



CLASSICAL  
CHARTER SCHOOLS

# Re-Opening Handbook

2022-2023

March 2023 Update

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## Summary of Major Updates:

This version was revised in March 2023 to reflect the most up to date guidance from the Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), Department of Health and Mental Hygiene (DOHMH) and Department of Education (DOE.) **There were no changes. We continue to monitor the most up-to-date guidance from the CDC, DOHMH, and DOE**

### **Below is a list of previous changes:**

- We will no longer be completing weekly staff COVID testing (August 2022).
  - Classical has a significant amount of at-home tests available across all school sites. The accuracy of these tests was the same as with weekly staff testing. These are available to staff and staff are encouraged to request them anytime they wish to test themselves.
  - If a staff member tests positive with an at-home test, they will need to be tested again at an approved testing site to secure COVID sick leave (COVID Sick Policy, January 2022).
  - Classical will reallocate these funds to support scholars and staff.
- Following CDC, DOE, and DOHMH guidance, masking is optional at Classical, barring specific exceptions (March 2022)
  - This went into effect on March 7, 2022.
  - See the following sections for more details:
    - [Masks and Personal Protective Equipment](#)
    - [Visitors and Network Staff](#)
    - [FAQs](#)
- Following DOE guidance, Social Distancing is optional at Classical, barring specific exceptions (March 2022)
  - This went into effect on March 7, 2022
  - See the following sections for more details:
    - [Social Distancing](#)
    - [FAQs](#)
- Quarantine and Isolation periods have been shortened (January 2022)
  - [Isolation Guidelines](#)
  - [Quarantine Guidelines](#)
- Test to Stay policy replaces contact tracing policy (January 2022)
  - [Test to Stay Policy](#)

## Vision & Principles

As in 2020-2021 and 2021-2022, we are committed to Safety, Equity, and Excellence as our guiding principles for re-opening.

### *Safety*

Safety continues to be our priority in 2022-2023. Classical will follow the most up-to-date guidelines from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), and the Department of Health and Mental Hygiene (DOMH) regarding a safe school re-opening. We are *layering prevention strategies* this year to protect our scholars, families, and staff.

### *Equity*

Our commitment to providing all scholars and families with an equitable learning experience during this challenging time remains a critical component of our reopening plan. Below outlines some key components of this commitment:

- Social Skill Groups
- Crisis Counseling
- Family Meetings
- Return to Onsite Learning for All and of Busing

### *Excellence*

We will continue to only offer in-person learning this year because we believe it to be best for scholars and families. Our scholars deserve stable, supportive, and productive face-to-face relationships with their teachers and friends. Further, our families wish to return to work, which was challenging while we were fully or temporarily remote. Lastly, we honor our daily promise: to develop liberated scholars and citizens of impeccable character.

## Health and Safety Features

Our primary concern is having all scholars return to in-person learning safely. Following CDC guidance, we are focused on layering prevention strategies to keep our community safe. Our primary safety measures include screening and containment, personal protective equipment, cleaning and disinfection, ventilation, vaccination, testing, and monitoring community transmission. All features are subject to change based on the most up-to-date guidelines from local authorities and the CDC.

### Masks and Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)

- **As of March 7, 2022, universal mask wearing is no longer required at Classical for any staff, student, or visitor. Masks are optional indoors and outdoors, on school grounds, and on school buses for all K-12 students and staff.** The CDC now recommends that individuals decide whether to wear a mask based on individual health factors and risk level in your community. See their guidance below:
  - If community transmission is low, wear a mask based on your personal preference, informed by your personal level of risk.
  - If community transmission is medium, wear a mask if you are immunocompromised or at high risk for severe illness or live with someone who is at high risk for illness. Talk to your healthcare provider about additional precautions, such as wearing masks or respirators indoors in public.
  - If community transmission is high, wear a well-fitting mask indoors in public, regardless of vaccination status or individual risk (including in K-12 schools and other community settings), if you are immunocompromised or at high risk for severe illness
  - You can find CDC transmission levels on their [website](#) by entering the state (New York) and county (Bronx).
- Find additional guidance regarding this change in masking and its implications below at the [Masking FAQs](#) section.
- **Masks are still required for any person who is returning to school from isolation on days 6 – 10. See more details regarding [isolation](#) below.**
- Masks are still required for any person who has had COVID-19 symptoms without testing and is required through Day 10 of symptoms.
- Wearing a face covering is still required in medical rooms/nurses' offices, as well as in School Based Health Centers. Nurses will have masks on hand for anyone entering who needs one.
- Masks will still be available to all students, staff, and visitors who would like them.

