



P.S. 147 The Isaac Remsen School

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Dear Families,

Welcome to Public School 147 The Isaac Remsen School. It is great to be celebrating the start of a new school year in partnership with you.

I am sure that we can all agree that the start of this particular school year has been like no other and we are grateful that you have been patient with us throughout this process. Even with the unprecedented challenges we continue to encounter because of the COVID-19 pandemic, my staff and I assure you that we are committed to keeping all of our students and staff safe in the school building. Our goal is to provide all students with the opportunity to excel so that they may become positive, contributing members of our school and community.

As you know, students in fully remote programs began full-day instruction on Monday, September 21, 2020. Students in blended learning began learning remotely on September 21 and reported to school for in person learning according to the respective cohort schedule. For your reference, I have included answers to the most commonly asked questions and policies organized by topic.

Health and Safety

- The NYCDOE provided all schools with Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) and cleaning supplies. A 30-day supply will be on hand at all times. Principals can call a hotline for immediate resupply.
- Our school is staff with a full-time nurse, Ms. Lucy Kwiecien.
- Students and staff practice physical distancing and remain in pods for as much of the day as possible.
- Students and staff wear face coverings throughout the school day. If for any reason a staff member or student does not have the appropriate face covering, one will be provided.
- Hand sanitizer is available in every classroom and key areas throughout the building.
- All NYCDOE employees are encouraged to be tested monthly.
- The school building is disinfected daily overnight.
- High-touch zones are cleaned multiple times throughout each day.
- Electrostatic disinfectors will clean surfaces daily with zero physical contact.

COVID-19 School-Based Random Testing for Blended In-Person Students - Consent from Families

What happens to my child if I do not provide consent?

We strongly encourage families of all students participating in in-person learning to provide consent. The more students that participate, the better our ability will be to monitor COVID-19 transmission in our school communities. This testing is essential to keeping your child and your child's school community safe and healthy, and ensuring the school building can stay open and in-person learning can continue.

You and your child always have the right to refuse testing. Families who do not provide consent may be required to participate in remote-only learning.

How long is my consent in effect?

Your consent will remain in effect until September 30, 2021. However, you can withdraw consent at any time.

How do I withdraw consent?

You may email the School Secretary, Ms. Falero at jfalero@schools.nyc.gov

Testing Process**Will all students be tested?**

All district school students participating in blended learning in grades 1-12 may be included in the random sample.

Who will be testing my child?

A trained individual will conduct the test. Testing will be provided by, among others, school nurses, city staff, and our partners: SOMOS, Bio Reference Laboratory, and Fulgent Genetics. A school staff member will be assigned to accompany your child to the designated area. The staff member will remain with your child for the entire duration of the testing. The staff member will escort your child to his/her respective classroom.

How will the testing work?

Once a month, one of these providers will visit your child's school with a randomly selected list of students and staff to be tested that day. The testing provider will set up in a designated area in the school. Staff from the school or the testing team will visit the appropriate classroom to retrieve students from that class who have been selected to be tested that day; those students will be escorted to the testing area, tested quickly, and then escorted back to their classroom.

What test will be used? Is it painful?

The test will use a "short swab" (similar to a Q-tip) that is inserted into the front part of the nose for five to ten seconds. We understand that some students may be nervous about testing, but the test is not painful and should not be uncomfortable for your child. The test should take no more than two minutes from start to finish.

Will all tests be done by a trained tester, or can some students self-administer tests?

Some of the test kits can be self-administered. Self-administered means that you can open the kit and follow the directions for inserting a small swab (like a Q-tip) into the front of both nostrils. In schools with these kits, some older students in may be able to self-administer their test if they choose, under the supervision of a testing provider or school staff member.

Are students escorted to the testing area in a group or one-by-one? Will more than one student be waiting in an area to be tested?

Students will be escorted with any members of their class/pod who are also being tested. Social distancing will be maintained at all times. Face coverings will be worn at all times, except for the very short period when a student must remove their covering to allow for collection of the test specimen.

Can parents accompany their children to be tested?

Unfortunately, no. To maintain the classroom pods and reduce the risk of COVID-19 being introduced into the building, parents will not be able to accompany their children during the test. We understand that this may feel scary, particularly for younger children. Our trained staff will ensure the testing is performed swiftly, gently, and in a positive environment for all children.

How long is the testing process expected to take?

The cotton swab is in the nose for five to ten seconds, so the entire process of explaining the test to the child and then swabbing them generally takes only minutes.

How long will my child be out of class?

The testing will not take long. We do not expect any child to be out of class for more than 15-30 minutes total from the time that they are picked up at their classroom until they are escorted back to class.

My child is not comfortable communicating in English. Will interpreters be available to explain the process to students who are multilingual learners? If so, how will this be arranged?

