that their children have COVID-related symptoms will be told to keep their children at home and to seek medical attention. The school nurse will contact these parents to ensure that all Centers for Disease Control, herein CDC, guidelines are followed when COVID-19-related symptoms and subsequent cases are identified.

Every instructional and common space will be equipped with hand sanitizer and/or disinfectant spray. The school buildings will be equipped with upgraded cleaning equipment, including electrostatic sprayers.

With the understanding that indoor air quality is greatly improved by increasing outdoor air delivery to our buildings and removing particulates from the air, we are committed to improving the air quality on our campuses to the greatest extent possible. The schools' ventilation systems have been inspected and are continually monitored and repaired. Upgraded air filters have been installed. Additionally, each classroom is equipped with an air purifier.

The school will provide training and promotion of hand and respiratory hygiene for both staff and students prior to the opening day and throughout the school year. Signage posted throughout the building to remind staff and students of the proper hygiene procedures. *See pages 15-16 in this report for details.*

- **Extracurriculars**

Currently, all extracurricular activities will be held remotely. Should this decision change, Responsible Parties will refer to the DOH’s “Interim Guidance for Sports and Recreation During the COVID-19 Public Health Emergency” (March 25, 2021) when developing protocols to ensure safety.

- **Before and Aftercare**

There will be no before care and after care programs offered during the 2021-2022 school year. The academic support for who are identified as academically at risk will be provided targeted supplemental instruction during the school day or remotely, as necessary. Any enrichment programs offered will also be conducted online.

- **Vulnerable Populations**

To meet the current social-emotional and well-being needs of students and staff returning to an in-person educational environment, our school will:

- implement a school-wide, comprehensive school counseling program, developed under the direction of our certified school counselor(s), that is reviewed and updated to meet the current needs of the BBL community
- provide resources and referrals to address mental health, behavioral, and emotional support services, and programs
- provide professional development opportunities for faculty and staff on how to talk with and support students during and after the ongoing COVID-19 public health emergency, as well as provide supports for developing coping and resilience skills for students, faculty, and staff

We know that some staff members may have accommodation requests based on their own or their families’ needs, and we will do our best to respond to those requests in a reasonable and equitable manner.

Accommodation requests will be prioritized in the following order:

1. Employees who are [immunocompromised](#) or otherwise medically diagnosed as being high risk\* according to the CDC for contracting COVID-19
2. Employees whose immediate family member(s) is [immunocompromised](#) or otherwise at high risk\* according to the CDC for contracting COVID-19
3. Other circumstances that would be determined on a case-by-case basis

*\*Medical Documentation Required*

We are aware there may be other staff and students who do not fall into the above categories, and we will address the needs as they arise.

- **Transportation**

Per Chancellor's Regulation A-801, the DOE provides transportation to all eligible New York City students in public, charter, and non-public schools.

The school bus is an extension of the classroom and services will be provided to all students with consistency and equity in conjunction with the Office of Pupil Transportation and the bus company. The bus company will be required to: perform regular school bus disinfection measures; train students and school bus staff regarding social distancing on the bus, at stops, and at unloading times; and train students and staff regarding the wearing of masks. The school will conduct similar training with staff who are assigned as bus monitors (staff who escort students on and off the bus, mornings, and afternoons). Both students and drivers will wear masks on the bus. Districts will continue to provide transportation to homeless students, students in foster care, those who attend religious, independent or charter schools – and those with disabilities – just as they always have.

- **Food Services**

Breakfast and lunch will be provided through School Meals and their satellite program, where the food is prepared by the host school's cafeteria and then transported to classrooms in BBL facilities. Breakfast is scheduled from 7:30 to 8:15 a.m. and will be served in classrooms. This meal will be offered irrespective of when they arrive, and special accommodations will be made for them to be housed in our staff room. The lunch boxes of those students who bring lunch from home will be sanitized and stored appropriately.

All classrooms will be staffed by our Teaching Assistants, and they will ensure that protocols like social distancing, handwashing, and bathroom breaks are maintained. They will be responsible for sanitizing classrooms before and after breakfast and lunch. They will also be monitoring hallway traffic and escorting students to recess. In times of inclement weather, recess will be held inside classrooms.