### Social Distancing

**There are no requirements for social distancing in public spaces, including classrooms, cafeterias, and auditoriums, unless the person is returning from isolation.** As per NYS guidance, those that are required to still wear face coverings due to returning from isolation should distance when they have to remove their mask for eating.

### Screening and Containment

- The [DOE Daily Health Screener](#) is required for all staff, students, and visitors at DOE Buildings (SBC I, SBC II).
- For all buildings, staff, scholars, and any visitors cannot enter the building if any of the following are true:
  - They test positive for COVID-19 (either first instance or after 90 days from first instance.)
  - They are a confirmed close contact of a COVID-19 positive individual and have not tested negative for COVID-19 as part of the "Test to Stay" initiative.

- They are experiencing new symptoms of COVID-19 (loss of taste and smell, fever over 100°F, a new cough, shortness of breath) and have not tested negative for COVID-19.
- They have a fever over 100°F.
- All scholars have their temperatures checked daily. Those with temperatures above 100.0°F are not allowed to enter the school building. Thermometers will also be available in each classroom to be used by staff in case a scholar or staff member needs to have their temperature taken during the day.

## Cleaning and Disinfection

- Custodians disinfect classrooms daily in the evening.
- School Directors are in close contact with custodial services to outline and reaffirm adherence to all safety and cleaning protocol. School Directors will follow-up immediately in the event of inadequate cleaning with Operational staff supporting, as necessary.
- Cleaning supplies are available to all staff in a central location within each school-site.
- All teachers and staff should support scholars in the development of handwashing and respiratory etiquette by teaching and reinforcing the following:
  - Handwashing:
    - When should I wash my hands?
      - After arriving to school
      - After coughing or blowing my nose
      - Before making or eating food
      - After using the restroom
    - Tips for handwashing:
      - Soap and water is best – but hand sanitizer is better than not at all!
      - When washing, wet, soap, scrub for at least 20 seconds, rinse, and dry.
  - Respiratory Etiquette
    - Cover your nose and mouth with a tissue when sneezing. If you don't have a tissue, use the crook of your elbow.
    - Dispose of your tissue.
    - Wash your hands afterwards.

## Ventilation

- All spaces (co-located spaces and private buildings) have MERV-13 filters installed. For co-located buildings (SBC I and SBC II), these filters are in the air conditioners. At private buildings (SBC III and IV), these are found in the central circulation system. These filters insure proper ventilation.

## Vaccination

- Vaccination is the leading public health prevention strategy to end the COVID-19 pandemic. Promoting vaccination can help schools safely return to in-person learning as well as extracurricular activities and sports.
- Students are highly encouraged, though not required, to be vaccinated.
- We will provide an update on field trip vaccination requirements shortly.
- All staff are required to be fully vaccinated. Staff are considered vaccinated two weeks after their final vaccination dose (2<sup>nd</sup> for Moderna and Pfizer, 1<sup>st</sup> and only dose for Johnson & Johnson.)
- Classical Charter Schools highly encourages all community members including staff, scholars and family members to receive the booster shot when eligible. Individuals who are 18 years and older and received their Pfizer-BioNTech or Moderna initial vaccine series at least six months ago or the Janssen/Johnson & Johnson

COVID-19 vaccine at least two months ago are eligible for their booster dose. Booster doses are not currently required or staff, but could be in the future depending on guidance from government officials.

