

New York French American Charter School (NYFACS)

**Plan for Fall 2021 Reopening**

- **Purpose**

On May 24, 2021, the mayor of New York City eliminated remote learning for fall 2021. The goal is to return to 100 % in-person learning. Students benefit from in-person learning and safely returning to in-person instruction in the fall 2021 is a priority. In this plan, we are differentiating between vaccinated and non vaccinated individuals. The rules and practices are universal to keep enforcement simpler.

## **Section A: Review of Health and Safety Procedures and Protocols**

### **A.1 Reopening of School Facilities for In-Person Instruction**

- **Capacity**

The NYFACS Elementary School (Pre-K through 4th grade) is located in our main building at 311 West 120th Street in West Harlem. Our Middle School classes (5th-8th grade) are held around the corner, in the Police Academy League (PAL) building at 441 Manhattan Avenue.

NYFACS applied NYSDOH standards for the COVID-19 emergency to calculate capacity per classroom in both our main building and the PAL building. Such standards require a social distancing of at minimum 3 feet between each seated student, in all directions. Based on our current enrollment, our class sizes may range from 10 to 20 students. Since we are committed to fully reopen school to all our students. The CDC also recommends that when it is not possible to maintain a physical distance of at least 3 feet, such as when schools cannot fully reopen while maintaining these distances, it is especially important to layer multiple other prevention strategies, such as in door masking. In order to ensure that all our students benefit from in-person learning in a safe and healthy environment, we plan to take additional mitigating measures such as desk shields and purifiers.

For staff meetings whether 1:1 coaching meetings or school wide PD, we will maintain 6 feet physical distancing. This may result in conducting virtual meetings for staff PD if there is not enough space to accommodate the entire staff.

- **Social Distancing**

We will rigorously implement and enforce NYCDOE NYC DOHMH recommendations regarding social distancing.

As the main building does not dispose of a large, ventilated lobby, staggered dismissal will have to occur outside the side entrance of the main building or the PAL building in conformity with socially-distanced markers placed on the sidewalk.

In the Elementary School, dismissed in the front of the school building. Students will gather in designated, socially-distanced delimited areas in the playground area and on the sidewalks adjacent to the building. A minimum of 3-feet will separate each child emplacement, and classes will be grouped and strictly separated from another. As parents will not be admitted to the building, students will be admitted into the building one at a time after verification of the completion of a necessary daily online health check-up using a designated App that morning, and a touchless temperature check.

No parent will be admitted into the school building barring an exceptional circumstance.

Children whose daily health check-up using the [designated link](#) have not been completed prior to arrival, school will not be admitted into the building.

Children exhibiting a temperature higher than 100 degrees will not be admitted into the building.

Younger children will be accompanied to their class.

Entrances and stairwells will be designated for specific grades, and will be unidirectional (except for essential NYFACS staff in protective gear) at specific times of the school day. At drop-off, entrances and stairwells will only be used to access classrooms. At dismissal, entrances and stairwells will only be used to evacuate classrooms. In the main building, the western entrance and stairway will be reserved for grades 2A & B, 3A & B, and 4A & B. The eastern entrance and stairways will be reserved for Pre-K, KA & B, and 1A & B.

Dismissal procedures will follow the same approach. At dismissal, if their parent is present, each student in turn will leave their classroom according to a pre-established routine that ensures social-distancing, taking all of their class materials with them. Younger students will be accompanied, and a monitor on each floor and stairwell will ensure a smooth transition.

A similar process of drop-off and dismissal will be followed at the PAL building, with the exception that students will be able to arrive and leave the school building alone, provided their parents have signed a consent form and provided the student uses a smartphone to demonstrate completion previous to arrival at school of the necessary daily online health check-up using the [NYFACS Daily Health Screening Tool](#). As is the case at the Elementary School, Middle School students will also be subject to a temperature check prior to being admitted to the PAL building.

Students will be required to wear proper fall/winter attire and to bring umbrellas to school should weather conditions require it, as they will not be permitted to shelter inside the school premises after dismissal.

Parents will be required to strictly adhere to the drop-off and dismissal protocols and will sign a commitment to do so in the NYFACS Parents Health Pledge they will be asked to sign prior to a return to in-person instruction.

Floor- and wall-affixed visual anchors and aids will predetermine desk emplacements and traffic flow in all classrooms and common areas to ensure appropriate spacing and social-distancing.

