



**Brooklyn Charter School**  
**Back to School Reopening Plan: 2020 - 2021**  
Version I: July 31, 2020

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## Introduction

We are returning to a “new normal” in the fall of 2020.

Knowing that COVID-19 is not going anywhere anytime soon, that children everywhere missed out on instructional time, that remote learning will be a part of our instructional model for the near future, and most importantly, understanding that our children and families deserve the best that we can give them – Brooklyn Charter School (BCS) is charged to deliver a program this fall that upholds our BCS Cornerstones and Affirmations to ensure that the needs of all students are met. We must lay out a plan for reopening that reflects our values of equity & access, the desire for our children 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:

- That every student is safe and that the 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 strategy includes:

- An updated attendance & monitoring system for remote learning;
- A new school-Wide communication tool: Remind App;
- Live remote instruction on the Google Classroom platform for all grades;
- 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 in 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 (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 a 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 follow:

- Fully remote students/families will receive 3-4 calls per week for check-ins.
- Hybrid learning students will receive at least 1 call per week in addition to a non-teaching staff member check-in while a student is in school.
- Lack of participation/attendance will result in communication being increased.

### **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 NYC DOE floor plan configurations is 144 persons.

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

BCS will comply with all mandatory assurances in partnership with NYC DOE 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.)

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 & Advanced Cleaning Protocols**

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 6 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 supplies for good hygiene, including anti-bacterial 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 an installed touchless hand sanitizer machine.
- Within classrooms, we will be asking students and faculty to wipe down surfaces with frequency throughout the school day.
- Sneeze guards will be hung/installed in relevant locations.
- 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.

## **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.

- All BCS students will have the ability to select full remote learning for the 2020-21 school year.
- BCS anticipates launching the school year with 8-12 students in one classroom based on a schedule developed by the school, with at most 2 adults at a time, generally not to exceed 13-14 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.

- 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 (6 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.
  - Meetings with student families will be conducted via phone and video conference.
  - 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.

- 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**

We 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.
- All students and staff will have their temperature checked using non-contact thermometers upon entry into the building. Any student or staff member with a

temperature above 100.0 degrees will be restricted from accessing classrooms and sent home.

- BCS will have a health exclusion room for students 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 asked to stay home for a period of at least 10 days, and be tested for COVID-19 as soon as possible.
- If a student or staff member tests positive, BCS staff will implement a normed communication protocol that will:
  - Communicate cases to the Department of Health (DOH) and ensure that they can take appropriate contact tracing measures.
  - Inform relevant stakeholders, while taking measures to protect the privacy of students and staff members.
  - Close a specific cohort of students for 10 days.
- If another person in the same residence of the student or staff member is diagnosed with COVID-19, that student or staff member should not attend school in-person.
- If someone is contacted via contact tracing and told that they have been in contact with someone who has tested positive, and are told to quarantine, they should do so.

### **Testing Protocols**

BCS will consult with the NYCDOH assigned school nurse to determine which staff and students presenting symptoms should be referred for COVID-19 tests. 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.

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 communication 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 or until symptoms end per the guidance of NYCDOH.

Students or staff that have been exposed to COVID-19 will be required to stay out of school for 14 days. Schools will consult with NYCDOH or NYC Trace to determine who is an “exposed” individual and must stay out of school. BCS will cooperate with NYC’s Test and Trace Corp. program and any other mandates required by the NYCDOH.

BCS will work with the 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.

### **Use of Face Cloth 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 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.
- Staff will wear masks at all times.
- Gloves will be available for staff to wear when cleaning classrooms or touching shared items.
- Students will be required to wear face coverings at all times, and most notably in times when physical distancing is difficult.
- Students should be frequently reminded not to touch the face covering and to wash hands frequently.
- BCS will give all community members guidance around sanitation of face coverings and reuse.
- 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.

### **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.
  - 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.

### **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; staff will perform hands-free temperature checks of students, and all students will use hand sanitizer.
- Meals will be served in classrooms or with strong physical distancing in the cafeteria if available.
- Dismissal procedures will be modified to ensure physical distancing.
- 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.
- 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.
- BCS will continue to conduct required school safety drills with modifications ensuring that social distancing between students and staff is adhered to.