### Monitoring Community Transmission

We will continue to monitor COVID-19 transmission rates in our school communities across the year and use that information to inform our layered prevention strategies. Community levels are monitored using the CDC's [Community Level by County Tool](#). We encourage all families to bookmark this page and use it as reference to inform their choices in COVID-19 prevention strategies.

## Isolation Guidelines

### *Isolation Period*

Any staff or scholar who receives a positive COVID-19 test, regardless of vaccination status or presence of symptoms, will be required to isolate. Both scholars and staff will need to participate in remote learning during their isolation unless their symptoms make them unable to do so.

- If a scholar is too sick to attend remote learning, they will have an excused absence.
- A new option was added under time-off requests in our ADP software that includes a new code, Covid-19 Sick. If you are experiencing COVID-like symptoms and are unable to work or if you have been mandated to a 5-day quarantine and are not able to work remotely, you need to be tested within 48 hours of your request. You must submit proof of having taken the test results and you should submit the results of the test immediately upon receipt to HR. To be approved for any Covid-19 Sick time off, you must be tested at an approved testing location. At-home Covid-19 tests will not be accepted. You should remember to enter the new COVID time-off code (Covid-19 Sick) in the ADP system as soon as you make the request.
- If the test result is *negative*, you will be required to revert back to charging any time off taken to regular Personal Time Off. HR is available to assist you in changing your code back to the appropriate PTO code.
- If the test result is *positive*, and you are too ill to work remotely, you have a total of up to 10 days for each of three COVID-related events for which paid time off is available. Please note that it is a total of 10 workdays per COVID event and the time cannot run concurrently. Use of Covid-19 Sick usage is limited to one event every 90 days.
- If you have any specific questions regarding this new COVID policy, please contact the HR department immediately for assistance at [HR@southbronxclassical.org](mailto:HR@southbronxclassical.org).
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The isolation period for K-12 students with a positive COVID-19 test result has been shortened to five days from ten days, following DOE and CDC Guidelines.

### *Return from Isolation*

Scholars and staff can return from isolation on Day 6 if they have no symptoms or their symptoms are improving, and they have been fever-free for 24 hours without the use of fever-reducing medication. Anyone returning from isolation on Day 6 must wear a well-fitting mask such as a KN95 on Days 6–10.

N95 or KN95 masks are available at the main office for any student or staff member who is returning from isolation. Staff and scholars do not need to show a negative COVID-19 test to return. Testing is not recommended for 90 days after individuals receive a positive COVID-19 test for the same reason outlined above.

### *Documentation*

For students, the positive COVID-19 test should be sent to Operations. For staff, the positive COVID-19 test should be sent to their School Director and HR.



## Quarantine Guidelines (Test to Stay Policy)

Until January 2022, Classical used the CDC's close contact tracing model to determine scholars who had been exposed in school. Any close contacts identified were required to quarantine and learn remotely. As of January 2022, Classical has implemented the "Test to Stay" policy which replaces the previous methods of determining close contacts. This policy requires that we test all students and adults that are in the home room of the COVID-19 positive individual, as well as any students or adults outside of the homeroom who meet certain criteria. See specifics below:

### COVID-19 Exposure Within School

If a scholar or staff member is a close contact within our school community, they will receive an at-home rapid test kit. This will include all scholars in a class where a positive case is identified as well as any close contacts from other areas of the day. Anyone outside of the homeroom cohort who was within 6 feet of a positive case for 15 or more minutes is considered a close contact and should follow the test to stay policy. Close contacts will use the take-home tests to monitor for COVID. Close contacts can remain in school during this time as long as they do not test positive and remain symptom-free. Wearing a mask is optional, but highly recommended. Close contacts will take one test on the day of notification and one test on Day 5 after exposure

If an exposed individual starts experiencing COVID symptoms before Day Five, they should take the second test immediately. Anyone who tests positive from an at-home rapid test should immediately report it to the school and will follow the quarantine guidelines listed above.

### Exposure Outside of School

If a scholar or staff member is a close contact outside of the school community, they must follow the same "Test to Stay" policy by conducting two tests – one on day of exposure (or day of notification of exposure), and one 5 days later. At home testing kits will be provided by Classical if supplies allow. If kits are unavailable, the scholar or staff member with out-of-school exposure will need to provide evidence of testing from an external provider.

