

# 2020-21 Bank Street College of Education Reopening Plan

Family Center, Head Start,  
and School for Children

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## INTRODUCTION

As we prepare for the 2020-21 school year, Bank Street College of Education has developed a comprehensive plan for reopening and operating that is aligned to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention as well as the New York State Department of Health guidelines. This document contains our plan for reopening the following Children's Programs: the Bank Street School for Children, Bank Street Family Center, and Bank Street Head Start.

Located on the Upper West Side of New York City, both the School for Children, an independent nursery through 8th grade school, and the Family Center, an inclusive center for children ages 6 months to 5 years, are within Bank Street's 112th Street building. Head Start, a preschool program, is located on the Lower East Side in its own building. As outlined in this plan, we aim to mitigate the risk of infection across our Children's Programs by creating multiple layers of protection for children and staff.

Throughout this process, we have deeply engaged in planning efforts (e.g., surveys, town hall meetings, small-group and one-on-one conversations) to understand the needs and priorities of staff, students, and families in our programs. We have also consulted with a range of experts, including doctors, architects, engineers, and air safety consultants, and hired Environmental Health & Engineering, Inc. (EH&E), an environmental health and safety consulting firm, to provide more specific guidance. Additionally, this report has been guided by the work of our Children's Programs Divisional Working Group as well as our College-wide Reopening Task Force, which includes representatives from each of Bank Street's operational areas and programmatic divisions.

We recognize the ever-changing circumstances, especially given the possibility of resurgence of COVID-19, and have developed plans that are flexible and adaptable.

For questions, please contact Suleyni Abreu, Deputy Chief Operating Officer, at [sabreu@bankstreet.edu](mailto:sabreu@bankstreet.edu).

## HEALTH & SAFETY

We have identified five key steps to make reopening our buildings as safe as possible:

1. Reduce the risk that someone who is currently infectious comes to school or work through testing, daily health screenings, and work from home policies for some staff.
2. Ensure regular cleaning of all shared surfaces as well as increased fresh air circulation to prevent the spread of the virus inside the building.
3. Establish protocols around social distancing and face coverings to prevent the virus spreading through close contact with others.
4. Limit group sizes and the number of people each child and adult is in contact with while at school or work.
5. Immediately isolate anyone who may be infectious if a case arises in our building and begin contact tracing to identify and test others who may have been exposed to the virus.

### ARRIVAL & DISMISSAL PROCEDURES

Drop-off and pickup will occur outside of the building. In our planning for the best way to do drop-off, we have two core goals: first to ensure students can enter the building safely and second to support healthy separation for each child and family given the challenge of doing this outside. We are planning for drop-off to happen outside of our building, either closing all or part of 112th Street, as well as using nearby areas in Riverside Park.

We plan to use additional entrances to the building in order to limit the number of children entering through each doorway. There will also be staggered drop-off times to ensure students have time and space to enter safely. We will implement screening activities upon arrival (see Symptom Screening) and any personnel performing in-person screening activities will be appropriately protected.

### FACE COVERINGS & PERSONAL PROTECTIVE EQUIPMENT

#### Policy

Bank Street will implement the following policy for face coverings based on current government health guidelines:

- **Adults:** All adults will be required to wear face masks at all times. Adults can take their masks off when alone, or when eating or taking a brief mask break with social distancing in place.
- **Children Younger than Age 2:** Face coverings are not permitted.
- **Children Age 2 and Older:** Face masks are expected to be worn at all times, except when approximately six feet apart and in a stationary position for snack, lunch, and approved mask breaks. Face masks are also required outside when doing group physical activity/exertion or when not approximately six feet apart. We will support children in age-appropriate ways to wear masks throughout the day.

Face masks are also required during transitions in hallways and other shared parts of the building. For adults or children who medically cannot wear masks, face shields will be used. At times when children need to see the face of the adult for social, emotional, and learning purposes, clear masks will be used. We will provide training for all students, faculty, and staff on how to adequately put on, take off, clean (as applicable), and discard PPE.

## **Supply**

While students can bring their own face masks with them, Bank Street will also make face masks available for all staff and students who may need them. When necessary, faculty and staff will be provided with additional personal protective equipment (PPE) including face shields, gloves, and a clothes-covering, such as a gown.

Approved face masks include:

- Cloth masks with two or more layers
- Surgical masks with three layers
- N95 or KN95 masks with no valves (masks with valves to release air are not protective according to CDC)

Face shields should not replace face masks unless there are medical or developmental reasons for an exception.

## **HYGIENE, CLEANING & DISINFECTION**

Bank Street will provide all faculty and staff with training and guidance on proper hand and respiratory hygiene before the school year begins. Teachers will support children in developing routines around washing their hands frequently throughout the day, including when they arrive, before eating, after using the bathroom, after coming back indoors, and before and after each activity.