Tape markings and where necessary plastic mats (if the flooring is carpeted) will be affixed to the floors of all classrooms to ensure that all desks, including the teacher's desk, are socially-distanced.

Student desks will face in the same direction to minimize respiratory contact. Floor markings will be affixed in corridors and stairways and where necessary in classrooms to illustrate mandated traffic flow.

Ubiquitous signage will be affixed on walls to remind staff, students and visitors to social distance, regularly wash hands or use sanitizer, and wear their masks and PPE.

Both the main building and the PAL building have two stairways. One will be designated and marked with wall and floor signage as UP, the other as DOWN, to ensure unidirectional traffic flow.

Unidirectional traffic flow will be mandated, marked and enforced with signage in corridors.

In order to forestall potential COVID-19 community spread, each class and its group of students will be assigned usage of a specific bathroom only.

With the exception of individual bathroom breaks and staggered recess breaks (no mixing of students from different classes or sections during bathroom breaks or recess), students will remain during the duration of the school day in their designated classroom.

Single teachers will travel to the designated classrooms.

Grab-and-Go breakfast and lunch will be delivered to and consumed in the designated classroom. In order to keep students in their pods, students requiring specialized instruction will not mix with students requiring the same specialized instruction from another class or class section.

All field trips, assemblies, and other large gatherings will be conducted virtually or in-person based on conditions in accordance with CDC guidelines.

Polycarbonate plastic barriers will be in place to protect staff and faculty.

There will be no use of lockers.

Student backpacks will be temporarily stored by the student under her/his desk.

There will be no sharing of school materials.

Any distribution of one-use school materials (such as a worksheet) will be social-distanced and executed with the use of protective gear.

All school materials will be brought from home and will return home.

- **PPE and Face Coverings**

Parents will commit in the NYFACS Parents Health Pledge to ensure that their children wear their cloth or disposable masks and maintain social distance on their way to school when using public transportation or walking the streets.

Students and staff will wear cloth or disposable masks at all times while inside the school building.

Acceptable masks include both cloth and disposable masks, but not bandanas, which have been shown to be less effective in blocking respiratory droplets.

Exceptions will be made for students with special needs or students who are medically fragile and not able

to maintain social distancing, hand or respiratory hygiene or wear a cloth mask. The school nurse will work with parents/guardians to identify alternatives.

Teachers working with special needs students requiring visual contact with a teacher's face will be afforded alternatives to cloth masks, such as transparent face masks which coupled with polycarbonate desk shields, will approximate the same protection level as cloth masks.

The school will stock and provide to school staff such as the school nurse, security guards, or others exerting higher risk tasks all necessary Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) including disposable nitrile gloves, disposable gowns, eye protection, face shields and N-95 Ventilating Masks.

The school will stock and provide as needed to staff and students disposable face masks to supplement the cloth masks students and staff will be required to report to work or study with.

[Mask Breaks](#) - During lunchtime, masks may be removed so students can eat comfortably at a safe distance from one another. Masks may also be removed during designated "mask breaks", during which students will maintain physical distance from each other.

- **Operational Activity**

COVID-19 Response Coordinators, will be responsible for the coordination of all COVID-19 related issues, will be appointed at NYFACS and the PAL building and will report directly to the Principal.

Visitors will be discouraged and limited to essential tasks such as technical and building maintenance. All essential visitors will be required to maintain social distancing and wear acceptable face masks and other requirements abided by school staff and students. In addition to health and safety screening, all visitors' background will be checked through the raptor technology.

Lunch and breakfast will be delivered directly to classrooms and consumed there, to minimize traffic within the school and contact between classes.

- **Restart Operations**

NYFACS has hired additional maintenance and cleaning staff to ensure the safety and hygiene of our main building. The PAL building has a full-time maintenance and cleaning staff member who has been charged with sanitizing classrooms and shared spaces, and has been doing so over the summer to ensure the safety of children using the facility for summer activities.

The heating, ventilation, and air conditioning (HVAC) ductwork has been inspected and air purification filters have been replaced. All classes will be equipped with purifiers and desk shields.

### **Hygiene, Cleaning and Disinfection**

NYFACS custodial protocols will meet or exceed NYCDOHMH, NYCDOE and CDC recommended standards, and will include:

NYFACS will utilize EPA approved disinfectants designed specifically for COVID-19.

The maintenance staff will clean and disinfect all classrooms once students and teachers have left for the day.