Yes, please let us know in advance so that we can provide an interpreter in your child's preferred language.

What if my child cannot be tested due to their documented disability?

If your child has a documented disability and testing would impair your child's mental or physical health due to that disability, please contact our school to discuss how to proceed.

If I get my child tested elsewhere, can I share those results and be released from in-school mandatory testing?

No. To have an accurate understanding of each school population, testing for this program must be performed on a single day, in the school building, and by one provider. If your child is tested at an outside location and they test positive you must keep your child home and report that test to our school. However, no outside test can be counted in the monthly survey.

How often will my child be tested?

Testing will occur at each school once per month. Your child will not be tested more than once per month unless they are displaying symptoms of COVID-19 or have close contact with someone who is confirmed positive for COVID-19. Some children may be chosen for monthly testing more than once during the school year.

When/how will I know if my child has been chosen for testing?

You will be notified by our school about two days before our school is scheduled to be tested. By consenting, your child may be included in the random sample for the testing day. If your child is tested, you will be notified after school that day.

How can I help prepare my child for the test (especially for younger children)?

You should talk to your child about testing. We encourage you to tell them that the doctors, nurses, and other health professionals at school need to make sure they are healthy, so they are going to do a test for the virus by rubbing a small cotton swab inside the front part of their nose. Remind your child that it's okay that the school performs this test and that it is quick, safe, and gentle.

Are staff being tested?

Yes, we are asking all staff and students in school buildings to participate in the testing program.

Test Results

When will results be available?

Results will be available within 48-72 hours after the sample is taken.

When will I receive my child's results?

In most instances, parents/guardians will receive results no more than 48 hours after the specimen arrives at the laboratory. You will be able to log into an online portal to access your child's results. If your child tests positive, you will also receive a call from the provider who completed the testing.

What happens if my child tests positive?

You should keep your child home from school and contact their physician. Additionally, the Test & Trace Corps will contact your family to provide resources, connections to care if you require support, and to discuss how to keep your child and other household members safe. Our school will also be notified to ensure steps are taken to protect other members of the school community. The Test & Trace Corps will provide your family with resources and will monitor your family for symptoms for 10 to 14 days.

Will overall results from testing across a school be shared with the school community?

Yes, but names or any other identifying information of the children or staff who test positive will not be released.

Will the DOE/City ensure that my child's personal information remains confidential?

Any information related to in-school testing is confidential and protected under the New York City Health Code and other local, state, and federal laws. We will store information securely, and only DOE and city staff will have access to test results by name and other personal information.

Where and how will test results be stored?

Results will be sent to two places: the State and City Departments of Health, where all communicable disease results are sent; and to the Test & Trace Corps and associated City staff to facilitate closing of classrooms or school buildings and to support contact tracing as necessary to ensure we protect all students, staff, and family members. These entities operate under strict privacy and confidentiality protocols.

Mobile Testing Vans

As part of the NYC contact tracing initiative, mobile testing vans will be dispersed through the 'hot zones' where there is an increase of COVID-19 infections. These mobile testing vans are completely separate from the NYCDOE Random Testing Program. Staff is welcome to be tested at these vans independent of work time as are students while not at school. Families are required to accompany their children to the mobile testing van for testing should this be a desired option.

NYCDOE Guidance Regarding Use of Face Coverings for Students Participating in Blended Learning

Anyone over the age of two entering a NYCDOE building must wear a face covering. Developmentally appropriate efforts will be made to increase face-covering adherence and tolerance for all students as needed.

A face covering is any well-secured cloth covering or disposable mask that covers a person's nose and mouth and is worn to reduce the risk of transmission of the virus that causes COVID-19. Clear face shields can be worn with an accompanying facemask, but must be approved by administration. The following types of face coverings are **not permitted** on NYCDOE property: Bandanas and neck gaiters, face covering with an exhalation valve or vent, face covering that completely cover or hide an individual's face, such as ski masks.

All students are expected to comply with face covering requirements in accordance with this guidance.

The NYCDOE may determine, through the exemption process described below, that a student cannot medically tolerate a face covering. School staff may also determine that a student can only minimally tolerate a face covering due to a documented social-emotional or developmental impairment. No student shall be excluded from school or bussing for these reasons; note additional precautions below when students are not wearing face coverings. A parent must seek an exemption from the face-covering requirement where a specific medical condition prevents the student from wearing or tolerating a face covering at all; the process for seeking and reviewing such medical exemptions is described below.

If a student can medically tolerate a face covering but needs additional support towards compliance, the school should provide additional adherence support and additional breaks, explore the use of alternative personal protective equipment (PPE), and ensure other risk mitigation strategies such as handwashing and physical distancing are adhered to while the child progresses towards compliance. Students shall not be required to participate in remote-only instruction as they progress towards compliance.