We are also in the process of installing touch-free: hand sanitizer dispensers in each classroom and throughout the building including outside our staircases; hand soap dispensers in classrooms and bathrooms; and faucets in specified spaces (e.g., Family Center, Lower School classrooms, Middle School classrooms) and some restrooms. In addition, we have touch-free paper towel dispensers in classrooms and throughout most bathrooms. Only hands-free water fountains will be used throughout the building. Water fountains that are not hands-free will be deactivated. There will be signage in restrooms and common spaces around proper hygiene, face coverings, and social distancing.

In addition, there will be enhanced cleaning and disinfection throughout the day, especially for high transit areas, such as restrooms, and highly touched surfaces, such as door knobs/handles, copy machines, and stair handrails. We will also identify cleaning and disinfection frequency for each facility and assign responsibility. Our facilities team will maintain daily logs that include the date, time, and scope of cleaning and disinfection.

## **ATTENDANCE & SICK POLICIES**

Any student or staff member with any of the symptoms of possible COVID-19 virus infection below—or with a member of their household who has any of the symptoms below—cannot be present in school. According to the New York City Department of Health, 80% of symptomatic cases of COVID-19 include at least one of the symptoms below.

- Fever or chills (100°F or greater)
- New uncontrolled cough that causes difficulty breathing (for students with chronic allergic/asthmatic cough, a change in their cough from baseline)
- Shortness of breath or difficulty breathing
- New onset of severe headache, especially with a fever
- New loss of taste or smell
- Nausea, vomiting, diarrhea, or abdominal pain

In addition, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) keeps an [up-to-date list of symptoms of COVID-19 on its website](#). If any student or staff member, or any member of their household, has three or more of the symptoms below they cannot be present in school. This list is not all inclusive as some individuals may display other symptoms or none at all.

- Fatigue
- Muscle or body aches
- Sore throat
- Congestion or runny nose

This attendance policy is grounded in guidance from the New York City Department of Health and consistent with the instructions around attendance that families and staff members will receive when completing the screening app each morning.

It is also strongly recommended that all staff observe students or other staff members for related signs of illness such as:

- Flushed cheeks
- Rapid or difficulty breathing (without recent physical activity)
- Fatigue, and/or irritability
- Frequent use of the bathroom

Students and staff exhibiting any of the above symptoms with no other explanation for them should be sent to the nurse's office on the first floor for an assessment by the school nurse. These students/staff will be supervised in the isolated area while awaiting someone to take them home. The family will be referred to a healthcare provider and provided resources on COVID-19 testing.

For more information regarding our policy on returning to school, see our In the Event of Illness section below.

## **IN THE EVENT OF ILLNESS**

### **Immediate Response**

If a student or staff member receives a positive test result, the individual will be immediately quarantined. All members of their cohort will also be quarantined for 14 days.

If COVID-19 cases are discovered at school, the immediate response will include closing off areas or classes where individuals were infected and engaging in a process of "deep cleaning" either in the affected area, portions of the school, or more broadly the entire school, as determined in consultation with DOH guidelines or conversations with our local DOH contact. We may choose to modify operations prior to instituting school-wide closures to help mitigate a rise in cases and will

be guided by [public policies that have been outlined by DOH](#) around classroom quarantines and full school closure if someone in the school community feels sick. Should we need to close our school, we will use our existing internal and external communications structures and protocols to ensure an orderly and efficient closure. We have a cleaning company on contract who will be able to provide a deep cleaning on short notice.

Upon the identification of a positive COVID-19 case, our school nurse, Robin Taylor, will serve as the main point-of-contact for answering questions from students, faculty, staff, and parents or legal guardians.

### **Management of Ill Persons**

We have developed protocols for caring for a student, faculty, or staff member who develops COVID-19 symptoms during the school day. These protocols include:

- A dedicated area of the nurse's office to isolate students, faculty, or staff with symptoms of COVID-19 from others until they can go home or to a healthcare facility, depending on severity of illness.
- Plans to ensure that symptomatic students who are waiting to be picked up remain under the visual supervision of a staff member who is socially distanced.
- Meeting PPE requirements for school nurse office staff caring for sick individuals
- Cleaning and disinfection as specified by CDC guidelines.
- Development of protocols to care for students with asthma that reduce the need for nebulizers or suction, or make provision for the use of these items in a safe location, since they are aerosol-generating procedures.

### **Contact Tracing & Quarantine Rules**

In the case of an individual testing positive, we are required by New York State to support the DOH in tracing all contacts of the individual, in accordance with the protocols, training, and tools provided through the New York State Contact Tracing Program. Our school nurses are also being trained in contact tracing to help support city efforts as needed. Confidentiality will be maintained as required by federal and state law and regulations.

