



The Brick Church School Reopening Plan for the 2021-2022 School Year

August 2021

Dear Brick Family,

We have been working hard to plan for the reopening of school this fall and really look forward to having children back in the building! The access to vaccines for everyone 12 and above has offered great relief and optimism and we eagerly await the news for vaccines for younger children. The Delta variant keeps us vigilant but we are committed to reopening safely for in-person school.

At each step of the way, we have been guided by the following principles:

Optimism, Equity and Community

There is nothing more important than educating our young students during this complex time in the context of continued optimism. Our children deserve optimistic adults in their lives. Within these principles we also draw upon **resilience, courage and flexibility**. As we reopen our doors again and commit to providing high quality early childhood experiences to our students we also commit to:

- ❖ Maintaining the health, safety, and emotional well-being of our students, faculty, staff, and families
- ❖ Adhering to the guidelines set forth by government agencies
- ❖ Staying true to our mission and program
- ❖ Providing clear and ongoing communication to our community

The result of our work to date is the plan presented here. The continued success of our efforts to reopen Brick again will require every member of our community to work together. Each of us must be ready and willing to create a culture of cooperation and responsibility and to make a daily commitment to protect the health of all who are learning, teaching, and working at our school. We are confident that our Brick community will do so once again!

Warmest regards,

Amy Warden



Opening Days. Our fall semester will commence as planned with Classroom Visits beginning on September 13, 2021. Classroom Visits will take the place of our usual Home Visits. These 1:1 introductions are an important opportunity for the children and parents to meet their homeroom teachers before school starts. The visits will last 15 minutes and take place at Brick. Student orientation begins on September 15. Please review the entire school calendar [here](#).



Arrival & Dismissal. To accommodate physical distancing guidelines, students will arrive and depart at staggered times by classroom using two entrances: 62 East 92nd Street and 1140 Park Avenue.

Please see the Arrival & Dismissal schedule for individual classes [here](#).

Once cleared to enter (see the Health & Safety protocols that start on Page 4), students will join their class in the Garden Room, Narthex or Chapel, depending on the entrance used. When the teachers have a majority of their students, they will walk them to the classroom together. We ask that you please arrive as close as possible to your scheduled time. If you will be arriving late, please come to the East 92nd Street entrance.



Carefully Contained Classrooms. To accommodate physical distancing requirements, classrooms will continue to limit interactions across classrooms. We have also continued with one additional classroom, 3 South, to keep the class sizes small. Limiting group size and exposure across classrooms will help limit COVID exposure among students and allow us to contact trace effectively if necessary. Students will enjoy more flexibility moving about the building and will have daily access to either the Garden or Rooftop Playground for outdoor play. They will also visit the Art Studio and Music Room with their class and resume in person Spanish classes. We are again pursuing permission from NYC to close East 92nd Street for Outdoor Learning and, in good weather, we may hold specials (music, art, spanish) classes outdoors.



Backpacks. Children may bring backpacks to and from school. For the health and safety of the children, we encourage children to leave any non-essential materials including toys and extra food items at home. “Loveys”, to support the separation process, and Show & Tell items are allowed.



Lunch & Snacks. Snacks will be provided by the School and will be served in individual portions (not family style.) Students enrolled in Extended Day should bring lunch (NO NUTS PLEASE) packed in a reusable lunch box with a reusable water bottle that can be kept in each child’s cubby until it is time to eat. Food cannot be shared. The school will also provide disposable cups and water. During snack and lunch, children will be seated a safe distance apart. Before and after eating, tables will be disinfected.



Chapel. Whenever possible Children’s Chapel services will be held in person in the Sanctuary (morning Chapel) or in the Chapel (afternoon Chapel). There will be 6 feet maintained between each class for social distancing purposes. Chapel programming will always adhere to our safety guidelines and will generally include a message or story from the Pastors of the Brick Church, candle lighting and music. We are excited to have children participate in this in-person Chapel by lighting and snuffing candles and serving as prayer helpers.



