



**Brooklyn Charter School**  
**Back to School Reopening Plan: 2021 - 2022**  
Updated: September 23, 2021

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## **Introduction**

Brooklyn Charter School is returning to a “new normal”. We will be in-person for all students on September 13, 2021.

Brooklyn Charter School (BCS) will deliver a program this Fall that upholds our Cornerstones and Affirmations to ensure that the needs of all of our scholars are met. We understand that our scholars will require a multitude of resources both academically and socio-emotionally. Therefore, we are laying out a plan for reopening that reflects our values of equity and access, the desire for our scholars to be successful, and the continued aspiration of bringing the greater good to our school community daily.

We plan to achieve this by ensuring the following:

- Each student is safe and that learning never ceases;
- That students continue to thrive academically, socially, emotionally and physically.
- That parents and guardians feel confident that their child/ren will remain healthy with us and that they will continue to progress through full remote learning or hybrid learning.
- That families feel supported through the challenges in the moment.
- That staff also feel prioritized as it relates to their health and safety. Making sure that staff are supported, equipped and prepared to work for our school community by balancing the complex situations that will arise as we open our doors in the fall.

For the past few months, BCS has been planning to do all of the above. Our team has put together a comprehensive re-opening plan that reflects the core beliefs of our school. It is BCS’ obligation of duty to ensure that the “the home that we call school” truly comes alive in each actual home where virtual instruction is happening daily as well as each classroom that is operating in-person classes. While at the forefront we are mitigating the risk of exposure to COVID-19 we are also aspiring to serve our students at any length to ensure success through equity and access.

Everything presented in the BCS reopening plan is aligned with New York City Department of Health (NYCDOH) and New York City Department of Education (NYCDOE) guidelines and mandates. This reopening plan will set the Brooklyn Charter School community up for all that has been declared above!

## **Family & Community Engagement**

Our families are our number one priority!

While our reopening plan considers operational and instructional elements of returning to school in the fall, we know our families play a critical role in keeping our plan together on all fronts.

We know from direct communication with our families, that many have either lost loved ones, have become unemployed and are struggling financially during this pandemic.

BCS will continue to strive, during these unexpected and turbulent times to ensure that all families of BCS feel:

- Supported emotionally and academically;
- Equipped with tools and resources to help their students with their school work;
- Confident navigating virtual learning tools and platforms;
- Appreciated for the hard work and effort they are doing to help teach their children.

Our back-to-school family engagement strategies continue to include the following:

- A new school-Wide communication tool: Rediker
- Weekly school updates via email/phone calls/social media platforms;
- Monthly family meetings, via Zoom (Curriculum-based workshops, Parent Support Groups, etc.).

These strategies and resources will be implemented in addition to our more traditional resources and tools, including multiple channels for outreach and direct contact with teachers and staff.

### **Family Support - Discovering and Addressing External Issues**

We remain committed to supporting our families with needs that arise outside of the school setting; that commitment has never been more important than at this moment. Our School Social Worker will also expand her focus on referrals for family counseling to ensure families are provided with greater support during this challenging season as necessary.

### **Family Support - Collaboration, Information Sharing, and Guidance**

We will seek input and feedback from families in numerous ways. Through family surveys, and Parent Meetings (bi-monthly) we will gain knowledge of trends in family needs, keep parents informed of our decisions, and build community with our families. We will also begin the practice of hosting family workshops and teaching/training from BCS this year to equip families with the knowledge and skills to help their children academically at home. BCS will utilize its school website and social media platforms to ensure a consistent means of communication with the school community. Information

will also be provided in the language(s) spoken at home among families and throughout the community to ensure information is accessible.

We believe that sustained contact with our most vulnerable students in an in-person virtual or hybrid setting is crucial in fulfilling our promise to students and families. We will train and assign specific faculty this fall to provide outreach to families to ensure that programs, systems and resources are prioritizing academic success, equity and access for all students and families. Communication will look as follows:

- Weekly emails to families highlighting information and events that are happening in the classroom and school;
- Lack of participation/attendance will result in communication being increased from our office team, the school dean(s) or the school social worker as necessary.

### **Health and Safety Protocols**

At Brooklyn Charter School, the health and safety of our students and faculty is our first priority. As we plan to navigate in-person learning and mitigate the risk of exposure to COVID-19, we have reviewed models and best practices from several school systems in addition to guidelines from the Center for Disease Control (CDC) and New York's Department of Health (DOH). Our overall goal is to meet and/or exceed minimum health guidelines whenever possible in order to keep our school community safe. Currently the maximum number of students and adults that may occupy the main floor (3rd floor) in which BCS operates based on the NYCDOE floor plan configurations is 288 persons.

BCS will collaborate with P.S. 23 through our building council to follow all health and safety protocols as prescribed by the NYCDOE and NYCDOH while maximizing these spaces (Cafeteria, Gymnasium, Auditorium, etc.) for instructional purposes if necessary.

BCS will comply with all mandatory assurances in partnership with NYCDOE custodial engineers and the NYC Division of School Facilities (DSF) as it relates to:

- 2020 NYS Uniform Fire Prevention and Building Codes (BC) and State Energy Conservation Codes;
- Lead-in-Water Testing as required by NYSDOH regulation 67-4;
- Maintenance of adequate code required ventilation (air conditions, air purifiers, fans, etc.)
  - Two Air Purifiers with HEPA filters and fans will be placed in all classrooms. One Air Purifier with HEPA filters will be placed in each office space.