We are also required by law to cooperate with state and local health department isolation and quarantine efforts. Whereas state and local health departments will implement monitoring and movement restrictions of COVID-19 infected or exposed persons, we are responsible for notifying faculty or families of students that they have come into close or proximate contact with a person with COVID-19. Please note that medical privacy laws explicitly prohibit Bank Street from revealing the name of the individual who has tested positive for COVID-19. We may only reveal that the student or faculty member has come in close or proximate contact with an unnamed person, and how we came to know this information (school tracking systems, governmental contact tracing, or another mechanism).

### **Return to School**

Bank Street will follow DOH requirements for determining when students and staff with COVID-19 symptoms can return to school in person. At a minimum, a return to school will require documentation from a health care provider, a negative COVID-19 test, or symptom resolution.

#### If Exhibiting COVID-19 Symptoms

Students or staff members with COVID-19 symptoms as outlined in the Attendance and Sick Policies section above can return to school if:

- They are confirmed by a COVID-19 test as not having COVID-19; or
- They have been diagnosed with another condition and have a healthcare provider written note stating they are clear to return to school; or
- Their symptoms have resolved, there is no fever without the use of fever reducing medicines, they have felt well for 24 hours, and they have received clearance from the school nurse.

#### If Positive for COVID-19

Students or staff members who test positive for COVID-19, or are diagnosed with COVID-19 by a healthcare provider based on their symptoms, should stay at home until all of these criteria are met:

- It has been at least ten days since the individual first had symptoms;
- It has been at least three days since the individual has had a fever (without using fever reducing medicine); and
- It has been at least three days since the individual’s symptoms improved, including cough and shortness of breath.

#### If Home Due to Health Status of a Member of Household

For students and staff members who cannot attend school because a member of their household has the identified symptoms of COVID-19, they should stay home until their household member meets the milestones listed above unless they also test positive for COVID-19.

#### If Home Due to Exposure to Someone with COVID-19

Anyone who is exposed to someone who has tested positive for COVID-19—either within their cohort, by a family member, or through another interaction—must quarantine for 14 days before returning to school. We will consider someone to have been exposed if they spent at least 10 minutes within six feet of someone who has tested positive. They should only return if they continue to be symptom free and test negative for COVID-19 at the end of that period.

## **SOCIAL DISTANCING**

### **Cohorts**

In order to create appropriate physical distancing, we have applied a rule of at least 50 square feet per person to each classroom, which is based on the goal of maintaining approximately six feet of social distance whenever possible. The maximum number of students in a given group will be determined by how many students are able to safely be together in their assigned room.

We are planning for the average size of groups to be 12 students; some groups will be slightly smaller, some slightly larger, with a maximum of 15 students in cases where the room has enough space for students to remain socially distanced.

With the creation of cohorts, we have determined that we will be able to operate at full capacity by hiring more teachers and support staff and repurposing other spaces in the building for classroom instruction.

### **Interactions Within Classrooms**

Students will be assigned to permanent homeroom groups, or sections, in a classroom and remain in that classroom for much of the day, except during select activities that can be held outside.

Students grouped together in a section will remain approximately six feet apart whenever possible, given the guidelines per age level.

### **Interactions Across Classrooms**

Student interaction will be limited to those within their group, except in certain situations that allow for adequate social distancing. Similarly, we will be limiting the number of classes that adults can interact with. If an adult is wearing a face mask, they are able to be exposed to two sections during an established interval of days or weeks; switching to work with other sections will require the adult to be cleared through testing. If an adult is wearing a face mask, a face shield, and gloves, they can interact briefly with students from multiple sections, as long as appropriate health and safety protocols are followed, such as changing PPE in between interactions across sections, temperature taking if there is risk of having interacted with a person with a fever, etc.

### **Outdoor Spaces**

When students are external to the building, multiple sections of students can be in the same general area, but students from different sections should not intermingle in the same activity.

Additionally, face masks should be worn per our guidelines as much as possible since the likelihood of greater exertion and heavier breathing is higher when children and adults are active. Outdoor activity must also be supervised by an appropriate number of adults per section, depending on the age level.

### **Physical Barriers**

As part of the lobby renovation this summer, we are installing barriers (i.e., sneeze guards) at the main security desk and the nurse office station on the first floor. Additionally, other physical barriers will be installed in the 2nd floor playdeck (planters), in the gym (movable partition and current slidable curtain to enable up to two pods at a time), and on the roof (netting structure to enable up to three pods at a time while maintaining social distancing).

### **Other Bank Street Programs**

To accommodate social distancing guidelines, we have limited in-person presence to only those staff who are necessary to be at the school during normal school hours. Other Bank Street programs that normally take place at our 112th Street building, including our Graduate School of Education and Liberty LEADS Program, will be online.

### **SYMPTOM SCREENING**

Each morning at home, families and staff members will complete a [health questionnaire](#) asking them to report symptoms for everyone in their family. We are in the process of developing a COVID-19 screening tool that will be available on the web (as a link) and as an app for IOS users. After completing the self-assessment, users will receive a response that indicates if they can or cannot go to school based on the guidance outlined above in the Attendance and Sick Policies section. Further steps upon arrival will also be implemented to verify that a student has taken the assessment and is cleared to be at school.