Common areas will be cleaned by maintenance twice during school hours and again when students and teachers have left the building.

Offices and meeting areas will all be cleaned by the occupant, upon arrival and prior to leaving, and then again by the maintenance team at the end of the day.

The Health Office and the Isolation Room -room 202 will both be cleaned by the nurse and the appointed staff member at least twice a day, or between seeing any patient—additionally, the maintenance team will clean these spaces twice a day.

Classes will be assigned a specific bathroom (only), to control social-distancing and plan for eventual contact tracing.

Bathrooms will be cleaned three times a day by the maintenance team, twice during the day and once after students and teachers have left for the day.

Weekly audits will be held to review cleaning and sanitization standards, and cleaning protocols updated regularly to meet changing work practices and procedures.

We will maintain a supply of all required cleaning supplies to forestall any shortages.

Maintenance staff will implement a deep cleaning of the school every Saturday or Sunday and after a confirmed positive Covid-19 case from students or staff.

NYFACS will train staff and students in healthy hygiene practices. These include hand sanitizing and hand washing, which will be required upon entering the building. Such practices will be required at regular intervals throughout the school day.

A care package will be given to each family previous to the return to in-person instruction. This care package will include masks, guidelines and the NYFACS Parents' Health Pledge.

Touchless hand sanitizer stations will be placed near the entrance of each classroom as well as at regular intervals in corridors .

Paper towels will be available in regularly-replenished dispensers in bathrooms to allow hygienic operation of sinks, urinals and toilets not configured as touchless.

- **Extra-Curricular**

NYFACS is exploring possibilities to offer in-person extracurricular activities in the building or in partnership with external providers. These activities will be conducted in accordance with the CDC

guidelines. We are also considering plans for virtual extra-curricular activities. For example, a Debate Club for Middle School led by two trained students (one a former NYFACS student) at Bronx Science High School of Science is proposed and will be conducted remotely via Zoom. NYFACS will continue our relationship with StreetSquash to service our Middle School students. Kids in the Game will provide Physical Education Services beyond the regular day.

- **Before and After Care**

At this time, we are not planning before and after care services.

- **Students with exceptional needs**

The process of identifying and requesting support for students in need of specialized care will be the same as it was pre-COVID-19. Our specialized team will meet remotely to review the progress and needs of students.

All Personalized Plans and IEP for students with specific learning disorders will be examined during remote meetings in order to identify required accommodations and the adaptation of COVID-19 prevention measures.

- **Transportation**

Transportation will be provided to eligible students. We will rigorously follow and enforce guidelines set by the NYCDOE, once we are given access to them.

- **Food Services**

NYFACS utilizes DOE's School Food Services. Meals will be already pre-packaged in "Grab-and-Go" pouches for facilitated and hygienic distribution to students.

The NYFACS cafeteria will not operate to avoid overcrowding.

Meals, whether breakfast or lunch, will be available to students directly in their classes.

Breakfast packets will be placed by staff wearing gloves on student tables prior to arrival.

Lunch will be delivered to each classroom in a box. The teacher or school aide will distribute each lunch packet to each student using protective equipment.

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

School activities and rituals such as spirit weeks, cultural celebrations and other social events will be conducted virtually or in-person based on the health and safety conditions.

We are planning to hire a social worker or partner with a human service organization to provide socioemotional support and counseling to students in need.

We will integrate morning Assemblies and advisories to our schedule and provide opportunities for students to express themselves.

- **Communication**

Parents and families will be regularly consulted through surveys and (virtual) meetings during which we will inform them about school activities, collect their input and empower them to become more involved and engaged in the school process.

ATS and PowerSchool databases with contact information for parents are being updated and double-checked for complete accuracy, especially with respect to cell phone numbers and email addresses.

A web page on the school website is dedicated to COVID-19 related-questions as well as COVID-19 related school communications and forms.

Our Communications Plan will prioritize multi-level communication with parents based on the level of urgency. We have purchased One Call System that provides a multilingual voice call, email and text.

Each NYFACS student now has a dedicated NYFACS domain email that s/he will be required to use for all school-related purposes, including accessing Google Classroom.

## **SECTION A.2 Monitoring**

- **Screening**

Prior to returning to school, families will receive a care package from NYFACS accompanied by the NYFACS Parents Health Pledge, which they will be required to sign.

