



**Department of Health
& Mental Hygiene**

**Department of
Education**

April 9, 2021

Dear Families,

No matter what, health and safety always come first in our schools. The New York City Department of Health and Mental Hygiene (DOHMH) and the New York City Department of Education (DOE) have worked together throughout the COVID-19 pandemic to protect the health of our school communities. We are proud that this partnership has helped make New York City public school buildings some of the safest places in the city.

As the pandemic has evolved, we have updated our protocols to ensure a safe, supportive learning experience for every student. Yesterday, following guidance from the CDC and detailed review of the scientific literature, we announced changes to our COVID-19 school building closure policies to minimize disruptions to in-person learning while maintaining our steadfast commitment to health and safety.

This new policy is among the many practices we have put in place to protect our school communities, including encouraging vaccinations for all eligible New Yorkers. At least 65,000 school staff members have already been vaccinated, providing a critically important layer of protection. All New Yorkers age 16 and up are now eligible to receive the COVID-19 vaccination, and we urge you to learn more and make an appointment at nyc.gov/vaccinefinder.

Here is what you need to know about the new closure policy:

[When will a school close?](#)

Beginning Monday, April 12, 2021, a school will only close if there are **4 or more** confirmed COVID-19 cases from 4 different classrooms during a 7-day period, and the cases are traced to exposure inside the school as determined by the investigating team.

Many DOE buildings have more than one school within them. Any other schools in the same building will not close unless they have a separate set of 4 or more cases from 4 different classrooms traced to exposure inside the school, or there is close interaction between the schools as determined by the investigating team.

What if there are 2 or 3 cases in a school?

If 2 or 3 positive cases in different classrooms are identified within a school over a 7-day period, the affected classrooms will switch to remote learning for 10 days. The rest of the school will remain open for in-person learning.

Additionally, random testing for COVID-19 at the school will immediately be increased to include 40% of a school's in-person population during the following week. Please note that individuals who have been vaccinated will be included in testing as of now.

What if there is 1 case in a school?

When a school has a single confirmed case, the affected classroom will switch to remote learning for a period of 10 days, just as they do now. Only unvaccinated students or staff in the affected classroom(s) will need to quarantine.

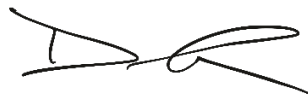
Continuing to close classrooms in response to a case of COVID-19, and increasing testing in the event of 2 or 3 cases, allows us to keep school communities safe, while avoiding closures of the whole school. We know how much continuity matters for students, staff, and families, and this approach allows for that while staying consistent with CDC guidance. It is also responsive to the many families and staff who have experienced multiple building closures this school year — and the ensuing disruption it can cause. Our goal is safety and stability for all our families.

As always, we are grateful to you and your children for your patience and persistence during this challenging school year.

Sincerely,



Meisha Porter
Chancellor
Department of Education



Dave A. Chokshi, MD, MSc
Commissioner
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