As part of arrival, individuals (i.e., students, faculty, staff, visitors) will also have their temperature taken or be screened for fever through a thermal camera. If an individual presents a temperature of greater than 100.0°F, they will not be permitted to enter the building. Personnel performing in-person screening activities will be appropriately protected.

All screening activities will be reviewed daily by the staff responsible or Suleyni Abreu, Deputy Chief Operating Officer.

### **TESTING FOR STUDENTS, FACULTY & STAFF**

All students and staff will be required to show a negative result on a COVID-19 test within the seven days before returning to Bank Street. In the Family Center, any parent or family member planning to come inside the classroom for a one-on-one visit with their child and their child's teacher as part of our phase in process in early September must also be able to provide a negative COVID-19 test.

Moving forward, we have identified a partner who will work with us to facilitate regular testing of staff and students throughout the year. Anyone who is exposed to someone with COVID-19 or who has persistent symptoms associated with COVID-19 will be expected to be tested and to follow the quarantine and return to school guidelines outlined above.

Students and staff members who have previously had COVID-19 and continue to test positive should speak to the school nurse and may be able to begin school with appropriate documentation from a healthcare provider.

### **VISITOR POLICY**

Visitors, vendors, contractors, parents, or other individuals will not be permitted entry without prior permission from our Director of Facilities. We will also implement mandatory health screenings, including temperature checks and a health questionnaire, for these individuals if they are permitted to enter.

## FACILITIES

### **AIR CLEANING & PURIFICATION**

Bank Street has made infrastructure investments to the HVAC system over the course of the last five years and we are making additional recommended HVAC improvements to our 112th Street building this summer following a thorough assessment by experts. In addition, we will have High Efficiency Particulate Air (HEPA) filtration units in the Family Center and School for Children classrooms, gym, lobby, auditorium, and other spaces in our 112th Street building as well as in our Head Start center. Prior to school opening, cooling coils are being thoroughly cleaned and Air Handling Units filters are being replaced with Efficiency Rating Value (MERV 13) filters. The combined air quality improvements we are making to our facilities will increase our capacity to reach six air exchanges per hour for most spaces in use this school year, exceeding the recommended minimum for educational spaces.

Bank Street has also determined that we will be able to accommodate all classes in our 112th Street building in rooms with windows. Through our expert assessment, we also determined that we can safely use our rooms without windows intermittently for small groups of children once the HEPA filtration units are in place. Windows will be kept open during the school day to ensure ongoing fresh air in each room. In addition, windows will be kept open for at least two hours before and after the school day.

We are continuing to assess changes to the HVAC system at our Head Start center.

### **COMMUNAL SPACES**

#### **Bathrooms**

Children will have multiple opportunities for bathroom visits when entering from and going outside, and as needed during the school day. Bathrooms will be used at 50% capacity and children will only be permitted to enter the bathroom with other children from their cohort simultaneously. If the bathroom is occupied, children will be asked to line up six feet apart.

Children will be required to clean their hands as per health guidelines upon each bathroom visit, with soap and water and/or hand sanitizer. Automatic hand sanitizer dispensers will be placed in hallways. Student use of alcohol-based hand sanitizer will be supervised by adults to minimize accidental ingestion and promote safe usage.

Staff will use a separate bathroom from students.

#### **Hallways & Elevators**

During transitions, students must wear face coverings and stay in a single file on the designated side of the hallway and stairwell. Students from within sections should remain approximately three feet apart wearing face coverings per our guidelines in shared spaces in the building. Students from different sections are not to interact with each other in a physical space, remaining approximately six feet apart from each other.

Use of the elevators will be restricted for facilities, IT and Kitchen staff, and those who receive pre-approval for ADA-accessibility needs. Other than this pre-approved use of the elevators, faculty and students will not be permitted to use the elevators at any time. Elevators should only be used by one person at a time.

There will be signage throughout the building around proper hygiene, face coverings, and social distancing.

### **Community Aide Staff**

For the 2020-21 school year, in order to ensure safety protocols and social distancing in hallways and bathrooms, Bank Street has added a school community aide role to the staff team on each floor. These aides will ensure that cohorts remain separated and will also ensure regular cleaning and disinfection of bathrooms and frequently touched surfaces.

### **Additional Areas**

We will be limiting the use of other areas, such as the library and auditorium, to one group at a time and providing barriers where needed. The cafeteria will be closed.

Additionally, we will be following New York State guidance on limiting gathering in small spaces (e.g., offices) by more than one individual at a time, unless all individuals in such space at the same time are wearing face coverings or are members of the same household, in which case occupancy will not exceed 50%.