For students with food allergies, the following measures will be in place:

- staff will have a list of students with food allergies provided by the nurse
- students are not allowed to share food
- food consumed is only from School Meals or from home
- The School Foods menu is available to families online

- **Mental Health, Behavioral, and Emotional Support Services & Programs**

We are fortunate to have a cadre of Guidance Department staff with a substantial clinical background and years of experience working with our population. Since the onset of the pandemic and eventual school closing, our Guidance Department has pivoted the themes of our Social Emotional Learning lessons to focus on trauma, specifically by providing psychoeducation on coping strategies, building capacity, and developing a sense of personal safety through the lockdown and beyond. In addition to working with our students, we have extended support to adults, including staff and parents.

Our Guidance Department had virtual meetings with staff to help them process their own experiences, building on lessons learned regarding COVID-19 and other social justice-related events around the country and even locally. We recommended to them how to handle conversations that students and/or parents/guardians may raise about the pandemic or other issues. Staff were asked to defer to the Guidance Department when faced with situations or questions that they did not feel comfortable handling.

Programs for in-person schooling started in June 2021 with a *Return to School Summit* with parents. Against the backdrop of the trauma stemming from COVID-19, the forum provided information and strategies to help parents prepare for their children's as well as their own Emotional Readiness, Physical Readiness, Social Readiness as well as Academic Readiness for in-person schooling. Over 60% of parents from both campuses attended the virtual summit. Since September, we have had sessions, titled Life Lesson Talk Series, with parents during which an invited speaker shared personal experiences about her growing up in New York City and overcoming life's obstacles and achieving success. Targeted Parent Training Sessions are offered in six-week cycles. These training sessions address issues such as Building Resilience, Setting Realistic and Enforceable Limits, Discipline, Helping with Homework, etc. The virtual sessions specifically provide parents/guardians with opportunities to share their personal/family COVID-19 or other adverse experiences, how they cope and to share with them the importance of fostering healthy, supportive, and nurturing relationships with their children to build capacity and resilience to handle traumatic and challenging life events.

As we prepare for the new school year, we have put in place training and support sessions for students and staff to reorient them to school systems and structures. The sessions will be trauma-focused and will prepare staff to have a better understanding of and be able to practice trauma sensitivity. They will also be provided with tools to help them to instruct students who have experienced trauma.

Staff will be trained to recognize the following behaviors of students, such as but not limited to being withdrawn, sleepy, crying often or incessantly, and nonresponsive/not participating in activities.

Staff, working in-person and remotely, will refer students who need a deeper level of care to the Guidance Department who will discuss and work with teachers, families, and principals to devise an intervention plan. This plan will be reviewed and updated to meet the needs of the child.

- **Communication**

We are committed to facilitating clear, ongoing communication with the greater school community throughout the 2021-2022 school year. BBL plans to disseminate information through our website, [www.bronxbetterlearning.org](http://www.bronxbetterlearning.org), on our social media pages, Facebook, and Twitter, through e-mail communications to families and staff within the school's database Plus portals, and via phone calls made through School Messenger. All communication to parents is also available in Spanish.

Below are some examples of the email communication we will send or post through Parent Portal/Facts for Website:

General guidance tips from the DOH:

- wash your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds, especially before you eat
- avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth with unwashed hands
- avoid close contact with people who are sick. Keep a distance of at least 3 feet to help slow the spread of COVID-19
- cover coughs and sneezes with a tissue and discard it in a closed container
- clean frequently touched surfaces and objects

Individuals are encouraged to wear face coverings when they are in public and are:

- indoors
- within three feet of distance from other individuals; or
- in a situation or setting where they are unable to maintain three feet of distance from other individuals; or
- in a public or private transportation carrier or for-hire vehicle

