

## Open House Nursery School

### Layered Covid Policies & Procedures

*Effective September 8, 2022*

*“Each layer of protection makes a difference. Avoiding crowding, good ventilation, consistent mask-wearing, vaccinating everyone who is eligible, regular testing and symptom screening all contribute to Covid safety in schools, even if no single layer of protection is perfect,”*

*– Anna Bershteyn, assistant professor of population health at N. Y.U.’s Grossman School of Medicine*

Our approach is multi-layered and has roles for all members of our community.

#### 1. Symptoms

No one with any symptoms of Covid may enter Open House unless they have had a negative Covid test within the last 48 hours, including vaccinated people and children with even mild cold symptoms such as a runny nose. The list of Covid symptoms is long and broad:

- Runny nose or nasal congestion
- Headache
- Muscle pain or body aches
- Nausea, vomiting, or diarrhea
- Shortness of breath or trouble breathing
- Sore throat
- Fatigue
- Loss of taste or smell
- Cough
- Feverish sensation or chills
- Temperature above 100.0 F

Parents and caregivers are asked to screen their children before leaving for school, and school staff will screen children once they arrive. Anyone with symptoms and without a negative Covid test within the last 48 hours should not come into the school building. If your child develops Covid symptoms during the day, you may be asked to pick them up and be tested. Your child may return once symptoms are largely resolved and your child is fever-free for 24 hours without the use of fever-reducing medications and has taken a negative Covid test. If the symptoms are from a condition diagnosed by a doctor (e.g. allergies) a letter from a doctor to that effect will relieve the need for testing and staying at home.

While recently recovered people (currently defined by the CDC as having tested positive in the last 90 days) are exempt from PCR testing, the school may ask for a Home Rapid test if symptoms are severe and/or they follow a known exposure.

In addition, even with a negative Covid test, children with very runny noses, coughs, fever, or who are generally unwell must stay home until their symptoms are largely resolved and they have been fever-free for 24 hours, without the use of fever-reducing medications.

Open House recognizes the burden this places on families, but keeping symptomatic people out of the school is extremely effective at reducing the spread of Covid and other infectious diseases.

## 2. Decision Tree

Our Decision Tree outlines much of our decision process regarding isolations and quarantines so that when situations arise, we have pre-designated decisions for any action to be taken. You can see our most recent Decision Tree and other Covid information at: [openhousekids.org/health-safety](https://openhousekids.org/health-safety). We regularly update that document to incorporate any new requirements from our governing agency, the NYC Department of Health, recent guidance from the CDC, and our individual community standards.

## 3. Daily Screenings

Teachers screen children daily for Covid symptoms, other symptoms, and other health concerns. Teachers will check children's temperatures daily.

## 4. Vaccination

All Open House staff are vaccinated. Adults accompanying children into the school must attest to being vaccinated.

We are very grateful that vaccination against Covid-19 for children under 5 has begun. The overwhelming majority of Open House families report they will have their child vaccinated. Please be sure to submit copies of your child's vaccination record by email to [programs@openhousekids.org](mailto:programs@openhousekids.org).

## 5. Community Standards Outside of School

All members of the Open House community – including parents, caregivers, staff, and other adults – should mitigate the possibility of bringing Covid into the school, including following advice from the CDC and NYS and NYC Departments of Health. In addition, all members of the community should communicate with the school's Directors and their classroom teachers about any exposures to anyone with Covid.

## 6. Surveillance

Our Covid surveillance PCR saliva testing program with Mirimus Labs detects cases of Covid. When Covid cases are found, we follow quarantine protocols outlined in our “Decision Tree” and/or required by the Department of Health and CDC guidelines. Last year we had weekly surveillance on Fridays, but we can increase the frequency of testing if we feel that is necessary. Testing fees are passed through to families at cost.

7. Masking

While masking is optional, we currently recommend all adults in our facility wear masks when in the school's public areas unless they are outside. Children are also encouraged to do so. Masking is optional inside Open House for most people. Masks are required in Open House if you are within ten days of an exposure or are within ten days of an infection.

8. Surfaces & Handwashing

Surfaces are cleaned on a regular schedule and handwashing is frequent and thorough.

9. Outdoor Time

Between 9am and 1pm, every class has two periods of outdoor time: one for guided movement/dance and one for free play. Our outdoor playground is large enough to accommodate multiple classes at a time.

10. Ventilation and Air Quality

Our HVAC system was updated this summer. It runs continuously when children are in attendance. All rooms have windows, and when the weather permits they are opened. All rooms and the public hallway have HEPA filtration machines.

11. Sick staff policy

Open House provides unlimited paid time off to staff for Covid-related reasons, including time off for testing due to a possible exposure or recovery from the vaccine.