## **BUILDING OPERATIONS**

### **FIRE DRILLS & LOCKDOWN DRILLS**

Fire and lock down drills will occur as per New York State Department of Education and New York City Department of Health regulations. There will be a monthly fire drill, as well as four lockdown drills, during the course of the year. During each drill, faculty and students will follow all regulations for the drills, in addition to those required by health guidelines, including maintaining social distancing, wearing masks, and limiting contact outside of the regular cohorts.

### **LUNCH**

Lunch will occur in the classroom. During lunch, students will be able to unmask, but they will need to remain distanced, facing the same direction to prevent the transmission via droplets and aerosols. Students will be welcome to bring their own lunch or participate in a prepackaged school lunch program. A hand washing routine will precede and follow lunch. Sharing of food and utensils will be prohibited.

We have hired a school lunch company to provide lunch service for the coming year for School for Children students who opt in. Lunch will be prepared at our Head Start center following all health and safety guidelines. In both programs, lunch will be individually served for each child and distributed to classrooms by our staff. Our catering/school lunch company and Head Start kitchen will accommodate food allergies and other dietary restrictions. Children in the Family Center bring their own lunch.

Additionally, families are encouraged to send their children with water bottles. Water bottles will be refilled in classrooms to minimize the need of children leaving the classroom.

### **METRICS USED IN DECISION-MAKING: REOPENING AND CLOSING**

#### **New York City and State Metrics**

Bank Street will follow the below New York State and City guidance for reopening and closing:

- Schools in New York State can only reopen if: (1) the region is in Phase IV of reopening and (2) daily infection rate remains below 5% or lower using a 14-day average since unPAUSE was lifted. Schools in New York City can only reopen if the daily infection rate remains below 3%.
- Schools will close again if regional infection rate rises above 9%, using a 7-day average, after August 1.
- Governor Cuomo announced on August 7 that all schools in New York State can reopen. Mayor de Blasio will make a decision about whether or not to open New York City schools in person in early September.

We will also use our procedures around testing and contact tracing to assess levels of transmission within the school. If those levels of transmission reach an unacceptable level, we will close.

### **Metrics for Quarantining a Class**

Students will be grouped in cohorts (see below for more details) to allow for fewer opportunities for cross-exposure and easier containment of the virus if there is an outbreak. If a student from a given class is confirmed to be COVID-19 positive, then the class will self-quarantine at home for 14 days and the school community will be alerted. The school may take extra precautions in the form of increased cleaning, changes in school schedules or space use, etc. during this time to mitigate the risk of spread.

In the case of sickness, but no positive test, the community will not be alerted until such time as a positive result comes back from a quarantined student. Students who present with symptoms of COVID-19 during a period of self-quarantine need to follow the procedures for returning to school as outlined above.

If the student who tested positive has a sibling in a different class, the sibling will also self-quarantine; however, the sibling's classmates will not need to quarantine unless the sibling has any COVID-19 symptoms or tests positive.

During the time of a full-class quarantine, the class lessons will continue remotely.

### **Metrics Used for School-Wide Decisions**

We will be guided by [public policies that have been outlined by DOH](#) around classroom quarantines and full school closure if someone in the school community feels sick as we investigate. In deciding whether to close the school building and enter a phase of remote learning, Bank Street will use the following metrics (either alone or in combination, as circumstances suggest):

- Multiple classes within our own school community have positive cases due to transmission from within the school.
- We are not able to safely staff our school programs because we have a significant number of faculty/staff absent.

### **TRANSPORTATION**

In the School for Children and Head Start, we do not currently offer a bus service to or from school for our students.

There are students in the Family Center who take a school bus provided by the public school district, which will be following the State-issued public transit guidance, protocols and procedures. This includes developing protocols and procedures to make sure that all individuals wear acceptable face coverings at all times while entering, existing, and seated on school buses and that individuals maintain appropriate social distancing, unless they are members of the same household. We will also limit the capacity on each bus to ensure social distancing. Parents will be required to complete the screening questionnaire, including taking each child's temperature, before children will be allowed on the bus. When they arrive, we will be taking children off the bus one at a time to ensure physical distancing. A second teacher will stand with the arriving children ensuring children are distanced appropriately while waiting for classmates. After school, children will be taken to the buses in small groups with two teachers to ensure physical distancing. They will be taken onto the bus one at a time.

## ACADEMIC PROGRAMS

The 2020-21 school year will offer both in-person instruction and virtual learning options, allowing students who enroll in our in-person program to attend school five days a week and students who enroll in our BankStreet@Home virtual program to learn remotely five days a week. While many of our routines and procedures have changed, this year will continue to be philosophically consistent with our approach to learning.

In the event that the school closes, we are prepared to transition all students to BankStreet@Home. We are also closely working with families who have immunocompromised children, or members of their household, to provide our virtual option.

In all of our programming, we will keep the health and safety of our students, faculty, and staff as our top priority.