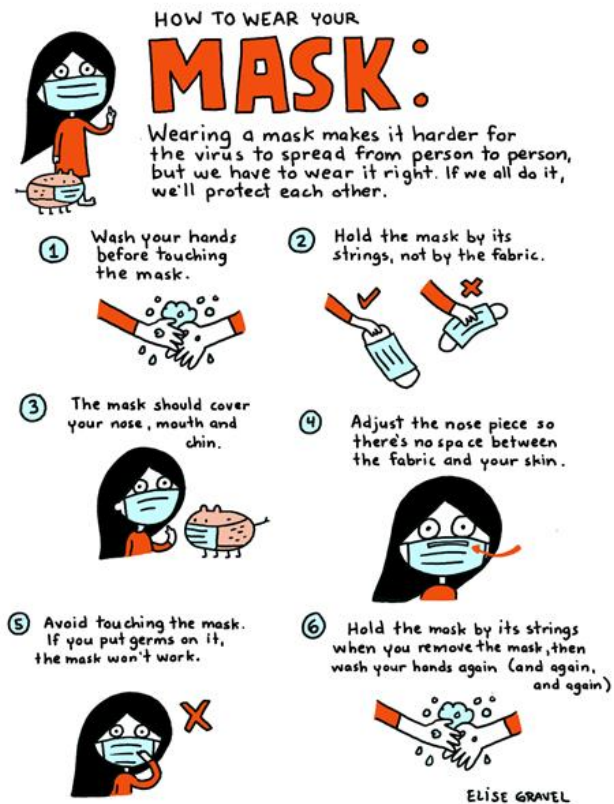
When wearing face coverings in public settings where social distancing measures are difficult to maintain (e.g., grocery stores and pharmacies), especially in areas of significant community transmission, you should:

- make sure that they fit snugly and cover their nose and mouth
- be changed frequently and laundered when they are soiled or wet
- not become complacent with other protective measures

- do not touch the cloth covering or face
- continue to be vigilant with thorough and frequent hand washing with soap and water, or alcohol-based hand sanitizer of 60%+ alcohol
- practice respiratory etiquette and cover your coughs or sneezes
- practice social distancing – even when wearing masks.

Link to NYS Dept of Health: <https://coronavirus.health.ny.gov/home>

Link to CDC Guidance: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-nCoV/index.html>





**Facebook/Twitter:**

- Social Distancing Video: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fPrYNOC3Kvw>
- Baby Shark Handwashing Video: <https://youtu.be/L89nN03pBzl>
- Graphics from the CDC on handwashing: <https://www.cdc.gov/handwashing/buttons.html>
- What Coronavirus is: Video from BrainPOP: [https://www.brainpop.com/health/diseasesinjuriesandconditions/coronavirus/?mkt\\_to\\_k=eyJpljoiWkRjMU5URTBPRGRqT1RWbSlSnQiOiYc1VuWmtLNIBMSk5FYjV1XC9qN1ZzaXk2aDg4cFVSQXBmQWFnQWRvczFxSGt4Z01TeXp2bWU2QmcrFZQZTB6UVFWazVIMUpkR3VXYWp4dWh0RmZQNGc9PSJ9](https://www.brainpop.com/health/diseasesinjuriesandconditions/coronavirus/?mkt_to_k=eyJpljoiWkRjMU5URTBPRGRqT1RWbSlSnQiOiYc1VuWmtLNIBMSk5FYjV1XC9qN1ZzaXk2aDg4cFVSQXBmQWFnQWRvczFxSGt4Z01TeXp2bWU2QmcrFZQZTB6UVFWazVIMUpkR3VXYWp4dWh0RmZQNGc9PSJ9)
- How to Talk to Your Kids About Coronavirus: PBS Article and Videos: <https://www.pbs.org/parents/thrive/how-to-talk-to-your-kids-about-coronavirus?fbclid=IwAR3GwvHoZ87YqY1QWYY6CBCGvN0Wym8UcFFXq-1TrwSwTq2Se9NRfWPW7Q>
- How to wash your hands: Video from BrainPOP: [https://jr.brainpop.com/health/bewell/washinghands/?mkt\\_tok=eyJpljoiWkRjMU5URTBPRGRqT1RWbSlSnQiOiYc1VuWmtLNIBMSk5FYjV1XC9qN1ZzaXk2aDg4cFVSQXBmQWFnQWRvczFxSGt4Z01TeXp2bWU2QmcrFZQZTB6UVFWazVIMUpkR3VXYWp4dWh0RmZQNGc9PSJ9](https://jr.brainpop.com/health/bewell/washinghands/?mkt_tok=eyJpljoiWkRjMU5URTBPRGRqT1RWbSlSnQiOiYc1VuWmtLNIBMSk5FYjV1XC9qN1ZzaXk2aDg4cFVSQXBmQWFnQWRvczFxSGt4Z01TeXp2bWU2QmcrFZQZTB6UVFWazVIMUpkR3VXYWp4dWh0RmZQNGc9PSJ9)



## Monitoring

The following protocols and procedures follow the guidelines of the CDC, DOH and DOE. Some procedures will change due to updated guidelines from these stakeholders.