### **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.

### **Facilities**

#### **Re-Opening Overview**

BCS is bound by state and city decision-making with regards to how soon we can reopen our schools. As of July 31, 2020, New York State intends to open schools by region.

Specifically:

- The Governor will open schools if NYC is in Phase IV and the daily infection rate remains below 5% or lower using a 14-day average since unPAUSE was lifted.
- The State will decide if the region has met these criteria the week of August 1-7.
- Schools will close if the regional infection rate is greater than 9% using a 7-day average after the August 1st determination has been made.

### **Approach to Reopening**

When the state and city have determined it is safe to open schools, BCS will re-open to students in our co-located space with Public School 23 on the date deemed allowable (tentatively, September 10, 2020) by the NYCDOE. 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.

### **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. All meals will be served in classrooms for health reasons until further notice. Students will wash hands before and after any meals are served during the school day. Staff assigned to classrooms 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 Gr 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.
- **Tentative:** There is enough uncertainty around OPT's ability to provide transportation to any schools this fall that we will communicate to families in August. Family communication will occur expressing that General Education and Special Education bus service may not be available this fall and that they should begin considering other methods of transportation. We anticipate that if the DOE is able to provide bus service, they will prioritize Special Education services and we will share this understanding with families.
- **Tentative:** In prior years, between 40-50% of our students have relied on yellow bus service. For this reason, if the DOE is able to secure bus contracts, we intend to work with OPT to provide yellow bus service for both General Education and Special Education students and to adhere to DOE guidelines regarding social distancing practices on buses. BCS also hires bus matrons for each school bus to ensure the safety of our students. In the event that yellow bus service is available, BCS bus matrons will be trained and charged with the responsibility to assign seats to students on each bus, ensure that students are appropriately socially distancing, disinfect assigned seats prior to the first pick-up and once again after the last drop-off.
- **Tentative:** In the absence of yellow bus service being in place, we will work to provide support in the form of adult MetroCards for families who must travel to-and-from school via public transit in order to bring their children to school.

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 NYCDOH coupled with the additional support of bus matrons provided by BCS. BCS will also rely on NYC 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 NYCDOH.

### **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.

### **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**

Our approach with school start and end times works to accomplish the following goals:

- Be predictable for students and their families.
- Withstand changes in external context which may require us to move in and out of different in-person (hybrid) or remote scenarios.
- Take family feedback into account and accommodate needs of families who have multiple students as well as those that they are supporting for at-home learning.
- Prepare for and anticipate that we will have students on a fully-remote learning plan

In-Person Hours	Hybrid 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>            Breakfast: 8:00-8:25 AM*            Arrival: 8:15-8:25 AM*            Dismissal: TBA</p>	<p>When students have in-person days, their hours will be as noted in the in-person hours to the left.</p> <p>When students have remote days, and in a fully remote context, their hours will be as noted on the right.</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: 9:00 AM*            End: TBA</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**

A tentative school calendar will be provided in mid-August 2020 that includes holidays and breaks. There will be a total number of at least 180 instructional days for the school year.

### **School Schedules**

School administration has prepared school schedules that consider fully remote, hybrid, and fully in-person learning so that we are prepared to switch between the various models as internal and external circumstances may change around COVID19. Families who opt

to have their students stay home will use the remote learning schedule. Families who opt to have their students in school will use a hybrid (in school and remote) model or a fully in-person model. Families will be given the option to switch between each model at the beginning of each of our four quarters. A survey was sent to families to determine how many students have elected to continue full remote learning as well as how many students plan to participate in a hybrid model at BCS. Once BCS has at least 90% of surveys completed by families (anticipated by August 7th) a more detailed school schedule will be created and communicated to families.