The care package will accompany the NYFACS Parents Health Pledge with instructions on how to identify COVID-19 symptoms as well as a list of NYC resources, including a list of NYC facilities where COVID-19 tests are administered at no cost. Parents will be encouraged to have their families tested previous to a return to in-person instruction.

Parents will pledge that they and their family have followed all NYC recommendations, including self-quarantines, upon return to NYC from foreign countries or states other than New York State.

Parents will pledge that their children will practice social-distance and always wear their cloth masks on the way to school if taking public transportation, a school bus, or walking the streets.

Parents will pledge to take their child's temperature every morning BEFORE sending their child to school, and to retain their child at home should their temperature and other symptoms match those of COVID-19.

Parents will have to certify the above on a daily basis, before their child's departure for school, using an App available on smartphones.

Students and staff will complete a Health Screening **before** entering the building, as follows:

- First click on: [NYFACS Daily Health Screening](#)
- Scroll down & select 'Guest Screening'
- Select 'I'm a Visitor or a Family Member'
- Enter name & email
- 'School or Facility You're Entering' -- Click Other and type in NYFACS
- Enter all the floors you'll be on for the day
- Complete screening

No student will be admitted into the building whose parents have not completed the online daily health check-up certification using the [NYFACS Google Daily Health Screening](#).

Upon arrival at NYFACS, a PPE-protected member of the NYFACS staff will take the temperature of each student. No student will be admitted to the building if presenting potential COVID-19 symptoms.

All NYFACS staff will be subject to the same preventive measures described above previous to reporting to work at the NYFACS or PAL buildings for in-person instruction, including any necessary self-quarantine. NYFACS staff will be encouraged to take a COVID-19 test prior to returning to the building.

All staff will need to self-certify their health using the health [Staff Daily Health Screening](#) link described above, on a daily basis. No staff who have not self-certified will be admitted to the building.

The temperature of all staff or essential visitors will be taken previous to entry into the NYFACS main building or PAL building. No-one with a temperature higher than 100 degrees or otherwise displaying potential COVID-19 symptoms will be admitted into the school buildings.

- **Testing Protocols**

The NYFACS nurse and two NYFACS staff members will be available, trained and designated to be point persons in charge of the care of potential COVID-19-symptomatic students or staff members.

An Isolation Room will be designated as an area where students or staff with potential COVID-19 symptoms may be temporarily quarantined.

Should evidence indicate that a student or staff member has symptoms of COVID-19 while in school buildings, the nurse will be alerted and the person will be accompanied by a designated and trained staff member to the Isolation Room.

The parents of the affected child will be contacted to come pick up their child, and instructed to call their health care provider or local clinic.

Symptomatic students and staff will follow CDC “Stay Home When You Are Sick” guidance unless otherwise directed by a healthcare provider or the NYC Department of Health.

If the student or staff member is not diagnosed with COVID-19 by a healthcare provider, they may return to school provided:

They have not had a fever and have felt well without the use of fever-reducing medicine for at least 24 hours since the last symptoms were manifest.

If a student or staff tests positive to COVID-19 or has COVID-19 symptoms even though a test has not been administered, that person should stay at home.

In the case of a confirmed or suspected COVID-19 case, NYFACS should be immediately informed. The student or staff should quarantine for the CDC-recommended amount of time.

Under FERPA regulations, the confidentiality of student and staff records is guaranteed. There are however exceptions in the case of public health emergencies. In the case of a confirmed student COVID-19 case, NYFACS will:

- Protect the confidentiality of the affected student, while alerting families that a case was identified in their child’s class and that their child may have been exposed.
- Seek parent consent to release such information to public health authorities.

Should a clear public health emergency necessitate it, NYFACS will release such information to public health authorities.

- **Testing Responsibility**

The school nurse will be responsible for the referring and implementation of testing.

- **Early Warning Signs**

NYFACS will monitor attendance and absences as well as consult regularly with teachers during staff meetings to detect patterns that might indicate community-spread of COVID-19 within the sc school population

NYFACS will monitor NYCDOH and other official sources for published infection rates in the NYC Metropolitan Area.

**SECTION A.3 Containment – includes protocols and procedures for how to respond to positive or presumed positive COVID-19 cases.**

- **School Health Offices**

NYFACS has a dedicated nurse appointed by the NYC Department of Health and Mental Hygiene. Should a student or staff member exhibit symptoms of COVID-19, she will be contacted as will be the NYC Department of Health and Mental Hygiene if further guidance is needed.