- **Screening**

1. All adults who enter BBL need to be fully vaccinated. Principals will be provided with proof of staff members' vaccination dates; consultants and vendors will also provide proof before entering the building. In addition, all BBL staff, students, contractors, vendors, and visitors (parents /guardians only) will be required to have a temperature check with a non-contact thermometer.
2. Screening of all BBL staff, students, contractors, vendors, and parents /guardians includes a daily temperature check and periodic completion of a screening questionnaire. A screening questionnaire determines whether the individual has:
  - knowingly been in close or proximate contact in the past 14 days with anyone who has tested positive through a diagnostic test for COVID-19 or who has or had symptoms of COVID-19
  - tested positive through a diagnostic test for COVID-19 in the past 14 days
  - has experienced any symptoms of COVID-19, including a temperature of greater than 100.0°F in the past 14 days
  - and/or has traveled internationally or from a state with widespread community transmission of COVID-19 per the New York State Travel Advisory in the past 14 days
  - And/or is fully vaccinated
3. BBL will collect screening information from staff and parents/guardians using paper checklists or the Department of Education health screening app to indicate if the individual passed or failed the temperature check.
4. If an individual presents a temperature of greater than 100.0°F, the staff or student will be denied entry into the building or sent directly to a space isolated from others until they can be sent home. Students will be supervised in the isolation room while awaiting transport home.
5. BBL will refer such people to a healthcare provider/school nurse and who will supply resources on COVID-19 testing. Students and staff must notify the school when they develop symptoms or if their answers to the questionnaire change during or outside school hours. Staff and parents/guardians will be advised to send this information via email or telephone to the principal.
6. BBL will encourage staff to complete required screenings prior to arrival at school and encourage parents/guardians to screen their child(ren) before sending them to school. Screening by the parent/ guardian prior to school is preferred in lieu of temperature checks and symptom screening being performed after arrival at school.

7. Parents/guardians and staff members will be provided resources from the CDC or the DOH to educate them regarding the careful observation of symptoms of COVID-19 and health screening that must be conducted each morning before coming to school. BBL will communicate to parents/guardians and staff that any student or staff member with a fever of 100.0°F or greater and/or symptoms of the COVID-19 virus will be sent home. Per the CDC, the list of symptoms of Coronavirus is on its [website](#). Some individuals may display other symptoms or none.

The most common symptoms of COVID-19:

- fever or chills (100.0°F or greater)
  - cough
  - shortness of breath or difficulty breathing
  - fatigue
  - muscle or body aches
  - headache
  - new loss of taste or smell
  - sore throat
  - congestion or runny nose
  - nausea or vomiting and/or diarrhea.
8. All staff will be trained to observe students or other staff members for signs of any type of illness such as:
- flushed cheeks
  - rapid or difficulty breathing (without recent physical activity)
  - fatigue, and/or irritability
  - frequent use of the bathroom
9. Students sent home will take part in the remote learning program provided by BBL staff. Students will continue to participate in remote learning until they are permitted to return to school.