Curriculum. Our commitment to maintaining the health, safety, and emotional well-being of our students, faculty, staff, and families informs not only our policies and routines but also our curriculum and programming. The Story of Us curriculum encourages strong, caring relationships with adults, the building of deep and meaningful connections with peers, and centers on inquiry and joy in learning in order to help children navigate the complexity of their new realities. Informed by the research, in consultation with experts in the field of early childhood education and mental health, and with the guidance of members of the Brick teaching staff, we have adopted a focus in our curriculum to support the students as they transition back to school. This study will focus on exploring the community, its members, and the way communities work together to take care of each other. The three essential questions guiding the study are: “Who am I?”, “Who are you?”, and “Who are we?” These questions will be explored through sharing and writing stories, collecting data about each other, through art experiences, and allowing for meaningful ways to engage in skill building across all learning domains. And, of course, this exploration draws upon the important relationship between home and school.



Birthday Parties. We will continue to celebrate birthday parties in school by offering special experiences for the honoree. In addition to specific classroom traditions, an individualized birthday song and a birthday balloon will mark the occasion. Although we are yet unable to accept edible treats, we are welcoming birthday-themed napkins from home in order to further personalize the snack which is provided by the classroom. Families will also be invited to zoom into the class to read a book or join an activity virtually on this special day. If your child has a summer birthday you can schedule a celebratory day with your child’s teacher.



Daily Health Screening. The latest guidance encourages students to be checked for symptoms before leaving home and at school. Checking symptoms at home will ensure that a sick child does not leave home and expose others. Brick will be asking each family to bring their child to school only if the child and all household members are free of COVID symptoms and are following the [NYS travel guidelines](#). Each family will attest to the health of their child and household via an online app. We are reviewing our current app and will send you the necessary information to download the app in early September. All attestations must be completed by **8:15 AM**.

If symptoms do arise please refer to this [flowchart](#) and/or reach out to Brick's nurse for further guidance at nurse@brickchurch.org.

Your child's temperature will be taken again when they arrive at school. Each class will have handheld, contactless thermometers at each entrance. If your child has a fever of 100.0 F or higher, they will not be allowed to stay at school. Children who stay for Extended Day will have a second temperature check at lunch.



Travel/Quarantine Rules. Families returning to New York after travel are required to follow the NY State protocols for self-quarantining and testing before entering Brick. As these requirements continue to change please refer to the NYS DOH website here: <https://coronavirus.health.ny.gov/covid-19-travel-advisory>.



Handwashing & Sanitizing. We have installed hand sanitizing dispensers at all entrances, classrooms, and bathrooms. Everyone will continue to be required to sanitize their hands before entering the building. Students will also sanitize and/or wash their hands with warm soap and water regularly throughout the day, including when they first arrive in the classroom, before and after eating, and after bathroom breaks.



Sick Policy. If your child or anyone in your home is sick with or has been exposed to someone who is sick with ANY of the following COVID-19 symptoms – fever (a temp of 100.0 F or higher), cough, sore throat, nausea, vomiting, diarrhea, extreme fatigue, body aches, shortness of breath, rash, runny nose/congestion, or lack of taste or smell – please contact the School Nurse and keep your child home from school. If your child or anyone in your home has been diagnosed with COVID-19 or has been notified by the DOH that they were in contact with someone diagnosed with COVID-19, please notify the School Nurse as soon as possible at nurse@brickchurch.org and keep your child home from school.



Face Coverings. As the NYC DOH, CDC and AAP recommends, we will require everyone two years or older to wear a face covering while in the building unless eating, drinking, or resting. The NYC DOH is discouraging wearing masks outside (in outdoor spaces exclusively used by Brick.) Therefore, children and adults will be encouraged to take masks off when on our playgrounds. Acceptable face coverings for students include child-sized surgical masks and reusable cloth masks. (Gaiters, bandanas, and masks with valves have been proven less effective and are therefore not allowed.)

We recommend that all student face coverings include a lanyard to prevent it from falling to the ground. Brick will provide one lanyard to each student. If wearing a face covering causes discomfort or distress in your child, we will work with them to become comfortable with it in a slow and nurturing way.