Our health and safety protocols will leverage the following strategies which are detailed below:

1. Facilities Readiness & Advanced Cleaning Protocols
2. Limited Class/Cohort Sizes & Minimal Teacher Changes
3. Physical Distancing
4. Regular Health Monitoring & Screening

5. Use of Face Cloth Coverings and Gloves
6. Restrictions on Shared Materials & Spaces
7. Adjusted Daily Systems to Support the Above

### **Facilities Readiness & New COVID-19 School Policies**

Before BCS opens its doors and to ensure proper supplies are available for increased cleaning, BCS will have the following in place:

- Signage will be posted to ensure facilities offer frequent reminders of needed protocols, including reminders for students and faculty to wear facemasks and to keep at least 3 feet of distance.
- BCS will be regularly and thoroughly cleaned with solvents that eliminate 99% of bacteria and are lethal to COVID-19, with an emphasis on high-contact surfaces and high traffic areas regularly.
- BCS will be stocked with needed Personal Protection Equipment (PPE) for good hygiene, including antibacterial soap, hand sanitizer with at least 60 percent alcohol (for staff and older children who can safely use hand sanitizer), paper towels, tissues, disinfectant wipes, face coverings (as feasible) and no-touch/open trash cans.
- Schools will maintain stock to last 60-90 days.
- Each classroom and all frequently traveled spaces will have installed touchless hand sanitizer machines.
- Materials and tools used by employees will be regularly cleaned and disinfected using registered disinfectants as stated in the DEC list of products registered in New York State and identified by the EPA as effective against COVID-19.
- Within classrooms, cleaning and disinfection will occur after each cohort's use of a space.
- Adult bathrooms will include guidance for staff to wipe down after usage.
- Student bathrooms will be monitored to ensure maximum capacity guidelines and signage will be present to remind students to wash their hands before exiting the bathroom.
- Cleaning and disinfecting of restrooms will occur multiple times throughout the school day.
- Physical distancing signage will be used in all restrooms.

### **Small Class/Cohort Sizes & Minimal Teacher Changes**

In order to minimize the risk of exposure to COVID-19, BCS will limit the size of classes. Groups of students will stay together with the same teachers throughout and across school days, and will not mix. This will minimize spread and facilitate contact tracing if necessary.

- BCS anticipates launching the school year with 15-18 students in one classroom based on a schedule developed by the school, with at most 2 adults at a time, generally not to exceed 20 total persons in a classroom at a time based on the allowable maximum capacity in each classroom according to the square footage of each classroom as directed by the NYC Department of Education floor plan surveys.

- Students will stay in the same classroom for the majority of the school day. Transitions between classrooms will be limited.
- Where required due to teacher departmentalization and content specialization, teachers will transition between classrooms to a limited set of cohorts.
- Students who will be in the same classroom together will make any needed transitions together, and dismiss together or individually.
- Large group gatherings and assemblies will be suspended until it is deemed acceptable, including field trips, athletics, and after-school programs.
  - In the event that Aftercare/Extracurricular activities are allowed, BCS will follow the same guidelines for exposure prevention- face coverings, social distancing (3 feet), and limited cohorts of students- as followed during the school day to the extent possible as recommended by the NYCDOH.
- In general, BCS will be limiting access to all visitors.
  - Visitors will not be allowed in the school building until further notice.
  - All deliveries will be dropped off on the first floor of the building and will be picked up by employees of the charter school.
  - Parents/guardians who must come to the school to pick-up children and/or conduct any school related business will check-in with school safety at the building's main entrance and the charter school will be notified in order to meet parents/guardians in the lobby, gymnasium or auditorium of the school building.
  - Meetings with student families will be conducted via telephone and video conference until further notice.
  - Staff will not be allowed to bring their own children to work under any circumstances.

### **Vulnerable Populations**

For staff who are at increased risk for severe COVID-19 illness (with appropriate medical documentation) who may not feel comfortable returning to an in-person educational environment, BCS will determine and allow, where appropriate, a way in which they can participate in educational activities, and make accommodations which may include, but are not limited to, full remote-learning teaching, modified work settings or providing additional PPE to individuals with underlying health conditions if applicable to essential job functions.

### **Physical Distancing**

Even with established groups, staff and students must maintain physical distancing protocols at all times.

- All staff and students must adhere to CDC physical distancing guidelines (currently 6 feet apart) at all times.
- Each classroom will maintain a desk configuration that enhances physical distancing, allowing students and staff to remain several feet apart.

- Handshakes and any other routines that call for physical contact are prohibited. Staff may not touch students.
- Tape markings will be placed on the floor in areas where students transition to assist in maintaining distance.

### **Regular Health Monitoring & Screening**

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

- BCS will keep student and staff medical information private.
- Screening will be done onsite for all students, faculty, staff, visitors, contractors, and vendors that are allowed to enter the school building. These stakeholders must complete a questionnaire/assessment which will be available on-line and in paper form onsite that determines whether the individual has been fully vaccinated, received a negative or positive COVID result within a certain time frame and/or has been in close contact with a person with COVID. Based on the way in which questions are answered, determine whether a faculty member or student may enter the building.
- All students and staff will have their temperature checked using infrared non-contact thermometers upon entry into the building. Considering that the school nurse is knowledgeable on CDC and DOH COVID-19 questionnaire guidelines, if an individual's temperature is greater than 100.0 degrees Fahrenheit or fails the screening test, the individual will immediately be sent home. The applicable individual(s) will also be instructed to contact their health provider for assessment and testing. To ensure fidelity of the above referenced process, those individuals helping with the screening process will be provided a template screening questionnaire and they will be taught how to use the infrared thermometer.
- BCS screeners will be provided and will use PPE, which includes an acceptable face covering or mask, and may also include gloves and disposable PPE (i.e. gloves, disposable facemasks, etc.) which will be replaced on a daily basis.
- BCS will have a health exclusion room for students whose temperature is above 100.0 degrees Fahrenheit or who have COVID like symptoms who cannot be picked up immediately. These students will also be assessed by the school nurse prior to being placed in the health exclusion room. The health exclusion room will be supervised by a BCS staff member.
- Students and staff who test positive for COVID-19 will be required to stay home for a period of at least 10 days to quarantine before returning back to the building.
- If a student or staff member tests positive, BCS administration will implement a normed communication protocol that will:
  - Communicate cases to the NYCDOE Situation Room to ensure that appropriate contact tracing measures occur. The Situation Room will notify the school on how to proceed once a case has been called in. The Situation Room will provide all communication to inform all relevant stakeholders of the school's action, while taking measures to protect the privacy of students and staff members.