### **BCS Tentative Hybrid Schedule**

<b>Grade</b>	<b>Monday</b>	<b>Tuesday</b>	<b>Wednesday</b>	<b>Thursday</b>	<b>Friday</b>
<b>Kindergarten</b>	In School	In School	In School	Remote	Remote
<b>First</b>	In School	In School	In School	Remote	Remote
<b>Second</b>	In School	In School	In School	Remote	Remote
<b>Third</b>	Remote	Remote	Remote	In School	In School
<b>Fourth</b>	Remote	Remote	Remote	In School	In School
<b>Fifth</b>	In School	In School	In School	Remote	Remote

### **BCS Tentative In-School Daily Schedule**

8:00 - 8:25	Arrival/Breakfast
8:30 - 9:00	Homeroom/Fundations/ Independent Reading
9:00 - 10:30	Humanities
10:30 - 12:00	Math
12:00 - 12:45	Lunch
12:45 - 1:30	Specials
1:30 - 2:15	Science
2:15 - 2:45	Dismissal

### **Tentative BCS Remote Learning Schedule**

9:00 - 9:15	Remote Morning Meeting/Attendance Check
9:15 - 10:30	Humanities
10:30 - 10:45	Break
10:45 - 12:00	Math
12:00 - 1:00	Lunch
1:00 - 1:15	Homeroom Check-In
1:15 - 2:00	Specials
2:00 - 2:45	Science

### **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.
- **Hybrid:** The purpose of an attendance system in the hybrid model will be to ensure both that students are present for live learning activities, and to ensure presence for in-person learning and the safety of those students who are in our care, inside of our walls.
- **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.

## **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.

We will transform our school by (1) investing in fixed assets; (2) creating the support infrastructure to enable flexible learning, and (3) expanding our instructional and cultural expectations for technology engagement.

### **Fixed Assets Investments**

- We've scaled up to 1:1 devices to support learning.
- All students in Kindergarten will receive Apple iPads with cases to take home. All students in grades 1-5 will receive Chromebooks.
- All students will receive headphones to support work at home.

In addition, BCS will leverage the following online platforms to support instruction:

<b>Platform</b>	<b>Expectations &amp; Guidelines for Use</b>
Google Classroom	BCS's hub for online learning for all subjects in grades K-5.
REMIND	BCS classroom information tool and BCS/COVID-19 related updates.
iReady	Interactive student engagement tools, including assessments that can be paired with remote live instruction. All BCS students have accounts.
SchoolReach	Parent communication tool that facilitates easy and equitable communication, including text messages to parents in multiple languages.
Kodable	Coding program for grades K-5.
Wit & Wisdom In-Sync	Standards-aligned, leveled texts for reading instruction.
Eureka Math In-Sync	Standards-aligned, leveled texts for mathematics instruction.



## **Teaching and Learning**

As we welcome students back to BCS this year, we know we're welcoming them back into a school and environment that looks very different from anything they have experienced in the past. A student could be in a physical classroom with a dozen of their classmates or a Google Meet classroom with twenty. Assignments that were once pencil-to-paper will now be largely completed and submitted using technology. And, the social interactions which once were so easy to come by will take a little more planning.

While it's bound to feel different this school year, it's our job to ensure that no matter how a student attends school at BCS, they all receive the same rigorous instruction and support necessary. What makes the difference is the intentional instructional design and effective use of instructional strategies. Given that, we've updated the BCS classroom experience for this school year to reflect any type of classroom.

As we approach the fall with hybrid instruction, the following can be expected in order to stay faithful to our school mission:

1. Our students should have access to technology that supports 21st century learning for the long-term.
2. We are aiming for a seamless integration between in-person and virtual live instruction. A student should be able to transition back and forth without skipping a beat.
3. We will leverage curricular support that facilitates engaging personalized learning and at-home practice.

<b>Virtual</b>	<b>Hybrid/ In-Person Learning</b>
<p>We recognize that remote learning will remain a feature of instruction at BCS for the immediate, foreseeable future.</p> <p>For families who prefer not to send their children to school and to implement distancing guidelines, we anticipate remote learning will be an integral part of our instructional design.</p>	<p>Most students will not be able to receive in-person daily instruction. Still, we recognize that remote instruction does not provide equitable access and may not be feasible for all students.</p> <p>Facing uncomfortable trade-offs, we prioritized in-person instruction for students in the following order:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Grades K-2</li><li>• IEPs that require services more than 60% of the time</li><li>• ELL students</li><li>• Transition grades: 5</li></ul>

We are building a grading policy and assessment approach that will be flexible for implementation whether we are engaging in in-person, hybrid, and virtual learning.