Dress Code. Children should wear comfortable clothes, a mask, and shoes with rubber soles to school each day. We ask that each child have one extra mask and one full change of clothes (including socks) at school with everything clearly labeled.



Physical Distancing. To facilitate physical distancing, we are continuing to use up and down stairwells, restricting elevator use, and placing signs and markings throughout the building to encourage individuals to observe spacing. During the day, children will be allowed and encouraged to play and interact with other students in their classroom but will be seated a safe distance apart during snack, lunch, and rest.



Health Office. The Women's Choir Room near the Youth Floor has been repurposed into a Health Office, which will serve as an isolation space for anyone showing symptoms of COVID-19. The [School Nurse](#) will be equipped with appropriate PPE as necessary.

The health office will be stocked with all appropriate PPE and First Aid kits for any emergency events that may happen on site. The School Nurse will handle all your questions or concerns about Covid-19 protocols, updates, school policies and procedures, student health files, and parent communications.

If a student becomes ill during the school day, they will be isolated in the Health Office and must be picked up from school within one hour. In order to facilitate this process, it is critical that families confirm that all contact information is up to date in the [GoPad app](#) and that a minimum of two emergency contacts are provided. As a reminder, GoPad is our security/attendance program used daily. New Brick families will receive an invitation via email from our GoPad administrator with instructions on how to register.



Cleaning, Sanitizing & Ventilation. Cleaning staff will thoroughly clean and sanitize the school every evening and in between AM and PM sessions. Teachers will disinfect tables before and after eating.

To improve air quality, we upgraded our HVAC ductwork to incorporate MERV-13 filters, and each classroom and common space will continue to have a stand-alone HEPA air purifier. All air handling equipment has been completely disinfected and set to maximum outside air settings to reduce the recirculation of air. Windows throughout the building will remain open as much as possible to maximize fresh air flow throughout.



Containment of COVID-19/Vaccine Requirements. We will continue to follow the guidance of officials and experts on how to handle possible and confirmed cases of COVID-19 in our community. **All faculty, staff and volunteers supporting Brick's programming are required to show proof of vaccination and complete a daily attestation about their health.** A negative COVID test is required of all faculty and staff before returning to school in September.

Individuals who answer YES to any question in the daily health/attestation screening must stay home and notify the School Nurse as soon as possible. If a child develops symptoms of COVID-19 while at school, they will be isolated in the Health Office, and the rest of the class will relocate to one of our designated "clean" spaces – the Living Room, Dining Room, or Watson Hall. The cleaning staff will disinfect the classroom and common spaces according to hygiene, cleaning, and disinfection guidance set forth by the DOH and CDC. The School Nurse will notify the family and the child will be followed by their pediatrician/physician. If the child is confirmed to have COVID-19 the nurse will notify the local DOH, and contact tracing will be used to notify all necessary individuals of potential exposure. Communication around your child's health is essential.

Please always let the [nurse](#) or your child's teacher know why your child will not be in school, whether it is COVID related or not.

An individual with symptoms* consistent with COVID-19 will not be allowed to return to school until they have tested negative for COVID-19 and have been evaluated by a physician who documents that the symptoms are related to another specific diagnosis (e.g. flu, strep throat, etc.) or a pre-existing condition. If the family chooses not to have the child evaluated by a physician and tested for COVID-19, the child must quarantine for 14 days. In all cases, they must stay home until they have been fever free for more than 24 hours without medication, and other symptoms are improving.

*Symptomatic is defined as:

Any **ONE** of the following symptoms:

cough, shortness of breath, difficulty breathing, new loss of taste and smell
or

Any **TWO** of the following symptoms:

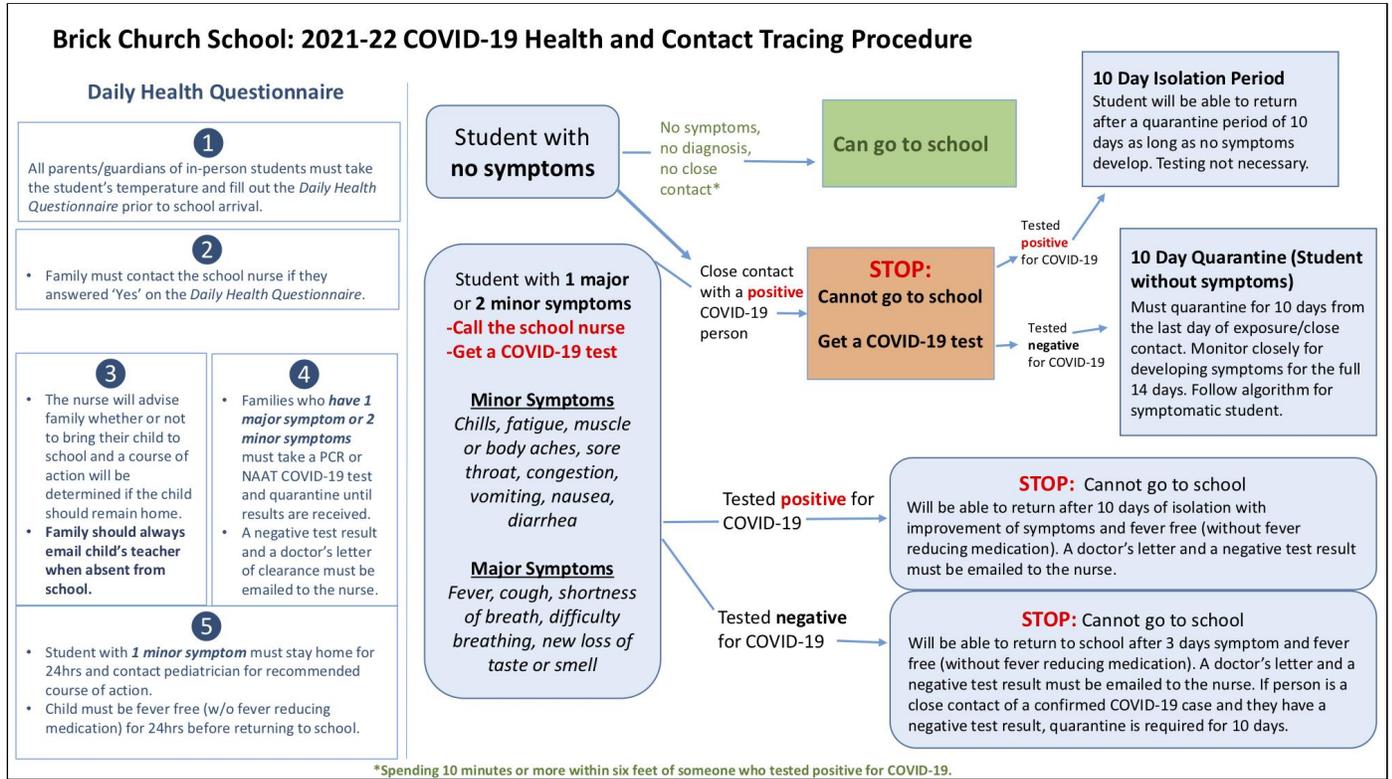
fever, chills, muscle aches, headache, sore throat, nausea or vomiting, diarrhea, fatigue, congestion/runny nose.

A COVID-19 positive individual must stay home until:

- They have a physician's note clearing them to return to school, after an isolation period of at least 10 days.
- They have been fever free for more than 24 hours without medication,
- Other symptoms are improving, **AND**
- It has been 10 days since symptoms first appeared.

Each positive COVID-19 case will be considered individually. If contact tracing necessitates the closure of a classroom, the class will shift to remote learning.

The summary of the above can be found in the flowchart below and [HERE](#):



Siblings. If a child tests positive then their sibling, as a primary contact, must also stay home from school. Siblings must quarantine according to the timeline of their COVID positive sister/brother and then an additional 10 days following the end of their siblings quarantine. If an asymptomatic sibling is quarantining due to exposure his/her brother/sister does NOT need to quarantine

To offer peace of mind, we will communicate appropriately with everyone in our community, balancing privacy and transparency



Brick @ Home/Remote Learning. Brick remains prepared for the possibility that the school or a classroom will need to transition to 100% remote learning at various points throughout the year. If we need to shift to online instruction, a bag of materials will be sent home (as needed.) It will take one full school day to pivot from in-person learning to Brick @ Home.