## Early Warning Signs

BCS will follow NYCDOE guidance on Early Warning Signs:

- In order for schools to reopen and stay open, BCS will follow the deemed percentage of positive tests in New York City using the 7-day rolling average determined by the Mayor before closing BCS.
- School administrators will consider closing schools if early warning indicators such as increased absenteeism or increased illness in the school rise beyond an acceptable level and will impact the availability of the school to operate safely even if the overall case rates across New York City were to remain low.

## Testing Protocols

BCS will follow all NYCDOE guidelines including the following recommendations:

- BCS will follow NYCDOE vaccine mandates in order to be in compliance with the NYCDOE.
- Once in-person learning has begun, BCS will follow the NYCDOE and DOH guidance for a rolling pattern of testing for all school-based staff and students if applicable.
- If a symptomatic student is sent home but has had no known contact with a positive case, the student can only return to school when all the following are met:
  - Presents clearance from a health care provider evaluation AND
  - The student has been symptom free for 24 hours without the use of medication.
  - Additionally, the student should participate in remote learning, if feeling well enough.
- If DOH or Test + Trace determine the student is considered a close contact of a positive case, the student can only return to school when all the following are met:
  - The student has completed a 10-day quarantine regardless of symptoms or test results since their last exposure to that case AND ○
  - Presents clearance from a health care provider evaluation AND ○
  - The student has been symptom free for 24 hours without the use of medication. ○
  - Additionally, the student should participate in remote learning, if feeling well enough.
- If the student does not get tested, then the student cannot return to school until:
  - 10 days have passed since the first symptom AND ○
  - The student has been symptom free for 24 hours without the use of medication.
- If a school-based staff member shows symptoms of COVID-19 while at school:
  - School-based staff members showing symptoms at COVID-19 will be directed to leave the building.
  - The school will strongly encourage the staff member to visit a doctor and get tested for COVID-19.



- If the staff member has had no known contact with a positive case, the staff member can only return to work when all the following are met:
  - Presents a negative PCR COVID-19 test result AND
  - Presents clearance from a health care provider evaluation AND
  - The staff member has been symptom free for 24 hours without the use of medication.
- If DoH or Test + Trace determine the staff member is considered a close contact of a positive case, the staff member can only return to work when all the following have been met:
  - The staff member has completed a 10-day quarantine regardless of symptoms or test results since their last exposure to that case AND
  - Presents clearance from a health care provider evaluation AND
  - The staff member has been symptom free for 24 hours without the use of medication.

COVID-19 testing is available across New York City and unless determined otherwise by NYCDOH, students and staff will continue to use their own doctors/clinics/hospitals of their choice. Free COVID testing resources for families.

<https://www.nychealthandhospitals.org/covid-19-testing-sites/>

BCS will offer random testing from the NYCDOE. Students will need to provide permission slips in order to participate in this program.

If BCS students and staff need access to large-scale testing, the school will follow the directions from NYCDOH regarding where testing should take place and communicate this information to the school community.

BCS will follow all metrics as set by NYCDOH if cases in NYC are increasing beyond an appropriate level and modify in-person instruction as necessary.

Students or staff that test positive for COVID-19 will be required to stay out of school for 10 days as per the guidance of NYCDOH before being able to return physically to the school building.

### **Testing Responsibility**

Identification of who in the community is responsible for referring, sourcing, and administering testing (e.g., local health department testing site, physician offices, hospital system), particularly in the event that large-scale testing at the school is needed.

- BCS will recommend use of NYC run testing sites for testing for school-based staff and students: <https://www.nychealthandhospitals.org/covid-19-testing-sites/>
- DOH school nurse on site will be the responsible party for recommendations/referrals for testing for symptomatic persons
- DOH school nurse will provide additional testing resources for families/staff as needed if testing is not available through their own physician's office

- BCS Administration will assist the DOH nurse in communicating with families and staff regarding any testing resources related inquiries
- In the event large-scale testing at the school is required, BCS will follow all guidance from NYCDOH and the NYCDOE.

### **Contact Tracing**

Students or staff that have been exposed to COVID-19 will be required to stay out of school for 10 days. BCS will consult with the NYCDOE Situation Room, NYCDOH or NYC Trace to determine who is an “exposed” individual and who must stay out of school. BCS will cooperate with NYC’s Test and Trace Corp. program and any other mandates required by the NYCDOE and NYCDOH.

BCS will work with the Situation Room and/or NYCDOH to determine what conditions (i.e. number of positive cases in the building) would trigger a cohort, section or full school closure and the amount of time of the closure. BCS will follow NYCDOE guidelines as it directly relates to in-school student cohort exposure to COVID-19 and cohort closing as well as school closings based on in-school cohort student exposure as directed by the NYCDOE.

BCS will have contact tracing logs for all staff members and students. As each staff member matriculates throughout the building, they will be required to sign into the room in which they will be entering. The Program Coordinator or school nurse will also conduct screening interviews for employees that are suspected to have the COVID-19 virus. The interview will be reflective of employees providing insight regarding all the places in which this individual visited.

### **Reporting**

The Director of Operations will notify the NYCDOE Situation Room and/or the NYCDOH immediately upon being informed of any positive COVID-19 diagnostic test result by an individual in our school facility or on school grounds, including students, faculty, staff, and visitors. Confidentiality will be maintained for the protection of all stakeholders.