## **Curriculum & Instruction**

In order to support a Hybrid model of teaching, and a potential fully remote learning model, BCS will add In Sync, from Great Minds, Inc., which includes a digital platform for both teachers and students. BCS will also begin using Affirm for math, which has more informal diagnostic tools so that we can monitor student progress more often. Having additional data will allow teachers to understand where their students may need remediation which in turn, will allow them to adjust their lesson plans, and give parents necessary tools to be able to support them at home. Additional data will also show where students can be accelerated when they are performing at or above grade level. Students will demonstrate mastery by showing their performance on pop quizzes, informal, and formal assessments. BCS will also continue using I-Ready for both Reading and Math where students will take diagnostic assessments three times per school year. Based on the results of the diagnostics, teachers will continue to assign students work based on the skills they need support and advancement with.

## **Special Education**

BCS is required to provide a Free Appropriate Public Education consistent with the need to protect the health and safety of students with disabilities and those providing special education services; meaningful parent engagement regarding the provision of services to their child; collaboration between the Committee of Special Education (CSE) and program providers representing the variety settings where students are served and access to the necessary resources to meet the unique needs of students during COVID-19. BCS is providing preferential access to high-needs students with disabilities for in-person instruction and will develop contingency plans to address remote learning needs in the event of intermittent or extended school closures due to COVID-19.

## **Bilingual Education**

Our English Language Learners (ELL's) have experienced learning loss in both their English language development and their mastery of content area knowledge. In order to address these potential challenges in the coming year. BCS will do the following:

- Provide preferential access for ELL students for in-person instruction;
- Provide all communications to parents/guardians of ELLs in their preferred language and mode of communication to ensure that they have equitable access to critical information about their child's education;
- Ensure that all ELLs receive appropriate instruction that supports their most recently measured English language proficiency level;
- Conduct ELL identification for all students who are enrolled during COVID-related school closures in 2019-20 during the summer of 2020 and during the first 20 days of the school year within 30 days of the start of the school year; and
- Recognizing that all teachers are teachers of ELLs, providing learning opportunities related to the instruction and support of ELLs to all educators, as required by Part 154 of the Commissioner's regulations.

## **Staffing and Support**

As we launch the 2020-2021 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.

Below you will find more information and actions available for:

### **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.

### **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 prioritized in order of the following:

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

*\*Medical Documentation Required*

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 3, 2020 - August 21, 2020
  - Window 2: August 24 - 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 in conversation and in writing to [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.
- NY State has issued guidance providing for up to 14 days of paid, job-protected sick leave for any employee asked to quarantine or recover as a result of coronavirus/COVID-19.
- The Families First Coronavirus Response Act (FFCRA) has issued expanded protections and benefits for employees adversely impacted by COVID-19 from April 1, 2020-December 31, 2020. Extended Medical/Family Leave does not impact one's overall sick or personal days.

- 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 all three of the following criteria are met:
    - At least three days (72 hours) have passed since recovery (resolution of fever without the use of fever-reducing medications);
    - The individual has improvement in symptoms (e.g., cough, shortness of breath); and
    - At least 14 days have passed since symptoms first appeared.
  - In the case of an individual who has symptoms that could be COVID-19 and who is not evaluated by a medical professional or tested for COVID-19, such individual is assumed to have COVID-19, and the individual may not return to work until the individual has completed the same three-step set of criteria listed above.
  - 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 14 days after exposure and get tested. After 14 days, with no symptoms, individuals can safely return to work sites.

### **Teacher and Principal Evaluation System**

BCS will continue to utilize its Teacher and Administrator Evaluations tools which will be modified to include remote learning expectations for the school year. All teachers and school leaders receive a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) which outlines responsibilities, duties and expectations for the school year.

### **Certification, Incidental Teaching and Substitute Teaching**

For the 2020-21 school year, BCS will ensure that all teachers and school leaders hold a valid and appropriate certificate for their assignment; and can continue to utilize incidental teaching when determining how to staff classrooms; can employ substitute teachers to address staffing needs for the allowable amount of days given their

qualifications and teaching assignments. BCS will put the following in place prior to the start of the 2020-21 school year:

- Verify the certification status of all teachers and school leaders via the NYSED Teach On-line portal.
- Remain in compliance with the NYSED teacher certification mandate and have no more than 5 teachers or 30% of uncertified teachers, whichever is less, employed during the 2020-21 school year in order to remain in compliance.

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!