

December 11, 2020

Dear Families,

What an exciting week this has been, reopening our school buildings for in-person instruction after this recent brief closure. I want to thank our students and families, our teachers, principals, and school staff for a safe and smooth reopening. I know it hasn't been easy, but public education is critical to our city's, and nation's, future, and it is why we continue to do everything in our power to keep our school communities thriving.

With support from all corners of New York City, we have been able to bring students in 3-K through fifth grade, and students in all grade levels in District 75 schools, back into classrooms. This is an important step in fulfilling our pledge to you: to provide a safe, secure environment in which your children can learn and grow. And a quick reminder: for blended learning to work best for everyone, we need your child to show up to school on their scheduled in-person days. Blended learning students in grades 6 through 12 in district 1–32 schools, including those participating in District 75 Inclusion Programs, will continue to learn remotely at this time.

Unfortunately, COVID-19 is still very much with us. Given the ongoing fight against a citywide resurgence, please note that we have changed our in-school testing protocol. In order to keep our buildings open, **we now require mandatory, weekly in-school testing for COVID-19** for a randomly selected portion of staff and students in grades 1 and higher.

**And this is critical:** If your child returns to school for in-person instruction without a consent form on file, principals and school staff will contact you to obtain consent. After that, students without consent forms on file, who do not have an approved or pending medical or disability-based exemption, must be moved to fully remote instruction.

In this Update for Families, you will find information on:

- What you need to know about mandatory, in-school testing
- How to submit consent for in-school random testing
- What to do if your child has recently traveled
- What you need to know about exemptions from in-school testing
- How to apply for kindergarten for the 2021–2022 school year
- How to learn more about elementary admissions
- How to participate in Parent University, a new platform offering families on-demand courses and resources on a host of subjects.

Because so much uncertainty comes with this pandemic, we remain committed to our time-honored traditions, which remind us that we are a community. One of those is our annual Big Apple Awards, recognizing outstanding teachers and college and career counselors. This year, it feels especially important to honor the teachers or counselors who have made a difference in your child's life. Nominate an educator by January 10, 2021 by visiting the Big Apple Awards website at [schools.nyc.gov/bigappleawards](https://schools.nyc.gov/bigappleawards).

As always, I am grateful for your flexibility and patience as we continue our journey together through this unprecedented year. There is no doubt that Covid-19 has affected our children—academically, socially, and emotionally, and we are already looking ahead to the next school year. This week, the Mayor and I introduced the 2021 Student Achievement Plan to bring our schools back stronger than ever next fall. Working with our



Department of  
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educators and all of you, we will create a roadmap rooted in healing and learning. I'll be sharing more on this in the months to come.

I know that if we all do our part, we can ensure a strong, supportive education for every child every day—no matter where they are learning.

Sincerely,

Richard A. Carranza  
Chancellor  
New York City Department of Education

To view a copy of this document in your language, visit [schools.nyc.gov/messagesforfamilies](https://schools.nyc.gov/messagesforfamilies)

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## Update for Families, December 11, 2020

### What You Need to Know about Mandatory, In-School Testing

In order for your child to return to in-person learning, you must submit the consent form for in-school COVID-19 testing by the first day your child returns to their school building.

- Testing will happen weekly for a random selection of staff and students in your child’s school.
- Any student in grade 1 or higher returning to school buildings must submit a consent form for COVID-19 testing in school by their first day back in school buildings.
- 3-K, pre-K, and kindergarten students are excluded from random testing.
- The test is quick, safe, and easy. If you have not submitted a consent form and your child is learning in person, you must do so right away.

### How to Submit Consent for In-School Random Testing

Submitting consent to have your child tested for COVID-19 in school is quick and easy. Even if you have already submitted consent, we ask you to do so again to ensure your student has the latest consent form on file.

There are two easy ways to submit:

1) Fill out the form online using a New York City Schools Account (NYCSA) at [mystudent.nyc.gov](https://mystudent.nyc.gov).

If you already have a NYCSA account linked to your student(s): Log in, click your student’s name, click “Manage Account,” and then when a dropdown menu appears, click “Consent Forms.” Read the page, and then choose the consent option at the end for your student.