The Director of Operations will report to the Department of Health, on a daily basis, in a form and manner to be determined by the Commissioner, all COVID-19 testing positive results reported in any manner to the school, and related information among students, teaching staff, and any other employees or volunteers. Such daily report shall include any other data elements as the Commissioner determines to be appropriate to track outbreaks of COVID-19 within the school and district.

## **Use of Face Coverings and Gloves**

According to the CDC, “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.” We will wear acceptable disposable surgical masks/cloth face coverings to limit the spread of the virus and slow unknowingly infected people from transmitting it to others.

- BCS will distribute, at a minimum, 1 reusable mask to each staff member and student. Extra disposable face coverings will be kept on site and distributed as necessary.
- Face coverings/masks will be required at all times for all students and adults, most notably in times when physical distancing is difficult with the exception of during properly-distanced snack and lunch times/periods.
- BCS will provide initial ongoing mask training for all students and staff. BCS will provide continual policy reminders, including signage throughout the building, about when and how to wear facial coverings/masks.
- Students should be frequently reminded not to touch the face covering and to wash hands frequently.
- BCS may also provide mask breaks in the classroom during quiet reading or rest periods, when students are safely distanced and no one is speaking.
- Adults may take mask breaks when in a room/work area alone, as well as in all scenarios listed above.
- Masks must:
  - Cover the mouth and nose comfortably.
  - Fit securely enough to stay put on the face without constant adjustments, and comfortable enough to wear consistently.
  - Be clean (if reusable) or new (if disposable) at the start of the day.
  - Have the student’s name inside (if reusable).
- Gloves will be available for staff to wear when cleaning classrooms or touching shared items.
- Note: Face coverings are meant to protect other people in case the wearer is unknowingly infected but does not have symptoms.
- Individuals who are unable to medically tolerate a face covering must adequately maintain appropriate social distancing at all times.

## **Medical Exemptions from Wearing a Face Covering**

Medical exemptions from wearing face covering School will adhere to the NYCDOE policy for parent requests for medical exemption from face coverings.

- Parents must submit documentation from a doctor or other health care provider specifically documenting the medical condition and why the student’s condition makes the student unable to wear or tolerate a face covering.

- The school administration will forward the request to the Office of School Health who will review the request and supporting documentation and may approve the exemption based on such documentation.
- Students must be permitted to attend school while requests are reviewed. During the review, the school should provide additional adherence support and additional breaks, explore the use of alternative PPE, and ensure other risk mitigation strategies such as handwashing and physical distancing are adhered to.
- The school will advise the parent of the outcome of the review.
- Students with face covering exemptions must continue to adhere to other health and safety requirements, including hand hygiene and physical distancing requirements. Staff working with students with a face covering exemption will be provided with additional PPE.

### **Restriction on Shared Materials & Shared Spaces**

We will limit use of shared materials and spaces where staff might be introduced to the virus still living on those surfaces.

- **Shared Materials**

- BCS will ensure adequate supplies to minimize sharing of materials wherever possible.
- Students will have 1:1 technology which they will bring to and from school as necessary.
- Staff will have self-contained supplies which will not be shared with others.

- **Shared Spaces**

- Students will not use shared spaces with the exception of the lunch room and auditorium. Students will be appropriately distanced in each shared space as determined by the DOH and NYCDOE.
- Staff access to, and use of shared spaces will be limited (ex. Main Office, Business Office, Staff Lounge, etc. will have maximum capacities depending on space).
- BCS classrooms will not use carpets.
- BCS students will not be permitted to use water fountains. Personal water bottles will be utilized by students and staff. Students may refill water bottles utilizing water fountains but may not drink directly from water fountains. Bottled water will be provided to students who do not bring water bottles to school as needed.

### **Adjusted Daily Systems to Support the Above**

In order to support staff and students in executing all of the above expectations, school administration will adapt daily systems as follows to ensure health of students and staff.

- Upon entry to the school building, staff will receive a temperature check.

- Arrival procedures will be modified to ensure physical distancing; designated staff will perform infrared non-contact temperature checks of students, and all students will use hand sanitizer.
- Daily screening assessments will be completed by ALL individuals entering the building each day.
- Dismissal procedures will be modified to ensure physical distancing. Students will be dismissed individually as parents/guardians arrive during the dismissal time frame.
- Deans, support staff, and related service providers will require adjustments to space in which they are offered and how they are provided.
- Student bathroom procedures will be specified to ensure limited numbers of students, physical distancing, and hand washing.
- In-class procedures will minimize students touching the same items.
- There will be no in-person grade-level or school-wide community meetings. All meetings will be telephonic or via video conferencing.
- Students and staff will engage in frequent hand-washing & sanitizing, and designated times will be identified in the schedule.
- Students will receive explicit instruction during the first two weeks about health and hygiene.
- BCS will develop written protocol to be distributed to families and the school community that addresses health screening information, observation for signs of illness in their child/ren which would require them to stay home from school as well as clear instructions to ensure that all persons in the school building keep social distance of at least 6 feet apart and wear face coverings. This information will also be available on the BCS website.

### **Safety Coordinator**

The Safety Coordinator at BCS will ensure continuous compliance with all aspects of BCS' school's reopening plan, as well as any phased-in reopening activities necessary to allow for all operational issues to be resolved before activities return to normal or "new normal" levels. The BCS Safety Coordinator is Robert Morales. His contact information is [rmorales@brooklyncharter.org](mailto:rmorales@brooklyncharter.org) and 718-302-2085.

### **School Safety Drills**

District/school plan has written protocol to conduct required school safety drills with modifications ensuring social distancing between persons.

- BCS will continue to conduct required school safety drills with modifications ensuring that social distancing between students and staff is adhered to.
- In the context of regularly scheduled Monthly Building Council Meetings we will address the scheduling of all safety drills with modifications to ensure social distancing.