- **Testing Protocols**

1. Consistent with [CDC's recommendations](#), individuals with COVID-19 [signs or symptoms](#) will be encouraged to see a healthcare provider for evaluation of whether testing is needed. Also, individuals can be referred to the [NYC testing website](#) to find a testing location near them.
2. BBL will follow the CDC guidance for allowing a student or staff member to return to school after showing symptoms of COVID-19. If a person is not diagnosed by a healthcare provider (physician, nurse practitioner, or physician assistant) with COVID-19 they can return to school:

- once there is no fever, without the use of fever reducing medicines, and they have felt well for 24 hours
  - if they have been diagnosed with another condition and has a healthcare provider written note stating they are clear to return to school.
3. If a person is diagnosed with COVID-19 by a healthcare provider based on a test or their symptoms or does not get a COVID-19 test but has had symptoms, they should not be at school and should stay at home until:
    - it has been at least ten days since the individual first had symptoms
    - it has been at least three days since the individual has had a fever (without using fever reducing medicine)
    - and it has been at least three days since the individual's symptoms improved, including cough and shortness of breath.
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- **Testing Responsibility**
    1. Staff members must complete the DOE Health Screening app before entering the building. Anyone denied entrance based on the DOE Health Screening app criteria is encouraged to get tested for COVID-19.
    2. The party responsible for the sourcing of the COVID-19 tests is the DOH and NYC Test & Trace Corps.
    3. Administration of testing is the responsibility of the NYC Test & Trace Corps who provides free, safe, and confidential testing for COVID-19.
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- **Early Warning Signs**
    1. The metrics BBL will use as an early warning signs that positive COVID-19 cases may be rising are:
      - national data trends and daily briefings by the Governor of NY State
      - positive cases in the community reported by the DOH
      - the number of cases reported by schools in the co-located buildings
    2. BBL will monitor news reports, the DOH website and the daily emails sent by the governor.
    3. BBL will follow the CDC guidelines for minimal to moderate community transmission <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/schools-childcare/guidance-for-schools.html> . Methods used to offset the early warnings by implementing multiple distancing strategies:
      - attending virtual field trips, remote assemblies, and remote meetings
      - canceling or modifying classes where students are likely to be in very close contact

- avoid mixing students in common areas by staggering bathroom time and use of the yard for breaks
- increasing the space between desks
- staggering arrival and/or dismissal times
- limiting nonessential visitors
- reminding staff, students, and their families to maintain distance from each other in the school

### **Containment**

BBL will engage in regular monitoring and screening of student and staff health to ensure that we can appropriately exclude those who might be infected and break the chain of transmission for the potentially impacted cohorts of students and staff.

- **School Health Offices**

Students and staff with symptoms of illness must be sent to the health office. A school nurse will assess symptoms and determine the extent to which they could be related to chronic conditions such as asthma and allergies or chronic gastrointestinal issues. For these conditions may present the same symptoms as COVID-19 but are neither contagious nor pose a public health threat.

If a child is running a fever or showing signs of illness, he or she is taken to nurse for examination. Based on the nurse's assessment, the child would either return to class or remain in a supervised isolation room. If it is determined that a student must isolate, the nurse will call the parents and arrange for the child to be picked up. The child will remain in the isolation room until a guardian or parent arrives. The nurse will recommend that the child be seen by a doctor and receive a COVID-19 test 3-5 days after exposure. If the results are negative, the child can return to school once he or she is symptom-free.

- **Isolation**

BBL will immediately [separate students and staff](#) with [COVID-19 symptoms](#) at school by sending them to an isolation room. The isolation room will always have a staff monitor. Responsible Parties have determined the locations of isolation rooms to ensure containment of individuals who are presumed positive of COVID-19 due to presented symptoms and/or potential exposure.

- **Collection**

Individuals who are sick will be required to go home or to a healthcare facility, depending on how severe their symptoms are, and they or their caregivers (in the case of minors) will be directed to follow [CDC guidance for caring for oneself](#). Individuals will also be recommended to watch for [emergency symptoms](#) and seek emergency medical care if symptoms occur.

Any students presumed positive, due to exhibition of COVID-19 symptoms, will be monitored in the isolation room. The school nurse will contact the parents and/or guardians of the student and arrange for the student to be picked up from school. Parents and/or guardians will not be permitted to enter the school building. Upon arrival, parents and/or guardians will wait outside while a school staff member escorts the child and delivers him or her to the identified parents and/or guardians. Added precautionary PPE measures in addition to the face masks (face shield, gown, gloves) will be available for the school staff members with this responsibility. Changes to this procedure may be warranted after guidelines are issued, per the DOE, for schools in shared spaces.