### IN-PERSON INSTRUCTION

#### Schedules

Students enrolled in in-person instruction will attend school five days a week, except for Upper School students in the School for Children, who will have a full day of learning remotely on Wednesdays to provide time and space for essential programmatic elements of the Upper School experience, including affinity groups, world language, performing arts, clubs, and community meetings.

#### Space Configurations

In order to create appropriate physical distancing, we have applied a rule of at least 50 square feet per person to each classroom, which is based on the goal of maintaining approximately six feet of social distance whenever possible. The maximum number of students in a given group will be determined by how many students are able to safely be together in their assigned room.

We are planning for the average size of groups to be 12 students; some groups will be slightly smaller, some slightly larger, with a maximum of 15 students in cases where the room has enough space for students to remain socially distanced. More information on this topic is available in our Social Distancing section. We have also hired additional teachers and support roles to accommodate for smaller class sizes.

In addition, we have expanded classroom usage throughout the building to accommodate smaller class sizes. In light of this, classroom furniture will also be relocated to new classroom spaces or stored, as needed. Similarly, faculty and staff needing office spaces, will be assigned to single office spaces.

#### Shared Materials

Bank Street will follow the below safety guidelines for shared materials:

- Classroom and outdoor playground toys will be frequently washed with soapy water and allowed to dry. We will also:

- rotate classroom toys throughout the day to allow for frequent cleaning;
- separate toys that can be mouthed and require cleaning in a labeled container noting the required cleaning; and
- routinely clean outdoor playground structures made of plastic or metal, such as grab bars and railings.

*Note: According to CDC, cleaning and disinfection of outdoor wooden surfaces (e.g., play structures, blocks, benches, tables) is not recommended.*

- Shared toys that are difficult to clean will not be used (e.g., sensory tables, playdough, dress-up clothes, puppets, etc.).
- Toys will not be shared between classrooms unless toys have been washed and allowed to dry. Regular soap and water can be used to clean toys.

*Note: According to the American Industrial Hygiene Association (AIHA), paper and cardboard-based items, such as children's books, do not require cleaning or disinfection, since transmission by that route is considered low risk.*

- Children will be strongly discouraged from bringing in toys from home. If personal toys are brought in, we will ensure that children do not share their toy with others.
- Students who are assigned a school chromebook will have their own device, which will not be shared with other students.
- Outdoor playground structures will not be used by more than one class/section of children at a time. If there is sufficient space on the playground and multiple structures, we will limit one pod to one structure as long as social and physical distancing can be maintained.
- Normal disinfection routines will be followed during diapering, including hand washing (staff and child) and cleaning and disinfecting the diaper changing station.
- When diapering or assisting with toileting, staff will wear gloves, wash hands (staff and child), and follow cleaning and disinfection steps between each child.
- Children and staff are required to practice hand hygiene for activities including but not limited to the following scenarios:
  - upon arrival to the first program activity;
  - between all program activities;
  - after using the restroom;
  - before and after eating; and
  - before departing the last program activity.

## **SPECIAL EDUCATION**

We will continue to support students with specialized needs and Individualized Education Plans through the collaboration of our special educators, classrooms teachers, and families for differentiated curriculum and interventions in classrooms.

In our School for Children, we will not be offering related services in the building during school hours. Since we cannot provide the space, supervision, and technology access during the regular school schedule for providers and students to do related services safely and routinely, we are communicating to families and providers that they will need to arrange for related services after school hours and at home or through video conferencing such as Zoom.

For our Family Center, in which we have a limited number of state-funded special education students, we are using the space and resources available to provide related services in the building during the regular school schedule.

### **VIRTUAL LEARNING: BANKSTREET@HOME (BS@H)**

BankStreet@Home is our virtual learning program. We have dedicated expert teaching staff supporting online learning for a small percentage of our student population, as well as a plan to integrate our Specialists equitably across in-person and at-home student groups. Teachers are planning curriculum and community activities so that in-person at-home groups of students interact and build relationships.

Students enrolled in BankStreet@Home will learn remotely five days a week. We have created this option for all students who are immunocompromised or have a family member who is, and we will keep this option in place until all students can safely return to the school in person.

Other families have been given the option to enroll their children remotely for the fall as well, and we are allowing all families who have selected BankStreet@Home to reassess their choice through the fall and decide to switch to in-person for the spring semester.

### **TECHNOLOGY**

Since the end of school, we have conducted outreach to other schools, spoken to experts, and reviewed available research to guide us in the development and strengthening of BankStreet@Home. We have explored various tools and learning management systems. Along the way we have engaged our faculty in understanding their perspectives and needs, leveraged our own leadership team's experiences with instructional technology, collaborated closely with Bank Street College's IT department, and been in constant dialogue with leadership about the decisions and resources relevant to strengthening BankStreet@Home.