## Approach to Reopening

BCS will work with Public School 23 to ensure that co-located systems are in place prior to our student's arrival - for example, the co-located school's arrival and dismissal procedures, food services, nursing, and school safety.

BCS will also rely on the NYCDOE custodial engineers and follow directions from the NYC Division of School Facilities (DSF) to ensure the safe restart of building systems and also ensuring the ongoing cleaning and disinfection of all classrooms, shared spaces, and outdoor facilities in order to meet standards as prescribed by the NYCDOH and CDC.

## Health Protocols

All protocols below are in accordance with current guidance from New York State, the NYC DOH and the CDC. Should guidance change, policies will be updated accordingly. We will require that all students and employees:

- Stay home if experiencing symptoms of COVID-19 or other infectious disease.
- Contact your physician for medical advice if you have a COVID-19 symptom or direct exposure to a confirmed case of COVID-19.
- Alert the Principal, Assistant Principal and/or the Director of Human Resources of symptoms, direct exposure, or diagnosis of COVID-19 or other infectious disease.
- Self-isolate or self-quarantine as indicated by your specific situation and your doctor's advice.
- Provide a written physician's note in order to return to school after an illness or self-isolation/quarantine period.
- If you plan on traveling outside of New York State, please notify the school as to your destination, date of departure and date of return.
  - *Self-isolate for 10 days if you have traveled to a state with significant community spread and are required by NYS to quarantine from the date of travel. All students and employees should comply with the NYS Governor's order. Currently travelers are required to take a COVID test prior to departure or upon immediate arrival to NY. A second COVID test is required on the 4<sup>th</sup> day upon return and once those results are received and are negative, the student and/or employee may return back to the building physically.*

## School Closure

BCS will follow NYCDOE and NYSED guidance to determine the parameters, conditions or metrics (e.g., increased absenteeism or increased illness in the school community) that will serve as early warning signs that positive COVID-19 cases may be increasing beyond an acceptable level.

Decisions regarding school building closures will be made in accordance with NYCDOE COVID-19 protocols and with New York State guidance on restrictions in designated

COVID-19 Zones. It is important to note that the above threshold is just one trigger for closing schools but may not be the only trigger. For example, a decision to close schools would be made where there were recurrent, uncontrolled outbreaks of COVID-19 in schools, even if the overall case rates across New York City were to remain low.

### **School Closure due to an Exposed/Infected Community Member**

BCS will move to a fully remote distance learning model based on state-or citywide directives, or metrics within our school community based on NYCDOE Situation Room guidelines that indicate that we should move to this model. BCS would move to a full remote model in the event:

- A New York State or New York City Department of Health directive to all schools.
  - In the event that the state and city thresholds for opening or closing are not aligned, BCS will follow the most local, relevant guidance.

Students and faculty are prepared for a shift to distance learning. The technology tools and learning resources that will be provided to students will be in regular use during in-person learning at the school building, and will go home with the students who have elected for full remote learning in the beginning of the school year. Though teachers are simultaneously preparing for both in-person and distance learning models, we will need some time to allow both teachers and families to rearrange home lives to accommodate remote learning, and there will be a preparation period of one to two days before remote learning schedules begin in full.

### **Child Nutrition**

#### **Meal Services**

BCS will continue to utilize the School Food (NYC DOE program). BCS will rely on NYCDOE School Food to ensure that service personnel follow all appropriate guidelines for safety as recommended by the NYCDOH. The school will train school staff as needed to reinforce the protocols adopted by food service and custodial personnel to ensure healthy, safe meals with the least disruption to the instructional day. Meals for grades K-2 will be served in classrooms for health reasons until further notice and students in grades 3-5 will be served lunch in the cafeteria with appropriate social distancing (6 feet apart). Students will wash hands before and after any meals are served during the school day. Staff assigned to classrooms/the cafeteria during breakfast/lunch periods will be required to clean and disinfect areas in which students occupy.

BCS currently relies on its partnership with P.S. 23 and School Food in making use of the shared cafeteria in the building and will continue to do so prior to making any decisions as to how the cafeteria will be utilized during this time.

## **Transportation**

### **Transportation Approach**

BCS relies on the Department of Education's Office of Pupil Transportation (OPT) for all student transportation support - including MetroCards for students in K-5, and yellow bus service. We have historically provided yellow bus service to students in Grades K-5 who are eligible based on the bus routes that the school has available. Our students' eligibility for yellow bus service, and whether they receive full or half fare MetroCards depends on the distance they live from the school. Due to the uncertainty around whether OPT will be able to secure contracts with bus vendors, and the uncertainty around what bus service will look like to assure student health and safety, our transportation plan remains fluid but tentative plans are as follows:

- **Confirmed:** Students will be assigned MetroCards per OPT eligibility.
- **UPDATE: Confirmed- BCS has secured its bus contracts with Allied Bus Company and will have yellow bus service for the first day of physical in-person learning.**

**UPDATE:** Allied Bus Company will ensure that personnel follow appropriate guidelines for safety as recommended by the DOH.

- In the event that bus service is available, BCS will rely on the NYCDOE Office of Pupil Transportation (OPT) to ensure that school bus companies and personnel follow appropriate guidelines for safety as recommended by the DOH coupled with the additional support of bus matrons provided by BCS. BCS will also rely on OPT to ensure that bus companies and personnel follow all appropriate guidelines for cleanliness and disinfection. Any school buses contracted directly by BCS will meet the same guidelines as provided by DOH.

### **Social/Emotional Well-Being**

At BCS, we are committed to serving our community of learners as a family. Many of our students rely on us to meet their physiological needs, their safety needs of security and welfare, and their belongingness needs of love and friendship. All of our students rely on us to aid them in gaining access to education, feeling a sense of accomplishment and esteem and elevating them in achieving full potential. We are committed to providing an equitable space for students to learn along with equitable access to resources for all families. We will support our students and attend to their needs despite our changing educational setting.

