

NYC DOE Back to School Q&A Video Guide

Video Series Part 1

Moderator:

Hello everyone. My name is Kelly Hur, and I am the assistant director of communication at Community Inclusion and Development Alliance - CIDA for short.

Today we are having a conversation with Deputy Chancellor of New York City Department of Education, Adrienne Austin, about what to expect in the 2021-2022 school year. Welcome Deputy Chancellor Austin. Hello, and thank you for joining us!

We asked our families to tell us what were their biggest questions and concerns for this new school year, and we have received great questions. This is a three part video series on Back to School 2021-2022, and we will get started with the first one - questions regarding vaccinations. Please be sure to check out the other videos on New Safety Protocols in Schools, and Remote instructions. Deputy Chancellor, let's dive right into the questions regarding vaccinations!

[Vaccination]

Q: About a week ago, the Mayor announced that all NYC DOE employees including teachers and contractors will receive at least one dose of COVID vaccine by September 27. How is that progressing? What is the current vaccination rate among DOE employees?

A: Vaccination is the key to getting out of the pandemic, and NYC DOE is grateful that the mayor made the announcement that all DOE Employees must be vaccinated by 09/27

- *Educators were prioritized in the vaccination in the early stage of the vaccination; so many of the staff and majority of the teaching staff were vaccinated.*
- *Since the mayor made the announcement, all the administrative and office staff will be vaccinated, and it's not just important for the schools, but also for the community.*

Q: For teachers and staff who are not vaccinated, how often do they get tested?

A: Every two weeks 10% of the school population will be tested until September 27

- *After September 27, all of the staff will be vaccinated; thus, it will only apply to students who have not received the vaccination.*
- *Post September 27, 10% of unvaccinated students will be subject to testing every two weeks.*

Q: Will NYC DOE require proof of vaccination for school bus drivers and bus assistants?

A: This is currently under negotiation. Bus drivers are not DOE employees, and they work for private companies that DOE contract with.

- *Bus drivers will practice the same level of precaution as they did last year - wearing masks and having masks for students.*
- *NYC DOE doesn't have the vaccination mandate for the bus drivers and bus assistants yet.*

Q: NYC Schools currently are not mandating students between age 12-15 to get vaccinated. Is there a plan or a strategy to encourage students and families to get their children vaccinated?

A: Absolutely! DOE has been promoting Vax to School Campaign

- *Considering the risks of vaccination vs. the risks of Covid19, the benefits of getting vaccinated outweigh the risks of it, so let's get vaccinated and be protected.*
- *It's about having those conversations with one another about the vaccination in our community. Let's encourage each other to get vaccinated.*
- *All adults older than 12 is eligible to get vaccinated*
- *You can find the appointments through vaccinefinder.nyc.gov 877-vax-4nyc*
- *No questions asked about immigrations and it's free to get the vaccine.*

Moderator:

Thank you so much for addressing these questions! For more information about the new school year, please visit schools.nyc.gov. And for more information about CIDA, please visit cidainfo.com. Be sure to check out our other two videos on 2021-2022 school year safety protocols and remote instructions. Thanks for watching and have a great school year everyone!

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Video Series Part 2

Moderator:

Hello everyone. My name is Kelly Hur, and I am the assistant director of communication at Community Inclusion and Development Alliance - CIDA for short.

Today we are having a conversation with Deputy Chancellor of New York City Department of Education, Adrienne Austin, about what to expect in the 2021-2022 school year. Welcome back Deputy Chancellor Austin!

This is the second part of the three part series on Back to School 2021-2022, and in this video we are talking about new protocols for the new school year. Please be sure to check out the other two videos on Students, Teachers, and Staff Vaccinations in Schools and Remote instructions. Deputy Chancellor, let's dive right into the questions on new safety protocols in the new school year!

[Safety Protocols for 2021-2022]

Q: First, parents are most curious about what the protocol this year is for confirmed cases for students, teachers, and staff. In particular, who is subject to quarantine and testing when there is a confirmed case in the school?

A: There are two policies: One for elementary schools - children who are under the age of 12 who are not eligible for the vaccine, and one for other schools.

- **Elementary Schools:** *In the event there is a positive case in a classroom, all students in the class will be instructed to quarantine for 10 calendar days.*
 - *Students will continue to receive live remote instruction while they quarantine.*
- **Middle and High Schools:** *In the event there is a positive case in a classroom, students who are:*
 - *At least 12 years old, vaccinated, and not showing symptoms will continue to attend school in-person.*
 - *At least 12 years old, vaccinated, and showing symptoms will be directed to quarantine for 10 calendar days. These students will have access to remote learning while quarantining.*
 - *Unvaccinated will be directed to quarantine for 10 calendar days. These students will continue their learning remotely. On day 5 of their quarantine, students may take a COVID-19 test, and with a negative result, return to attending school in-person after day 7.*

Q: What about the new social distancing protocols in the classroom? What does gym and recess look like this school year in terms of social distancing?

A: NYC DOE is following the CDC guideline. There will be at least 3 feet of social distancing in the classroom.