Bank Street has made the following commitments to enhance our online learning approach:

- For all students learning at home we will ensure they are interacting with other children learning virtually as well as those learning in the school building so that all our children can remain connected to their peers.
- Charlie Vergara, the School for Children's Technology Coordinator, will be the point person for the learning needs of adults, including both our faculty and parents. In addition to direct support, he will be developing and sharing support resources such as documentation, videos, and set up guides.
- We are collaborating with Bank Street's IT team to ensure just-in-time tech support for hardware/connectivity issues for all constituents, including for parents.
- We will be partnering with and supporting parents, and are committed to understanding each family's context—culture, routines, etc.—through a “virtual home visit” conversation before BankStreet@Home begins in the fall.

- From our research and outreach, we have identified a set of technology tools and systems that will provide a stronger and easier user experience for children, families and educators this fall.
  - The college and school have been implementing the use of a student information system (SIS) called Blackbaud. We will continue to use this as a backbone for families and our faculty and staff to access, store, and manage key data and documents that are both financial (e.g., contracts, financial aid) and related to student progress and growth (e.g., reports). Blackbaud will also make it easier to send and archive communications to families.
  - For students in the 4/5s to 8/9s, Seesaw (<https://web.seesaw.me/>) will be part of the BankStreet@Home experience. We are engaging with our teachers and leaders about its potential to be used in combination with Google Classroom or independently. We will provide families with more information on how the use of these tools will be structured to support tactile and kinesthetic learning, as well as managing assignments, providing teacher feedback, and serving as a hub for all academic work for our younger learners.
  - For students in 9/10s through 13/14s, we will build from successful virtual learning experiences this spring, using a combination of Google Suite and Classroom, elements of Blackbaud, and other instructional tools (e.g., Desmos) that students have learned or can learn to manage without placing an undue burden on parents to navigate it all.
  - We are currently working to build a deeper understanding of these instructional and data system tools and developing training opportunities for our teachers.
- We are dedicating teams of teachers to BankStreet@Home sections that align with how we are planning to support in-person sections of children. The expertise of Head Teachers and Associate Teachers in the Lower and Middle Schools, and Humanities and Math/Science teachers in the Upper School, will be equitably distributed, as will access to Specialists.
- A regular and predictable set of activities will be shared before the school year as well as agreements between home and school to best support children's learning.
  - For the 4/5s to 8/9s, we are making adjustments based on our experiences and feedback for the types and amounts of synchronous time; with fewer students in each section, we will be able to increase synchronous instructional time while remaining within the bounds of what is developmentally appropriate and being mindful of when asynchronous times are beneficial for young children.
  - For the 9/10s to 13s/14s, we will build off our approach to synchronous and asynchronous learning and teaching times and formats that was successful with this spring; the sections will also be smaller which will allow us greater flexibility for learning, support and enrichment.
- We will be differentiating the way we think about "screen time," with periods of time that children are engaging with others through the screen and times when a child is engaged in an activity with a teacher at the ready to support them if needed through the screen.
- Curriculum and learning goals for BankStreet@Home students will be aligned with our in-person curriculum, though there will need to be modifications. Relevant materials and tools that are needed for BankStreet@Home learning will be provided or a materials list will be shared prior to the start of school.
- We will be thoughtful about how best to provide social-emotional supports for both children and their families engaged in BankStreet@Home.

## **SPECIALS, EXTRACURRICULAR & OTHER ACTIVITIES**

### **INDOOR GUIDELINES**

No health or physical activities are allowed in classrooms except light stretching and meditative and mindfulness exercises.

The gym can have at most two sections of students at one time in a space that allows for 12 feet of space between students, with proper supervision for both sections according to child development needs and expectations. These sections will be separated by dividers and there will also be dividers provided to cordon off a corridor for children to exit the space to use the bathroom or leave without entering the other section's space. The gym space will also have an open time in between usage for cleaning and full air circulation.

In the gym, students can engage in light physical activities, wearing face coverings per our guidelines, that enable natural spacing, such as walking, yoga, games of skill practice, other activities that can be done while prohibiting clustering of players or heavy exertion and breathing.

We are providing Specials classes (e.g., Art, Shop, Drama, Music, Physical Education, World Language, Library) remotely whenever the teacher must interact with children in more than two groups. This means the Specialist will either provide instruction and guidance through video conference such as Zoom or in a pre-recorded video and planned with the classroom teacher. In some cases, we are also integrating Specials content and skills into classroom curriculum. We will not be doing any activities that include singing, playing a wind instrument, or projecting loudly as part of a drama class in person

We are convening community gatherings, special events, and smaller affinity groups and clubs through video conferencing as well, with times built into the weekly schedule to accommodate for these important meetings. For faculty and staff, we will host video or teleconferencing meetings and conferences.