We also believe in ensuring that our students experience joy and feel valued as they engage in their school experience, whether virtually at home or in classes at our school building. We are committed to recognizing our students' humanity, work, and effort every day.



BCS will ensure that a building-level comprehensive developmental school counseling program plan, developed under the direction of our certified school social worker.

Below is a detailed description of the Brooklyn Charter School counseling program plan, which has been updated to meet current needs regarding the COVID-19 public health emergency.

#### Mental Health and Trauma-Responsive Practices Staff

- Professional Development sessions and information for staff on:
  - Trauma-informed practices,
  - Self-care, and
  - How to support students during a public health crisis

#### Creating spaces for staff reflection: all-staff meetings, team meetings, and surveys

- Survey staff regularly to assess needs
- Opportunities for staff to connect (e.g. lunches, game nights, workshops)
- Opportunities for staff to have 1:1 check-ins with a clinical social worker on staff or administrative staff as necessary

#### Students

- Teacher and student social emotional check-in weekly
- Individual and group counseling services (push-in/pull-out)
- Use of Responsive Classroom technique in classrooms
- Morning Meeting group check-ins
- Intentional, thoughtful, and on-going community building among classes or pods
- Intentional, thoughtful, and on-going relationship building between staff and students and staff and families

#### Families

- Staff and family social emotional check-ins as needed
- Regularly distributed surveys to assess family needs
- Opportunities for families to check-in with a social worker
- Designated Social Work email address for families to write to with questions, to be checked regularly by SW Team

### **Trauma Informed Practices**

We believe that identifying and implementing research-based trauma informed practices is crucial to meeting students, staff, and family needs during and after these especially turbulent times. BCS will utilize a predesigned Universal Mental Health Screener that has been determined to be both reliable and valid. This screener will be sent out to all families in early August to determine which students require support upon their return in the fall. BCS will determine the levels of support necessary based on how students score on the screener. This will best allow BCS to group students by specific mental health needs, or to whether we need to refer students out for more clinical intervention if necessary.

As a result of these screeners, BCS has chosen to also formally incorporate trauma informed practices into our school culture practices next year. We will all engage in on-going conversation, training and development with respect to these practices and strategies as we seek to be a safe learning and work environment for all our stakeholders.

**School Schedules**

**School Start/End Times**

In-Person Hours		Remote Hours
<p>We will keep in-person timeframes consistent with what would have been true to this school year. Please note that these are initial time stamps and arrival windows may be adjusted.*</p> <p><b>K-5</b>            Arrival: 7:30-8:00 a.m.            Breakfast: 7:45-8:30 AM            Dismissal: 3:00 PM*</p>		<p>Remote hours below have been developed based on parent input from surveys. The day also begins late enough that a family member could feasibly complete in-person drop-off of a student, and return home in-time for remote learning. Please note that these are initial time stamps and arrival windows may be adjusted.*</p> <p><b>K-5</b>            Start: 8:30 AM*            End: 3:00 PM*</p>

**Rationale:** We want to keep our schedule as consistent as possible to make planning as easy as possible for our entire school community, and make it as easy as possible on families who have multiple students in our school community. The vast majority of our school community relies on yellow bus service and public transit to get to and from school - precise arrival times would create inequities.

**Approach to Health Safety at Arrival and Dismissal:** We will ensure that arrival and dismissal windows are wide enough to maintain social distancing. School administration may choose to give individual cohorts suggested arrival times within the arrival window. Similarly, each school will have a consistent dismissal time. School administration will ensure that student egress from the building is staggered and prevents cohorts from overlapping. We will work to be swift and efficient, but this may mean families who pick students up may have a slightly longer wait-time at pick up in order to maintain safe protocols.

## School Calendar

BCS will follow the NYCDOE school calendar for the 2021-22 school year. A tentative school calendar has been posted on the BCS school website that includes holidays and breaks. There will be a total number of at least 180 instructional days for the school year.

## Tentative Schedule

### BCS Tentative In-School Daily Schedule

7:30- 8:00	Arrival
8:00-8:30	Breakfast/Morning Meeting/Homeroom/Fundations/Social & Emotional Learning (SEL)
8:30 – 10:00	Humanities
10:00 - 10:30	i-Ready Intervention (ELA/Math)
10:30 - 12:00	Math
12:00 – 12:50	Lunch
12:50 – 1:35	Specials
1:40- 2:10	Word Study/Guided Reading
2:10-2:40	Science
2:40-3:00	Math Centers/Independent Reading
3:00 - 3:30	Dismissal

### Tentative BCS Remote Learning Schedule

8:30 - 9:15	Specials
9:15- 10:30	Humanities
10:45 - 12:00	Math
12:00- 12:30	Guided Reading/Word Study

12:30 – 1:20	LUNCH
1:30 - 2:30	i-Ready Intervention (ELA and Math OR Science)
2:30 - 3:00	Math Practice/Centers

## **Attendance and Chronic Absenteeism**

### **Student Attendance**

The goal with attendance systems in the fall will be to understand who is present for live or in-person learning time, who is not, and to provide supportive follow-up to students and families regarding their presence. We are shaping the attendance system to be simple in execution, meaningful, and executed in either a virtual or hybrid model. We aim to make improvements on our approach used during remote learning such that attendance marks will be more meaningful and can be leveraged based on our communication system.

- **Virtual:** The purpose of an attendance system in a virtual-only setting will be to ensure students engage in live learning activities daily and that their families are informed about their participation.
- **Use of the Student Information System:** We will mark attendance in our Student Information System. We will have a COVID specific attendance code/note system.

### **Attendance for Instructional Purposes**

Schools are responsible for developing a mechanism to collect and report daily teacher/student engagement or attendance regardless of the instructional setting.