Parent or student disagreement with the face-covering requirement is not an acceptable basis for relaxation of the face-covering requirement. Students who do not comply with the face-covering requirement for reasons not based on a documented medical, social-emotional, or developmental impairment, and notwithstanding the school's provision of a face covering and support towards compliance, will be required to participate in remote-only instruction as described below.

Students must be allowed to remove their face coverings when eating or drinking. For safety reasons, 3-K and Pre-K students should never wear face coverings during nap/rest time.

Schools may allow students to remove their face coverings for a brief period of time. These “mask breaks” can be offered throughout the day, at a school’s discretion. The frequency of mask breaks may vary by grade level within a school.

- Mask breaks should not last for more than five minutes.
- Mask breaks can only occur when:
 - Students are outdoors or well-ventilated areas.
 - Students can remain at least six feet apart.

Masks on the School Bus

All students are required to wear face coverings on the bus, except if approved for a medical exemption. If a student does not have a face covering, the bus driver will distribute one. Students with a medical exemption will not be required to wear a face covering on the bus, but must maintain at least six feet of physical distance from the driver or other passengers on the bus. Students without a medical exemption but who need support because they struggle with wearing a face covering due to a documented medical, social-emotional, or developmental impairment:

- Will be reminded to wear the face covering,
- Will be permitted to have mask breaks, as defined above,
- Must remain physically distant from the other passengers.

The attendant must remind students to wear the face covering if they remove it. Face covering breaks may be allowed for brief periods as necessary.

Medical Exemptions

The following sets forth the procedures for parents seeking a face covering exemption for their child for medical reasons only:

- Parent must submit documentation from a doctor or other health care provider specifically documenting the medical condition and why the student’s condition makes the student unable to wear or tolerate a face covering.
- The school administration will forward the request to the school’s Health Director who will review the request and supporting documentation and may approve the exemption based on such documentation.
- The school must advise the parent of the outcome of the review.

Students with face covering exemptions must continue to adhere to other health and safety requirements, including hand hygiene and physical distancing requirements. Staff working with students with a face covering exemption will be provided with additional PPE.

Guidance for Supporting Students Who May Struggle with Wearing a Face Covering

Supports for Students with Disabilities

For a student with a significant disability that limits their tolerance for wearing a face covering, schools should provide support as described below. This support should be provided based on the school’s experience with the child, knowledge of the child’s needs (for example, if the child’s disability as documented on the child’s Individualized Education Program (IEP) is the cause for the child’s inability to tolerate a face covering), and considering any additional documentation or information shared by the parent:

- Inform the parent that the expectation is for students to wear face coverings throughout the school day as much as possible, and that their child will receive training/instruction on increasing face covering-wearing tolerance and will be provided with mask breaks.

- Provide a face covering upon entry to the bus or school and instruct the student on how to wear it. If the student removes the face covering, the student should be reminded to wear the face covering. If the student is unable to keep the face covering on after three (3) attempts, the student should be given a mask break, which may take place indoors, in a well-ventilated area, while ensuring that other students maintain at least six feet of distance. The mask break can last longer than five minutes at the discretion of the teacher/provider, as appropriate for the student's needs.

Supports for Children in Early Childhood Programs (3-K and Pre-K)

As with any behavior changes in early childhood, children and families should be supported in a positive and developmentally appropriate way to change their behavior regarding face-coverings in their program environment. Teachers in 3-K and Pre-K classes can incorporate a wide variety of strategies to introduce children and families to this expectation, which may be accomplished over time. This situation should be approached with empathy toward the family and child taking into consideration their cultural and linguistic needs. Reassure families and children that this is being done to ensure that everyone is safe and healthy. The Division of Early Childhood (DECE) will support teaching teams and families in introducing and reinforcing this expectation. It is important that this expectation not lead to conflict between or among children and teaching staff. Children who refuse to wear a face covering, are crying, or are dysregulated may be experiencing mental distress. In these cases, teaching staff and families should use positive, nurturing strategies to prevent conflicts over face covering, and encourage the child to consistently use a face covering over time.

Children in early childhood programs should not be isolated, suspended or expelled for not wearing a face covering. For children who need additional support acclimating to the face covering requirement, schools must create and implement a positive behavior intervention plan that supports a child towards consistently wearing a face covering. The positive behavior intervention plan should include the following:

- A detailed behavior plan whose duration is at least one month in length that includes some milestones for successful integration of the face covering for the child,
- The different positive behavior approaches and strategies that will be taken with the child,
- A communication and support plan with the family,

Children who do not respond to a DECE-approved positive behavior intervention plan will be transitioned to remote learning.