### Face Coverings Following Exposure

It is strongly recommended that face coverings be worn when an individual has been exposed or potentially exposed to COVID-19 (in the same room for 15 minutes or longer with a person who tested positive for COVID-19). This face covering should be well-fitting and should be worn for 10 days after the known exposure.

### Special Cases

#### *When Exposure Occurs at Home (Siblings, caretakers, etc.)*

Scholars who live in the same home as scholars who are COVID-19 positive can either follow the test to stay policy or stay home and learn remotely for the duration of the COVID-19 positive individual's isolation period.

- For example, if a 1<sup>st</sup> grader tests positive for COVID-19, their 6<sup>th</sup> grade sibling can either:
  - Come to school upon taking a negative COVID-19 test (if symptom free)
  - Stay home and learn remotely until the 1<sup>st</sup> grade sibling meets exit from isolation requirements.

#### *When the Exposed Person Recently Had COVID*

Any person who had a documented case of COVID-19 within the last 90 days is exempt from the test to stay requirement. Testing is not recommended for 90 days after a positive test result because tests may still yield a positive result despite the individual no longer being able to transmit COVID to others.

## Communication After Contact Tracing

- All close contacts will be contacted by their School Director after positive case is determined. This communication will include next steps and any important context. It will not include specifics, like the identity of the COVID-19 positive person.
- All staff will be notified of a positive case even if they are not deemed a close contact, as well as general information about closures.
- School Directors will send messages to affected families and staff simultaneously. Any co-located schools should also send messages simultaneously (ex. SBC 4, 2B).
- This message will specify how staff should contact School Directors with concerns and within what time frame they can expect a response.

## When to Get a Covid Test

Scholars & staff should get a test if:

- They have **new symptoms of COVID-19**.
- They have been exposed to a COVID-19 positive individual inside or outside of school.

K-12 scholars & staff **can, but are not required** to get a test if:

- They have symptoms that are not specific to COVID-19.

## Presents with COVID-19 Symptoms

### *Staff*

Any staff member that has new symptoms of COVID-19 must take the following actions:

- Regardless of vaccination status, COVID-19 symptomatic staff must get a rapid COVID-19 test and report their results to their School Director and HR.
  - If symptoms appear during work hours, the staff member should self-administer an at-home test (available in the main office).
  - If symptoms appear after work hours, the staff member can either submit an at home test, a test from a clinic, or they can come to work early (before stand-up) to procure a test and self-administer before the day begins.
- If the test is negative and the staff member does not have a fever, then the staff member can either use their PTO to take time off work if they are too ill to work or they can stay onsite for the day.
- If the test is positive, then the staff member must follow the [isolation requirements](#). The staff member is eligible to work remotely or to take COVID-19 sick leave.

### *Scholars*

If any scholar has new symptoms of COVID-19, they must take the actions listed below:

- Scholars must get a COVID-19 test as soon as possible and send the results to the school. Tests are available at Classical for that scholar.
- Scholars will be allowed to transition to remote until their test results come back but must submit proof of their test.
- If the test is negative, then the scholar can either take an absence from school due to illness or return to school in person. With a doctor's note, this absence would be marked as excused. Without a doctor's note, this absence would be marked as unexcused.
- If the test is positive, then the scholar member must follow the [isolation requirements](#) listed above. If a scholar is feeling unwell and unable to join school remotely, they can take a remote absence, which would be excused with a doctor's note.
- With parental consent, scholars who become symptomatic during the school day can be tested at school.

## Documentation

All staff test results should be sent to their School Director and HR.

All scholar test results should be sent to Operations. Scholars must provide documentation so that they can transition to remote learning. Without documentation, scholars will not be able to learn remotely.

Should a student or staff member feel ill during the day or test positive for COVID-19, the protocols and procedures remain the same. Schools will continue to report positive cases to the Situation Room.