- *Space restrictions should not exclude any students from in-person learning, and 92% of classrooms in NYC can accommodate students, and school principals are working to find solutions to accommodate all students.*

- *Schools that have access to playground, yards, and parks, will be using the spaces.*
- *Last year, 840 schools in NYC took advantage of outdoor learning, and schools will continue to utilize the outdoor space this year.*

Q: Are there changes during lunch time at the cafeteria? Given that the students will take their masks off during lunch time, will there be a social distancing among students?

- *Following the CDC guidance, schools are going to be maximizing social distancing when eating at the cafeteria.*
- *Schools are going to use other indoor and outdoor spaces to maximize the social distancing possible when eating.*
- *Principals are programming lunchtime to reduce the number of students gathering in one space at the same time.*
- *Improved air circulation and ventilation currently in place, and HEPA air purifiers are installed in the cafeteria as well.*
- *Multi prong approach to not just maximize the physical spacing, but also improve the air circulation and ventilation in those spaces.*

Q: What are some options for students with disabilities and young students who refuse to wear masks?

A: NYC DOE has a mask mandate: All students, all faculty and staff must wear masks.

- *Teachers and principals are taking the mask mandate very seriously.*
- *This hasn't been an issue with reopening of the schools last year, and the summer rising program.*

Q: What's the threshold for school closures and remote learning in terms of the community infection rate?

- *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.*
- *With NYC DOE's approach and multiple measures of mask mandate, hand washing, vaccination in older students and all staff, will prevent schools from closing, but, when and if, the decision will be made by DOHMH.*

Q: Does the NYC DOE have a contingency plan in preparation for severe cases of Delta or other new variants - the latest is Mu? If so, how does the plan address the safety of the students against the new variants and a potential pandemic?

A: Contingency plan is in place, and NYC DOE is constantly communicating with DOHMH.

- *Situation room is arranged and in place with representatives from DOE, DOHMH, Testing and Tracing, Department of buildings, constantly evaluating data, sharing information, and making decisions.*
- *Health and safety of the children are the most important priority in making the decisions.*
- *NYC DOE is doing everything to keep the students safe with mask mandates, vaccination, new safety protocols, sanitized and cleaned classrooms, improved ventilation, and air purifiers installed.*
- *We urge parents and students to join us in this effort because we have to do this as a community and help our children learn.*

Moderator:

Thank you so much for answering these questions from the parents! For more information about the new school year, please visit schools.nyc.gov. And for more information about CIDA, please visit cidainfo.com. Please check out our other two videos on Students, Teachers, and Staff vaccinations in schools, and remote instructions. Thanks for watching, and have an awesome school year everyone!

NYC DOE Back to School Q&A Video Guide

Video Series Part 3

Moderator:

Hi everyone! My name is Kelly Hur, and I am the assistant director of communication at Community Inclusion and Development Alliance - CIDA for short.

Today we are having a conversation with Deputy Chancellor of New York City Department of Education, Adrienne Austin, about what to expect in the 2021-2022 school year. Welcome back Deputy Chancellor Austin!

This is the third part of the three part series on Back to School 2021-2022, and in this video we are talking about remote instruction for the new school year. Please be sure to check out the other two videos on Students, Teachers, and Staff Vaccinations in schools, and New Safety Protocols for this year. Deputy Chancellor, let's dive right into the questions on remote instructions in case our children are confirmed positive with Covid or are exposed to Covid in the classroom.

[Remote Instruction]

Q: According to the NYC DOE guideline, students who tested positive for COVID19 will receive remote instruction. What would the remote instruction look like more specifically?

A: It looks different from last year where there were in-person cohorts and remote cohorts.

- *This year will look like a traditional school year. If the entire class needs to quarantine, the teacher will provide synchronous remote instruction using zoom or google meet.*

Q: For students with special needs, what does remote instruction look like this year? How will related services be provided in a remote setting?

A: Remote instruction for students with special needs looks very similar to the remote instruction for general education classrooms.

- *NYC has about 250K students with special needs, and many of them are in the general education classrooms.*
- *Same as the general education classrooms, when the classroom goes remote, students with special needs will receive synchronous remote instruction and related services online.*
- *Same applies to D75 students. When students in D75 need to quarantine, they will receive a mix of synchronous instruction and asynchronous learning activities for assignments.*

Q: In July, Mayor Bill de Blasio announced the “New York City Academic Recovery Plan”. He said that this plan includes \$251 million in increasing special education services, including new after-school and Saturday programs available for any child with an individualized education program. Any update on this plan? Will students with disabilities be able to receive extended services, such as related services after school hours?

A: Understand that families and advocates are very excited. It’s unprecedented, and it’s a huge investment in our students. We are waiting to release the money to schools.

- *Currently gathering ideas and insights from the school principals because the programs will be executed in the schools.*
- *More to come. Stay tuned.*

Moderator: Thank you Deputy Chancellor for answering some of the biggest questions that our families were curious about. We also want to thank CIDA parents who have submitted these questions.

For more information about the new school year, please visit schools.nyc.gov. And for more information about CIDA, please visit cidainfo.com. Please check out the other two videos on Students, Teachers, and Staff vaccinations in schools, and New Safety Protocols in the New School Year.

Thanks for watching and on behalf of everyone here at CIDA and NYC DOE, we hope you have an amazing year of learning!

THE END