The student will be accompanied by the nurse or a designated trained staff member presenting full PPE to the Isolation Room until a family member arrives.

- **Isolation**

An Isolation Room will be prepared for the purposes of temporarily quarantining students with potential COVID-19 symptoms.

The school nurse and two trained NYFACS staff (one for backup in case of absences) with full PPE protection will accompany the student to the Isolation Room and remain with her/him, socially-distanced of course, until a parent/guardian arrives to take the child home.

The Isolation Room might be used for isolating more than one student, but only if social distancing permits it and provided students are given additional protective gear.

- **Collection**

The COVID-19 Response Coordinator will be charged with reaching out to the parent/guardian of the student in temporary quarantine. NYFACS will inform the parent/guardian that their child must be examined by a health care provider or clinic to verify their symptoms and if recommended by a doctor take a COVID-19 test.

The parent/guardian will be asked to call the COVID-19 Response Coordinator so that the child may be accompanied by the appointed staff member with PPE outside of the building to be entrusted to the parent/guardian while avoiding contact with any other student or staff member.

- **Infected Individual**

Symptomatic students and staff will follow CDC “Stay Home When You Are Sick” guidance unless otherwise directed by a healthcare provider or the NYC Department of Health.

If a student or staff is diagnosed with COVID-19 by a health provider based on a test, or their symptoms, they should stay at home until it has been at least ten days since the person first had symptoms and, it has been at least 24 hours since the person has had a fever (without the use of fever reducing medicine) and, it has been at least 24 hours since the individual’s symptoms improved, including cough or shortness of breath.

If a person tested positive for COVID-19 but has no symptoms and continues to have none for 10 days after the test, they can return to school.

- **Exposed Individuals**

Anyone who has had close contact with someone with COVID-19 should stay home for 14 days after the most recent exposure, unless they are fully vaccinated and tested negative to Covid-19.

Should a verified COVID-19 case emerge within the student body or staff, NYFACS will evaluate whether close contact may have occurred and may, in consultation with the NYC Department of Health and Mental Hygiene, determine what the next steps are.

- **Hygiene, Cleaning and Disinfection**

In addition to the regularly scheduled intensive measured of cleaning and disinfection outlined above, in cases of verified or suspected illness, NYFACS will:

1. Close off areas used by a sick person and not use these areas until after cleaning and disinfection have occurred
2. Open outside doors and windows to increase air circulation in the area
3. Wait at least 24 hours before cleaning and disinfection. If waiting 24 hours is not feasible, we will wait as long as possible

- **Contact Tracing**

NYFACS will assist public health authorities monitor community transmission by:

1. Keeping accurate attendance records of students and staff members
2. Strictly separating classes of students, including during recess
3. Assigning a bathroom to a specific class and rigorously scheduling bathroom breaks
4. Maintaining a log of any visitors which includes date, time and where in the school they visited
5. Assisting local health departments in tracing all contacts of the individual at school in accordance with the protocol, training, and tools provided through the NYC Department of Health and Mental Hygiene's Test and Trace Program.

- **Communication**

We will inform our community of any confirmed or suspected COVID-19 cases while maintaining FERPA mandated confidentiality. We will use emails, DOJO, Phone calls and the One Call System (Robot call, Text and email) to contact parents

Public health authorities will be informed where mandated

## **SECTION A.4 Closure**

- **Closure triggers**

NYFACS will monitor absenteeism and illness to look for early warning signs

NYFACS will consult with the NYC Department of Health and Mental Hygiene to determine triggers

for shutting down a class, a building, or the entire school.

- **Operational Activity**

Should widespread virus transmission emerge within the school community, or whether alternatively or in conjunction in the wider NYC community, NYFACS may resort to altering its operations, possibly leading to partial or full closure of either of its buildings, and return to a fully remote mode of instruction.

- **Communication**

Communications in case of a closure will follow the same modalities established in our Communication Plan.

### **Additional Resources**

- [Prevent the Spread of Covid-19 This School Year](#)
- [What to Know About Kids and Masks](#)
- [What you should know about washing your hands](#)
- [Staying Home When you are Sick](#)
- [Cov-Ed 4 Kids Pre-K & Kindergarten](#)
- [All About Coronavirus: A Video for Kids and Their Families](#)
- [Stay Home When You Are Sick PDF](#)