Event	Type of Documentation Required	Length of Remote Learning
Scholar Tests Positive for COVID-19	Positive COVID-19 Test	5 days from the date of the positive test.
Scholar's household member is COVID-19 Positive	Proof of Household Member's Positive COVID-19 Test	Can send a negative test and return to school if the scholar is asymptomatic. Otherwise, should learn remotely for the duration of the COVID-19 positive individual's 5- day isolation period.

## Transitions to Remote Learning

### Attendance

The following attendance policy will be used for scholars who must quarantine and learn remotely.

- Present for all classes: Present (P on Jupiter)
- Misses 1-3 classes: Late (T on Jupiter)
- Misses 4 or more classes: Absent (A on Jupiter)

Teachers should write “Remote Learning” in the comments and make note of the classes missed on the attendance log of Jupiter for record keeping purposes.

### Missed Assessments

All assessments, including Running Records, must be taken onsite. If a scholar misses an assessment due to needing to quarantine, they will need to make the test up upon their return to school.

### Logistics of Remote Transitions

Each school is handling any transitions to remote learning on a case-by-case basis this year. Depending on the situation, either livestreaming or remote teaching will be required.

### Zoom Licensed Accounts

All GTLs, School Directors, and Deans will retain licensed zoom accounts in the event that there is an unexpected transition to live-streaming or remote learning.

# Modifications to the School Day and Year

## School Events

### *Annual Events & Workshops*

Annual events and workshops, such as Back to School Night and Parent Academy, can either be remote or onsite. This will be determined by the total number of participants and current covid rates, and thus, may vary by school. This policy will be revisited for the second trimester.

### *Report Card Day*

For both trimesters, Report Card Day will remain remote. This policy will be revisited for 2022-2023.

### *Staff Only Events*

Staff Only events are back this year! We are excited to come together as a school community.

### *After-school Clubs and Activities*

After school clubs and other extracurriculars are an important part of a school community, and benefit scholars social, emotional, and mental health. These types of activities can resume this year at the discretion of the School Director and Deans with the following caveats:

- There are no requirements for social distancing in public spaces, including classrooms, cafeterias and auditoriums, unless the person is returning from isolation. As per NYS guidance, those that are required to still wear face coverings due to returning from isolation should distance when they have to remove their mask for eating. Clubs can be hosted remotely, if preferred. If so, there are no restrictions to capacity or social distancing.
- High-risk extracurricular activities will still require participants to be fully vaccinated. High-risk sports include football, volleyball, basketball, wrestling, lacrosse (boys), stunt, and rugby. High-risk extra-curricular activities include chorus, musical theater, dance/dance team, band/orchestra, marching band, and cheerleading/step teams/flag team.”

## Professional Development

All Staff Professional Development sessions can either be onsite or remote. A decision regarding each instance will be made in advance of that day and communicated to staff. This decision is based on community transmission at the time.

## Team Meetings

All team meetings should take place in person; however, team meetings can move remote at the discretion of the School Director if community transmission increases.

## Classroom Seating Charts

### *Homerooms*

Distance from a Covid positive person is no longer a key factor in whether scholars need to quarantine and transition to remote, therefore homerooms no longer need to keep detailed seating charts for COVID-19 contact tracing purposes.

### *Small Groups, Math Groups, Tutoring, Lunch, SST Groupings, Bus, etc.*

Anytime a student is not with their homeroom cohort, a seating chart must be kept and followed as in these instances, we will still contact trace based on distance from the COVID-19 individual. As a general rule of thumb, scholars should stay in their assigned seats so that we can ensure all close contacts are correctly identified.

## Monitoring Mask Compliance

Masks are now optional for scholars and staff. Scholars can choose when to or not to wear their masks. Teachers will not be expected to monitor for mask compliance unless the scholar is required to wear a mask due to returning from isolation. It is the parent's responsibility to enforce and monitor mask use for their child.

## Daily Procedures

While daily procedures such as bathroom use, arrival and dismissal, mealtimes, transitions, rugs, and busing will be affected by our safety measures, they will vary by school site. School Directors will be working with GTLs, Deans, ICs, and Ops to determine how to best meet the requirements given the unique factors at each school.