- **Infected Individuals**

It is imperative for individuals diagnosed with COVID-19 to complete isolation and recover before returning to campus. Discharge from quarantine and/or isolation and one's return to school will be conducted in coordination with the local health department.

If a person is diagnosed with COVID-19 by a healthcare provider based on a test or their symptoms or does not get a COVID-19 test but has had symptoms, they should not be at school and should stay at home until:

- it has been at least ten days since the individual first had symptoms
- it has been at least three days since the individual has had a fever (without using fever reducing medicine)
- and it has been at least three days since the individual's symptoms improved, including cough and shortness of breath

The CDC provides specific guidance for individuals who are on home isolation regarding when the isolation may end, Discontinuation of Isolation for Persons with COVID-19 Not in Healthcare Settings <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/hcp/disposition-in-home-patients.html>.

- Students and school staff members who are vaccinated and identified as close contacts do not have to quarantine if they are asymptomatic. However, they will be encouraged to get tested 3-5 days after exposure.

- Symptomatic individuals will be sent home and encouraged to get tested for COVID-19. If the results are negative, these individuals can return to school once they are symptom-free.
  - Unvaccinated students and school staff members who are deemed close contacts will quarantine for 10 days. These individuals may test out of quarantine and return to school on Day 8 if they are able to present a negative COVID-19 test from Day 5 or later. Proof must be submitted to the school.
  - DOH will conduct contact tracing to determine if any other persons would be considered ‘exposed’ or ‘close contacts.’
- **Exposed Individuals**
    1. In collaboration with NYC Track & Trace, BBL will ensure that anyone considered a “close contact” to someone diagnosed with COVID-19 is notified in a timely manner.
    2. A close contact is:
      - a. Anyone within three feet of someone with COVID-19 in the classroom for at least ten minutes, regardless of wearing a face covering.
      - b. Anyone who was within six feet of someone diagnosed with COVID-19, for at least ten minutes, was unmasked.
      - c. Anyone who was within six feet of an adult diagnosed with COVID-19 for more than ten minutes, regardless of whether the person was wearing a face covering.
    3. Those who have been identified as having had [close contact](#) with a person diagnosed with COVID-19 will be instructed to stay home and [self-monitor for symptoms](#), and follow [CDC guidance](#) if symptoms develop.
    4. Asymptomatic fully vaccinated individuals do not need to quarantine if exposed to COVID-19.
  - **Vaccination**

We know how important it is to keep our schools and classrooms open for learning. The New York City Department of Education (DOE) has done everything they can to make sure all classrooms are equipped to be safe learning environments, including mandating that all staff are vaccinated. At BBL, we adhere to this guideline, knowing that it will increase the safety of our students and staff members. Per NYC guidelines, all current staff members have provided proof of at least one vaccination dose by October 5, 2021.

In partnership with the City’s vaccination effort, the Bronx Charter School for Better Learning continues to offer its campuses as pop-up vaccine sites for students ages 5 through 11. Eligible students must be accompanied by a parent or guardian who can either give verbal consent or submit a completed consent form.

- **Previous COVID-19 infection**

Following current guidelines, asymptomatic individuals who have recovered from laboratory confirmed COVID-19 infection during the previous 3 months do not need to quarantine if exposed to COVID-19.

- **Hygiene, Cleaning, and Disinfection**

1. Healthy hygiene practices will be taught on an ongoing basis in school for both students and staff. Videos for training:  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qJG72sycQB8>;  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=d914EnpU4Fo&t=12s>
2. The importance of hand and respiratory hygiene will be highlighted
3. Students and staff members will be given adequate supplies and time to allow for frequent hand hygiene regimens
4. Hand hygiene includes time in the school day, when students enter the classroom, periodically during the morning, before and after lunch and before dismissal. Hand hygiene includes:
  - traditional hand washing (with soap and warm water, lathering for a minimum of 20 seconds), which is the preferred method
  - use of alcohol-based hand sanitizers (60% alcohol or greater) when soap and water are not available, and hands are not visibly dirty. Hand sanitizer will be placed throughout common areas (e.g., entrances, cafeteria), near high touch surfaces
  - signage will be placed near hand sanitizer indicating visibly soiled hands should be washed with soap and water
  - some students or staff who are unable to use alcohol-based hand sanitizers for health reasons will be permitted to wash their hands with soap and water
  - Respiratory hygiene includes training students and staff to cover their mouths or noses with a tissue when coughing or sneezing and dispose of the tissue appropriately. A supply of tissues and no lid trash cans will be available in each room.
  - Posted signs will be placed throughout the school and will share messages with the school community. Signage will remind individuals to:
    - i. stay home if they feel sick
    - ii. cover their nose and mouth with an acceptable face covering when unable to maintain social distance from others
    - iii. properly store and, when necessary, discard PPE
    - iv. adhere to social distancing instructions
    - v. report symptoms of, or exposure to, COVID-19