Students in our 3-to 5-year-old classes will be engaged in synchronous learning activities for 2 to 2.5 hours each day with appropriate breaks. A *sample* virtual day might include the following activities:

- Morning or Afternoon Meeting
- Small Group Work (divided by curricular activity)
- Teacher-facilitated, project-based learning
- Movement Break
- Story
- Snack
- Special (e.g. Music, Art, Movement, or Virtual Field Trip)
- Closing Circle

Students enrolled in Extended Day will be engaged in synchronous learning activities for an additional 1 to 1.5 hours every Tuesday, Wednesday, and Thursday such as:

- Circle Time
- Small Group Work (divided by curricular activity)
- Teacher-facilitated, project-based learning
- Interest Groups (e.g. blocks, dramatic play, art)
- Movement Break
- Read-Aloud for a Purpose/Music
- Goodbye Song

Students in the Twos Program will be offered 30 to 60 minutes of synchronous activity on the days that they are enrolled. Their virtual learning curriculum will be centered around the family. Each child will engage with their teacher 1:1 or in a small group daily (according to their class schedule.)



Other School Closings: If the whole school closes for a non-COVID related reason, such as snow, there will be no virtual learning.



Student Absence Due to Quarantine. If a child is quarantining or is out sick due to COVID-19 for an extended period of time, they will be given the opportunity to stay connected to their teachers and friends by Zooming into their classroom for Morning or Afternoon Meeting. They will also receive a 1:1 check-in from one member of their teaching team every 3rd day they are absent. Please note that this accommodation is only reserved for COVID-related reasons, including close-contact quarantine, unavoidable travel-related quarantine, or isolation due to a COVID-positive test result.



Technology & Training. We have installed portable kiosks with cameras in all classrooms should large or small group Zoom technology be needed. During the pandemic, professional development for our teachers has included best practices in virtual learning for early childhood students and ways to support children in their social/emotional needs as they experience school in a new way.



Communications. We promise to keep the school community informed and updated throughout the year as we again reopen with care. This Reopening Plan is considered a living document and will be accessible on the school website. We will notify you of any important updates by email. Any closure announcements will be sent by email from the Director, posted on the school website, and texted from the [GoPad app](#).



Socializing Outside of School. As a community that has each other's health and well-being at the forefront, we know you also want your children to socialize outside of school. We strongly encourage outdoor playdates/classes whenever possible and ask that all families follow NYS, NYC and CDC social distancing and masking guidelines when indoors.



Visitor Policy. During school hours, entry to our building will be restricted to students and vaccinated faculty, staff and volunteers, except in case of emergency. Parents/caregivers will be allowed to walk children to their classrooms for class visiting days (9/13 and 9/14) and during September's orientation period. All adults must show proof of vaccination, clear the daily health attestation and be masked and socially distanced during their time in the building. They will be encouraged to leave as soon as their child is settled in the classroom. We look forward to welcoming parents back inside the building on a regular basis when it is safe to do so. Our first step will be to welcome vaccinated volunteers, who are not working directly with children, into the school when necessary for their volunteer work. We are continuing to evaluate whether we can hold large parent/family events in person and safely.

Visitors of The Brick Presbyterian Church, with whom we share our facilities, will be required to follow all of the health and safety protocols outlined above with respect to masks, hand sanitizing, and physical distancing. All Church staff are also required to be fully vaccinated. In-person Sunday services, following established health and safety protocols will continue.



Virtual Gatherings. Because entry to our buildings will be largely restricted to students, faculty, and staff, we will hold parent-teacher conferences, most facets of our admissions process, parent committee meetings, and large cross-class gatherings virtually this fall. We are evaluating ways to have class specific events in person safely and will continue to keep you informed.



We're in This Together! We rely on the effort of the entire community to keep school open and everyone safe and well. **Together, we can do this!**