## Busing

We will have busing this year. Details will follow once busing is set up. Safety principles apply to busing. Social distancing is not required nor possible on buses (as per CDC); however, a seating chart should be kept to aid contact tracing.

## Scholar Services

### *Quarantined Staff*

In the event an SST staff member is required to quarantine or isolate and cannot be on-site, staffing will be adjusted to ensure scholars receive mandated services. Options when adjusting staffing including having the other provider in the building provide services or offering services to on-site scholars via Zoom.

### *IEP and 504 Meetings*

IEP and 504 meetings will occur virtually subject to further guidance from the Department of Education.

### *Outside Providers*

Any contract agencies, including OT, PT, Hearing Services, Paraprofessionals, and counselors, must complete a temperature check upon entering the building. A face covering is now optional for visitors. All visitors wishing to enter school buildings must continue to show proof of having at least one dose of the COVID-19 vaccination, show identification, and complete the daily health screening form.

## Visitors & Network Staff

### *Families & Other Visitors*

We are excited to welcome families back to our school buildings this year! All visitors to all sites, including families, contractors or vendors, food services, deliveries, or copier repairs, must complete a temperature check. Visitors to co-located buildings (SBC I and SBC II) must complete [the DOE Health Screening](#) and must show proof of at least one dose of the COVID-19 vaccination to enter a DOE school building. Visitors are not required to wear a face covering. Visitors do not include students attending school or school related activities in a DOE school building.

Acceptable forms of proof include:

- A CDC Vaccination Card
- A NYC Vaccination Record
- NYC COVID Safe App
- Excelsior Pass
- DOE COVID-19 Vaccine Portal

A log should be kept in the main office of visitors to aid in contact tracing. As with staff and scholars, visitors cannot enter the school building if they have tested positive for COVID-19, have COVID-19 symptoms, or are a confirmed close contact of an individual with COVID-19.

### *Interviews*

All interviews are conducted remotely until further notice.

### *Network Staff*

We are excited to be able to increase collaboration amongst school-sites and welcome network employees back into our buildings for the upcoming year. Staff are welcome to travel between school buildings freely. If a network staff member is going to come onsite for any length of time during the week, they must submit a negative COVID-19 test to Ms. Caraballo or participate in onsite staff testing.

### *Signage*

Appropriate signage instructing staff and scholars is prominently placed across each school site. Signage includes reminders to staff and scholars to:

- Stay home if they feel sick.
- Properly store and, when necessary, discard PPE.
- Report symptoms of, or exposure to, COVID-19.
- Follow hand hygiene, and cleaning and disinfection guidelines.
- Follow respiratory hygiene and cough etiquette.



## FAQs

**Question:** Do scholars still need to stay silent during mealtimes and snack times given the new guidelines?

**Answer:** *No. Since scholars can now opt out of wearing masks, we are no longer expecting scholars to be silent during meal and snack times; however, some sites might choose to have silent portions of lunch or snack (this was done before COVID-19.)*

**Question:** Will the change in mask policy have an impact on any of our curriculum?

**Answer:** *Yes – in instances where curriculum was limited due to masking needs, those considerations are now lifted (such as in Music.) Relevant team leads will determine how to proceed.*

**Question:** Am I expected to keep track of who does and does not need to wear a mask in my classroom?

**Answer:** *No. Families should speak with their scholars about their family preference for masking, and it is the responsibility of the student to follow the rules set by their family. Families can inquire about whether their student is following their preference while at school, but teachers are not expected to enforce those rules. Similarly, students cannot receive consequences (warnings, checks, etc.) for choosing not to wear their mask.*

**Question:** If one of my scholars returns from isolation, will they need to eat separately for snack and lunch?

**Answer:** *Yes. As per NYS guidance, those that are required to still wear face coverings due to returning from isolation should distance when they have to remove their mask for eating. For any concerns regarding social distancing during snack or lunch, connect with your school director, operations manager, and deans.*