If you do not already have a NYCSA account: You can create one right away! If you have an account creation code from your school, you can create a full account in approximately five minutes, and then provide consent as described above. If you do not have an account creation code from your school, you can still provide your consent right away by clicking “Manage Consent” under “COVID-19 Testing” and filling out your and your child’s information to provide consent.

2) Print and sign the attached form and bring it to your child’s school on the first day they are back in the school building. A printable PDF file is available in ten languages at [schools.nyc.gov/covidtesting](https://schools.nyc.gov/covidtesting).

### What to Do if Your Child Has Recently Traveled

- If your child has recently traveled outside of New York to a place on the State’s travel advisory list they must quarantine for 14 days.
- They also have the option to test out of quarantine based on the State’s guidelines: [coronavirus.health.ny.gov/covid-19-travel-advisory](https://coronavirus.health.ny.gov/covid-19-travel-advisory).
- You or your child should continue to complete the health questionnaire daily.



## What You Need to Know about Exemptions from In-School Testing

Exemptions will only be granted in certain limited cases, and two types of exemption request forms are available at [schools.nyc.gov/covidtesting](https://schools.nyc.gov/covidtesting):

- A form for students who need a medical exemption due to a health condition that would make it unsafe to undergo testing (e.g., facial trauma, nasal surgery). This form must be signed by a physician and be submitted with supporting medical documentation.
- A form for students with disabilities who cannot be safely tested in school due to the nature of their disability. Students with an approved disability-based exemption will be expected to get tested outside of school.

## How to Apply for Kindergarten for the 2021–2022 School Year

It's time to start your child's journey through elementary school! If you live in New York City and your child was born in 2016, the kindergarten application is now open. Be sure to apply by January 19, 2021.

You can apply one of two ways:

- Online at [MySchools.nyc](https://MySchools.nyc). Click on the link to create or access your MySchools account.
- By phone at (718) 935-2009. Call Monday through Friday between 8 a.m. and 6 p.m., or Saturday through Sunday between 9 a.m. and 1 p.m.

With MySchools, you can search for schools, find great choices for your child's application, and apply to kindergarten—all in one place.

To learn more about kindergarten admissions, visit [schools.nyc.gov/kindergarten](https://schools.nyc.gov/kindergarten).

Our new Elementary Admissions Video series will walk you through what to expect, how to set up your MySchools account, and how to apply. Stay tuned: More videos are coming soon!

For questions, call (718) 935-2009 or email [ESEnrollment@schools.nyc.gov](mailto:ESEnrollment@schools.nyc.gov).

## How to Learn More About Elementary Admissions

Join us for a virtual Elementary Admissions event to learn about 3-K, pre-K, and kindergarten admissions. Find out what to expect and how to apply. All New York City families are welcome to attend.

Sessions will be held on the following dates:

- Tuesday, December 15, at 2 p.m.
- Thursday, December 17, at 6 p.m.
- Wednesday, January 6, at 6 p.m.
- Thursday, January 7, at 6 p.m. This event will be hosted in Spanish.
- Tuesday, January 12, at 2 p.m.

Register for a session at [tinyurl.com/NYCDOEElementaryEventsSurvey](https://tinyurl.com/NYCDOEElementaryEventsSurvey). When you register, be sure to indicate your language preference—interpretation services in specific languages will be provided for each session based on these responses.

### [How to Participate in Parent University](#)

Parent University is a new online platform that offers a catalog of courses, live events, and activities to help connect with families and support students. The platform offers all New York City parents and guardians access to live and on-demand courses and resources across multiple subject areas and grade bands. Courses are available in multiple languages and we're working to expand the number of multilingual offerings.

All families, from early childhood to adult education, can create a free account and register for workshops, attend an event, find a training and more. There are currently 95+ courses offered covering a wide range of topics including:

- Remote Learning and Technology
- Health and Wellness
- Special Education
- Multilingual Learners
- Early Childhood Education
- Parent Leadership
- School Buildings and Operations
- Adult and Continuing Education

You can start Parent University today at [parentu.schools.nyc](https://parentu.schools.nyc).