NYCDOE Loaned iPads

To request a Remote Learning Device access the application: <https://coronavirus.schools.nyc/RemoteLearningDevices>

Getting Started with your iPad, including tech support and information:

<https://www.schools.nyc.gov/learning/learn-at-home/technical-tools-and-support/getting-started-with-your-ipad>

Google Classroom

Getting Started with Google Classroom:

<https://www.schools.nyc.gov/learning/learn-at-home/technical-tools-and-support/getting-started-in-google-classroom>

A Guide to Google Classroom for Families & Additional Remote Learning Links

<https://cdn-blob-prd.azureedge.net/prd-pws/docs/default-source/default-document-library/translated-guide-to-google-classroom.pdf>

Info Hub including Family Website

<https://infohub.nyced.org/>

The Following Policies, Schedules and related information can be found at the home page of the PS147 website at www.ps147.org

Schedules

Group A and B Students Blended Learning
Cohort Schedule for Blended Learners (Monthly Calendar)
Prekindergarten Remote Only Students
Kindergarten – Grade 5 Remote Only Students

Policies

Visitors Policy
Attendance Policy

Helpful Links for COVID-19

<https://www.schools.nyc.gov/learning/learn-at-home/activities-and-supports/special-education-supports/helpful-links-for-covid-19>

Instruction

Modes of teaching and learning: Whether your child is participating in blended learning or learning 100% remotely, they will receive instruction through both live interaction with their teachers on video and assignments, projects, and work to be completed independently throughout the course of the school day and week.

Live video instruction: Different amounts of live video instruction are appropriate for different age groups. Live video instruction should be delivered in short intervals (15-20 consecutive minutes) throughout the day for young learners, and can increase based on developmental appropriateness and grade-level.

Posting schedules: Schedules for all students – those fully remote as well as those participating in blended learning – will be posted with enough time for parents to plan their work and family commitments accordingly. Schools should provide all students with sufficient time for high-quality interactions with teachers and peers, and overall class schedule and times designated for live video instruction will be posted so students and families can adjust their schedules if needed.

One-on-One Teacher Support: teachers will have 20 minutes of office hours every day (8:30am – 8:50am) to engage students and families via video conference or telephone. Teachers will offer support and guidance and provide updates related to student progress and learning.

Lunch in the Classroom: In-person student lunch will be modeled off our Breakfast in the Classroom program. This will allow students to eat lunch during one of their regularly scheduled instructional periods, while receiving instruction related to the class scheduled for that time. All health and safety guidelines for in-person learning are maintained during this time.

- In elementary schools, students will engage in an instructional activity that is fun, engaging and enriching, such as interactive read-alouds, social-emotional learning, content through music, etc.

Community Building: All students will start and close their day with a routine that builds community, centers the day, and sets them up for success. This will provide all students with the same type of community- and relationship-building that is an integral part of a typical school experience. This may consist of a daily morning meeting where the teacher engages students in activities related to social-emotional wellness and community-building, and a daily closing activity where the teacher recaps the learning for the day, and gets students prepared for the following day.

Social-emotional support: Social-emotional activities should be integrated into academic subjects to the greatest extent possible throughout the day

Teachers: Students engaging in remote learning, will, for the most part, be taught by teachers from their school. While there may be some limited exceptions on a school-by-school basis, parents can expect their children to be assigned teachers from their school when they receive their full schedule before the school year begins.

Parent Coordinator: The Parent Coordinator is part of the administrative team working under the supervision of the principal. The Parent Coordinator will engage with and involve parents in the school community by working with the principal, school staff, school leadership team, parent associations, community groups and parent advisory councils. This position focuses on creating a welcoming environment for parents. The Parent Coordinator will identify parent and related school/community issues and work with the principal to see they are addressed in a timely manner.

Grading: Students engaged in remote learning must meet the same academic policies as students engaged in blended learning. Student grades must be based on student demonstration of the learning standards and competencies addressed in the remote or blended course. As with all courses, the NYCDOE subject-certified teacher overseeing the course is responsible for designing or selecting assessments to gauge student progress. These may include projects, exams administered within or outside the online platform, portfolios, and other measures of student mastery.

Communication: Our school communicates with our families in various ways. We encourage families to monitor the home page of our school's website for updated information. Our school website is www.ps147.org. For students participating in blended learning, information is backpacked home in your child's green folder. Please be sure to check the green folder daily. Information is also posted on our school's social media pages on Instagram at ps147k and Twitter at @PS147K. The school phone messenger system is also used for important announcements. Finally, our school also uses *Classroom Dojo* as another form of communication with parents and the school community.

It is my hope that you find this information useful. We want to assure you that with your help and cooperation, our teachers and staff will do their finest to make this new school year meaningful and fulfilling for your child.

Yours truly,

Sandra Noyola

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Principal

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