- vi. follow hand hygiene, and cleaning and disinfection guidelines
- vii. follow respiratory hygiene and cough etiquette

- Healthy hygiene practices will be taught in person, by videos, announcements, and posters or signs posted in highly visible areas such as: entrances, restrooms, classrooms, and administrative offices. Video <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=W-zhhSQDD1U>
- Per the CDC guidelines the school will be disinfected daily by the custodial staff. The building will be deep cleaned on a nightly basis with electrostatic disinfectant sprayers, which dispense disinfectant so that it adheres to surfaces without the need to physically touch them.
- BBL is using ESSER (Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief) funds to supply PPE and cleaning supplies. The building is sanitized by custodial daily once staff and students leave.
- Areas to be cleaned daily include classrooms, isolation rooms, restrooms, cafeteria, library, and buses. BBL staff clean and disinfect frequently throughout the day high touch surfaces. Examples of high touch include tables, doorknobs, light switches, countertops, handles, desks, phones, keyboards, tablets, toilets and restrooms, and faucets and sinks.

- **Contact Tracing**

BBL will aid the public health department by communicating who may have had contact at school with a confirmed case by:

- keeping accurate attendance records of students and staff members ensuring student schedules are up to date
- keeping a log of any visitors which includes date, time and where in the school they visited
- aiding DOH in tracing all contacts of the individual at school in accordance with the protocol, training, and tools provided through the New York State Contact Tracing Program
- families/staff/ children will be monitored daily by the DOH to ensure neither students nor adults return to school during infectious period.

- **Communication**

Protocols and safety measures will be shared with parents/guardians, staff, students, and administration of the co-located schools via telephone calls, text, or emails as each case occurs.



Weekly phone calls made through School Messenger (telephone, text, and emails) will provide updates as will postings on the BBL website, Facebook, and Twitter accounts.

- **Closure**

As of Monday, September 27<sup>th</sup>, 2021, the DOE no longer automatically closes an entire classroom when there is a positive student case in that class. 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.

BBL will collaborate with collocated school administrators and the DOH to determine the parameters, conditions, or metrics (e.g., increased absenteeism or increased illness in school community) that will serve as early warning signs that positive COVID-19 cases may be increasing beyond an acceptable level. BBL will also close if any of the schools in the collocated space have staff absentee rates that will impact the ability of the schools to operate safely.

- **Operational Activity**

1. Students who are quarantined or participating at home due to school closure will have full access to our academic program through various remote-learning platforms, including live instruction via video conference software.
2. All school operations will continue remotely during either a full or partial school closure, and all academic programs will be remote following the procedures put in place for the March 2020 closure.
3. The plan for an orderly closure of the school is multi-tiered and determined by the guidance provided by DOH, DOE, CDC, and the school building council. Closure of the school is not subject only to our students but is compounded by the shared facility and the COVID-19 data regarding the surrounding community. Therefore, the phasing, milestones and involvement of key personnel is TBD.

- **Communication**

BBL will continue to communicate with staff and parents via email, weekly phone calls made through School Messenger (phone, text, email), BBL website, Facebook, Twitter and Zoom meetings to provide updates on the closure process.

### **Concluding Remarks**

In all the plans detailed above, the mitigation of risk and the health and safety of our students, faculty, staff, families, and larger school community are of paramount importance. Following health and safety concerns, our plans are based on operationalizing our vision and educational priorities. We are committed to continually looking for ways to improve the educational experience for our children and prioritize in-person learning throughout the 2021-2022 school year.