### **OUTDOOR GUIDELINES**

External to the building, in open spaces and park areas, students can engage in light to moderate physical activities, wearing face masks per our guidelines, that enable natural spacing, such as walking, jogging, yoga, Pilates, and games that can be done while prohibiting clustering of players.

The Roof and Deck will have no more than two sections at one time, with proper supervision for both sections according to child development needs and expectations. The roof will be divided by a curtain to keep the sections separate. The deck will require sections to take turns using the facilities and materials, such as switching the use of equipment (e.g., the climber). Children can engage in light to moderate physical activities, wearing face masks per our guidelines; the games and play activities in these areas must enable natural spacing and avoid clustering of children as much as possible.

### **BEFORE & AFTER SCHOOL / EXTRACURRICULARS**

For School for Children students, we are creating a set of fee-based virtual after school offerings such as chess, science, and movement, while working with our music professionals to ensure there are continued instrumental lessons; we are also seeking to continue with a more limited set of free

ensemble offerings that are also virtual. Currently, we are planning to offer a level of financial aid for these virtual programs that aligns to individual family financial aid tuition rates.

We have determined that we will not be able to offer in-person child care before and after school, at least at the start of the school year. It is our hope that, as we learn how best to run school safely during the school day, we will also be able to build options for After School programming in the building that can also meet our safety protocols. We will not be offering sports and team activities either.

**CONGREGATE EVENTS (I.E., SPECIAL EVENTS, FIELD TRIPS)**

Bank Street will not be hosting any special events in-person that bring members of our community together across the groupings of children and adults that exist day to day to keep children and educators safe. All annual events, such as curriculum nights and fundraisers, will occur virtually, if at all.

Additionally, we are not planning any field trips or enabling our community members to attend student or educator conferences in person.

## COMMUNITY

### MENTAL HEALTH & SOCIAL-EMOTIONAL SUPPORT

#### Employees

Bank Street offers an Employee Assistance Program (EAP), a confidential counseling and referral service available for free to all employees and their household members. Counselors are available 24 hours a day, seven days a week to help with a whole range of issues, from support for personal problems, to free legal assistance, to help finding a pet sitter. Through EAP, staff members and their families can receive three free therapy sessions over the phone and assistance in finding a longer term referral aligned with their insurance.

The Bank Street Children's Programs (Family Center, Head Start, and School for Children) are working to establish a partnership with a mental health organization that provides staff with professional development designed to meet them where they are and to support them in their work with families and children during the COVID-19 public health emergency. The partnership will be built to ensure that staff come together at least monthly with mental health professionals who have an understanding of trauma-informed practices.

#### Students & Families

Our teachers and staff will be in constant communication with parents about the emotional and mental health needs of each child. Our faculty have been trained in the past and are receiving additional training on the indicators of anxiety and trauma in children, for both in-person and online learning.

At Bank Street, we have a deep well of age-appropriate practices to support the social-emotional as well as cognitive and intellectual development of children and will continue to use those and adapt them to this new context, keeping in mind the safety and social distancing requirements above. From play and work time for younger students, to in-depth, collaborative, longer term projects in humanities and math and science for our older students, we are committed to addressing the needs of the whole learner in this time of increased social and emotional crises.

We also have a team of social workers and psychologists that have taken what they have learned from the spring's crisis mode around the virus and are building a thoughtful, comprehensive approach for our faculty, children and families around shared responsibilities and resources for a safe, healthy, and supportive school year.

The Family Center and Head Start contract with mental health professionals who are available to meet with families and to make referrals for mental health programs, resources, and services.

### COMMUNICATION PLANS

Bank Street will continue to regularly communicate with students, faculty, and staff about reopening plans as well as health and safety information through our usual methods, such as posting on our website, sending frequent email updates, hosting town halls and Zoom meetings with families, and updating our family handbook. We will also publish this plan on our website and update as needed. Additionally, School for Children division heads and the Family Center

and Head Start directors will engage with families through virtual meetings in smaller settings, individual conversations, and via email. We will share resources and training around technology, PPE, and other COVID-19 protocols, including but not limited to hand hygiene, proper face covering wearing, social distancing, and respiratory hygiene.

All families currently enrolled in the Bank Street Family Center and School for Children for the 2020-21 school year are proficient in English, but should that change every effort will be made to communicate orally with the family in their home language. Translations of all materials are provided as needed for families in our Head Start programs.

Bank Street will create a community expectations document that parents will sign before the first day of school confirming that all families understand health and safety requirements such as the need to complete daily health questionnaires, the fact that parents will not be able to enter the building, rules around attendance, and the impact of travel and other choices families make outside of the school day.

There will be signage in restrooms and common spaces around proper hygiene, face coverings, and social distancing encouraging faculty, staff, and students to adhere to CDC and DOH guidance. We will have distance markers denoting spaces of six feet in all commonly used areas and any areas in which lines are commonly formed or people may congregate, including signs with arrows in hallways.