All students (in-person, asynchronous or remote) are marked in attendance by 9:00 am everyday (time will be adjusted for any staggered arrival schedules as necessary). Attendance is taken by classroom teachers. Attendance includes in person attendance at the building. Students are marked late or for early dismissal when students are not in attendance for instruction.

Remote Live Instruction: Families are expected to let teachers know when their child is out of school/not in attendance. If a student does not log in by 9:15 a.m.:

- Our teachers, main office staff and/or dean will contact the family/student to understand why absence and/or lateness has occurred. Contact is made through email, phone call or text. Comments are logged in an attendance Google Document.
- If a student does not login for two consecutive days during the week:

- Teachers/Office staff call families and put a comment in BCS Attendance Document, copying the Dean who contacts family/student to understand why consecutive absences have occurred. Contact is made through phone call, email or text. Phone calls are preferred.
- Monthly responses if failure to meet attendance expectations
  - If cumulative attendance falls below 90% for the month, families are emailed a letter from the Assistant Principal detailing the attendance rate.
  - Plans will be developed to support individual students with chronic absenteeism (such as but not limited to individualized schedules, support in problem solving with a social worker).

### **Attendance for Reporting Purposes**

Attendance of any school-age student of compulsory age, who resides in the district or is placed by a parent/guardian in another public school district, a charter school, or is placed by a district administrator or the CSE of the school district in educational programs outside the district (such as, another school district, BOCES, approved private in-State or out-of-State school, and State supported school) must be reported in SIRS.

Attendance must be reported by any reporting entity that is required to take attendance. BCS reports all daily attendance through the NYC Department of Education’s student information system, Automate The Schools (ATS).

- BCS will report attendance in ATS daily for all students both in remote and in class learning.
- All reporting of attendance is automatically uploaded to SED through ATS and BOSCES Level 0 platform.
- All suspension reports are uploaded by BCS to SED through BOSCES Level 0 platform
- BOCES uploads all attendance records to SIRS

### **Technology and Connectivity**

BCS will invest in the infrastructure, resources, and tools that enable our teachers to flexibly and reliably deliver instruction virtually and in person. This investment includes developing the capabilities for students to view and review live instruction, virtually submit work and receive feedback, and engage in academic social interaction with teachers and peers.

As we launch the 2021-2022 school year, BCS recognizes our Staffing & Support plans need to be flexible and incorporate the needs not only of our students and their families, but also the needs of teachers and staff members, who we believe are the most important assets we have in pursuit of our mission. We recognize that all staff members will have unique needs and perspectives as we return to school, and we are committed to working with each staff member to meet them. Given the nature of COVID-19, we anticipate specific considerations will need to be made for the groups outlined below and encourage

school administration and staff members alike to be proactive in planning and problem-solving for any concerns.

## **Staffing and Support**

### **Essential Staff**

Returning to school requires us to identify who are considered “essential” staff in our building, including essential staff by role and an essential minimum number of staff to ensure the safe and effective operations of our schools. In general, we define “essential” staff as:

- At least one (1) teacher or assistant teacher per classroom in use
- School Secretaries
- Student Service Managers
- Social Workers
- Deans of Students
- Assistant Principals
- Directors of Operations
- Operational Support Faculty
- Principals

Without each of these roles in the school building every time students are learning in-person, we do not believe we can safely or effectively operate our schools.

### **COVID Vaccination**

All faculty in NYCDOE buildings are required to be fully vaccinated as of October 5, 2021. Documentation of full vaccination must include the manufacturer, lot number(s), date(s) of vaccination; and vaccinator or vaccine clinic site in an acceptable format;

- Record prepared and signed by the licensed health practitioner who administered the vaccine, which may include the a CDC COVID-19 vaccine card;
- An official record from one of the following, which may be accepted as documentation of immunization without a health practitioner’s signature: a foreign nation, NYS Countermeasure Data Management System (CDMS), the NYS Immunization Information System (NYSIIS), City Immunization Registry (CIR), a Department-recognized immunization registry of another state, or an electronic record system; (iii) Excelsior Pass; or (iv) any other documentation determined acceptable by the department.
- Failure to be fully vaccinated will result in a faculty member no longer being permitted on NYCDOE school building premises.

### **Accommodation Requests/Medical Exemptions**

All staff members are expected to return to work. 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 accommodation requests in a reasonable and equitable manner.

Accommodation requests will be considered and prioritized in order of the following:

1. Employees who are [immunocompromised](#) or otherwise medically diagnosed as being high risk\* according to the American Disabilities Act (ADA) or the Center of Disease Control 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*

Accommodation requests must be received verbally and in writing to the Director of Human Resources. To protect personal information, all accommodation requests should be submitted to [rmorales@brooklyncharter.org](mailto:rmorales@brooklyncharter.org). The Director of Human Resources will coordinate on behalf of staff members with School Administration to approve/deny accommodation requests. Approval or denial of the request will be made to staff members by the Director of Human Resources. If the accommodation request is denied, the staff member's options will be discussed. If the accommodation request is approved and the staff member's job is not conducive to remote work, other duties may be assigned.

It is unlikely that we will be able to approve all accommodation requests. In those instances, staff members are encouraged to keep an open dialogue with their school administration to identify if any additional adjustments may be available.

Please note:

- Employees requesting accommodations should be prepared to share the following information:
  - How the disability creates a limitation.
  - Medical documentation of the disability.
  - How the requested accommodation will effectively address the limitation.
  - Whether another accommodation could solve the issue.
  - How the proposed accommodation will enable the employee to continue performing the job's essential functions.
- To review in an equitable manner, accommodation requests will be evaluated on the following timeline:
  - Window 1: August 16, 2021 - August 27, 2021
  - Window 2: August 30 - Ongoing
- Accommodation requests will be reevaluated every 30 days or in alignment with CDC/Department of Education guidelines, whichever is less. Re-approval is subject to the stated prioritization of accommodation requests and needs of the Staffing & Support plan.
- Accommodation requests may be denied if deemed unreasonable, that is, if approving the accommodation request would otherwise place an undue hardship on Brooklyn Charter School's ability to operate or fulfill its Staffing & Support plan.

- School administration may be able to fulfill accommodation requests without undue hardship by making scheduling adjustments in coordination with the Director of Human Resources. In doing so, school administration will ensure that workloads remain evenly distributed among all team members such that fulfilling the accommodation request will not place an undue hardship or oversized workload on other employees.

### **Parents & Caregivers Considerations**

We understand that parents/caregivers will have a particularly unique experience navigating the return to school and managing parent/caregiver responsibilities. We encourage any parent/caregiver to proactively work with their school administration to identify and manage their needs. We will explore flexible solutions that honor our commitments to students.

We also understand that childcare may be available to varying degrees as a result of COVID-19, and that availability may change over time as context changes. In the event parents/caregivers are unable to work given a lack of access to childcare, additional Sick Day and Family Leave options have been made available:

- Two weeks (up to 80 hours) of unpaid sick leave because the employee is unable to work because of a bona fide need to care for an individual subject to quarantine (pursuant to Federal, State, or local government order or advice of a healthcare provider), or to care for a child (under 18 years of age) whose school or child care provider is closed or unavailable for reasons related to COVID-19, and/or the employee is experiencing a substantially similar condition as specified by the Secretary of Health and Human Services, in consultation with the Secretaries of the Treasury and Labor; and then,
- Up to 12 weeks of paid expanded family and medical leave at two-thirds the employee's regular rate of pay where an employee, who has been employed for at least 30 calendar days, is unable to work due to a bona fide need for leave to care for a child whose school or child care provider is closed or unavailable for reasons related to COVID-19.
- More information may be found at the [Department of Labor Families First Coronavirus Response Act \(FFCRA\)](#) information page.

Sick Days should continue to be submitted in accordance with guidelines in the following section.

### **Sick Days & Sick Leave**

#### ***Part A***

- Should staff ask or be required to log sick time for a doctor's visit, they can do so using the normal protocol found in BCS Employee Manual.
- Should staff ask or be required to quarantine by a health professional for an extended period of time, please inform the Principal and Director of Human



Resources verbally and in writing to [jhunt@brooklyncharter.org](mailto:jhunt@brooklyncharter.org) and [rmorales@brooklyncharter.org](mailto:rmorales@brooklyncharter.org).

- For any employee impacted by quarantine, your sick days will be logged as “COVID-19 Sick Leave” in ADP. “COVID-19 Sick Leave” operates as a different category of sick leave than typical sick leave and is in effect through December 31, 2020. Employees are covered up to 5 days based on New York State’s Order for Mandatory or Precautionary Quarantine within the school year. Please refer to Mr. Morales for supporting information from New York State.
- More information may be found in the COVID-19 updates of the BCS Employee Manual.

### ***Part B***

- If an Employee is experiencing COVID-19-like Symptoms
  - If a staff member is experiencing COVID-19-like symptoms, as defined by the CDC, or living in the same household as someone experiencing COVID-19-like symptoms, that staff member must not report to work or be around any BCS staff members or students. The staff member should follow the normal call-in procedures and request a Sick Day with BCS School Administration.
  - Staff members should immediately contact their healthcare provider and arrange for COVID-19 testing.
  - Symptoms could include:
    - Feeling feverish or a measured temperature greater than or equal to 100.4 degree Fahrenheit
    - Loss of taste or smell
    - Cough
    - Difficulty breathing
    - Shortness of breath
    - Headache
    - Chills
    - Sore throat
    - Shaking or exaggerated shivering
    - Significant muscle pain or ache
    - Diarrhea
  - Individuals or a designated family member should communicate with School Administration and follow the advice of their healthcare provider. The staff member may work remotely during this time, if able.
- Testing Positive for COVID-19
  - Any staff member who tests positive for COVID-19, lives with someone who tests positive for COVID-19, and/or has been exposed to someone with COVID-19 is required to immediately follow these steps:
    - Communicate with BCS School Administration about their situation.

- Quarantine themselves per the policies below.
  - Individuals or a designated family member should communicate with BCS School Administration and follow the advice of their healthcare provider. As with all health information, this information is treated as confidential. The staff member may work remotely during this time, if able.
- When a Staff Member May Return to Work
  - Return to work policy after COVID-19 symptoms or positive test.
  - Any individuals who themselves either: (a) are lab-confirmed to have COVID-19; or (b) experience the symptoms of COVID-19 (listed below) must stay at home throughout the infection period, and cannot return to work until cleared by Human Resources and any of the below conditions have been met:
    - In the case of an individual who was diagnosed with COVID-19, the individual may return to work when the following criteria are met:
      - At least 10 days have passed since symptoms first appeared.
    - If the individual has symptoms that could be COVID-19 and wants to return to work before completing the above stay at home period, the individual must either (a) obtain a medical professional's note clearing the individual for return based on an alternative diagnosis or (b) receive two separate confirmations at least 24 hours apart that they are free of COVID via acute infection tests at an approved COVID-19 testing location.
- Return to Work Policy After Direct Exposure to a Person with COVID-19
  - Individuals who have had direct exposure to someone with COVID-19 must stay home for 10 days after exposure and get tested. After 10 days, with no symptoms, individuals can safely return to work sites.

This BCS Reopening plan is a working document that is student-centered, with equity and flexibility at its core. BCS will provide frequent communication with the school community to ensure parental involvement and family engagement. As a learning educational agency, it is our obligation of duty to continue to create and foster a culturally responsive environment that prepares our students for rigor and independent thinking/learning in order to empower students as agents of positive change in our ever-changing society.

This reopening plan will continue to set the Brooklyn Charter students up to become the leaders that we will need for tomorrow without missing a beat!

