



Finn Academy 2021-2022 Reopening Plan

The Path Forward.



Letter from Finn Leadership

Dear Finn Families,

It seems hard to believe that we will be entering another school year amidst a global pandemic. Over the last year and a half, you have all demonstrated the character that makes Finn Academy unique. We are pleased with and inspired by our teachers and staff who have worked tirelessly since March, 2020 to ensure your scholars have the best educational experience possible. We are proud of your scholars for persevering and doing their very best, despite the frustrating moments they faced. And we are deeply appreciative that as parents, grandparents, and care givers, you allowed us the honor of having your children remain with us. As a school community, it is important that we pause and appreciate all that we have accomplished in light of these challenges. Our core principles of scholarship, perseverance, aspiration, reflection, kindness, and leadership are the tools that will help us continue to successfully navigate the unknown that lies ahead of us. Remember, we are crew and we choose Finn.

We recognize that the fall and a return to school once again holds great uncertainty. Our leadership, teachers and staff have worked throughout tirelessly throughout the summer for a return to in-person learning for all scholars. The re-entry continued to focus on these points in its work:

1. Scholar and staff safety. Our school will follow the recommended safety guidelines put forth by the State in order to protect the health of the school community.
2. Scholar social and emotional well being. We will ensure copious support for scholars as they resume school in the fall as they experience unparalleled times as learners.
3. Scholar academic success. You and your scholars can anticipate access to the high-quality education that Finn is proud to offer as a school of choice.

We are grateful for your support and partnership during this time. Please know we are here for you and your scholars, we welcome your questions and feedback, and we look forward to continuing along the educational journey with you and your scholars this fall.

Sincerely,

Finn Leadership Team

Executive Summary

In planning for the safe reopening for the 2021-2022 academic year, the school analyzed and incorporated guidelines and recommendations from the NYS Department of Health, the CDC, NYS Education Department, SUNY Charter Schools Institute, and our local Public Health Department. The school also sought input from parents/guardians, staff members, and community stakeholders through various modes of data gathering.

The New York State Department of Health released guidance for the return to in person instruction on September 2, 2021; that guidance can be found here:

<https://coronavirus.health.ny.gov/system/files/documents/2021/09/school-guidance.pdf>

As a K-6 charter school, Finn Academy remains committed to its mission of promoting an inclusive, rigorous and nurturing environment to best prepare our children for their future and to cultivate a community of scholars, leaders and friends. While the 2021-2022 school year will continue to look different than in years past, our Board of Trustees, leaders, and staff remain committed to this mission.

We have also approached our planning and decision-making for the upcoming school year through three key lenses: health and safety, social-emotional and mental health well-being, and academics and instruction, and consistently grounded in focused guiding principles.

The School's designated COVID-19 Safety Coordinator is the Chief Operations Officer; however, the health and safety of Finn Academy's scholars and staff is everyone's responsibility. Any questions or concerns should follow the School's normal communication chain.

To continue to effectively meet the needs of our school community, this reopening plan will be reviewed, adjusted, and communicated to stakeholders, in alignment with any changes to guidance or recommendations by the various state agencies and our charter authorizer, the SUNY Charter Schools Institute.

Guiding Principles

The School's reentry planning and decision-making process has been consistently grounded in the following guiding principles:

- **Health and Safety** – The School will align all decisions with the recommendations of the NYS Department of Health in order to safeguard the health and safety of our scholars, staff, and entire school community.
- **Equity** – The school will prioritize equitable access to high-quality instruction and school-wide supports for all scholars.
- **Social-Emotional and Mental Health Needs** – The school will prioritize the social-emotional and mental well-being of scholars and staff; connection before content.
- **High-quality Instruction** – Continued focus on delivery of high-quality instruction to all scholars across all instructional models to support growth and achievement.
- **Communication** – Consistent communication between school, families, and staff will be essential in ensuring that key stakeholders are up to date with important information and changes throughout the year.
- **Special Area Instruction** – Fitness, Dance, STEM, Art, and Music will continue to be an important component of learning for Finn Academy scholars.

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The Plan

Physical Distancing

Per NYSDOH guidance, because of the importance of in-person learning, schools should implement physical distancing to the extent possible within their structures, consistent with the following, but should not exclude students from in-person learning in order to meet a minimum distance requirement.

- (a) A distance of at least 3 feet is strongly recommended between all students.
- (b) A distance of at least 6 feet is recommended between students and teachers/staff, and between teachers/staff who are not fully vaccinated.
- (c) Universal masking is required according to the Commissioner's masking determination issued pursuant to 10 NYCRR 2.60 for indoor settings. Should there be a time when the determination for universal masking in schools is lifted, masking must occur when physical distance cannot be maintained.
- (d) Maximize physical distance as much as possible when moving through the food service line and while eating (especially indoors). Using additional spaces outside of the cafeteria for mealtime seating such as the gymnasium or outdoor seating can help facilitate distancing.

Finn Academy will follow the protocols and procedures below to ensure physical distancing is maintained at all times while on school grounds:

- a. Staff, scholars and visitors will be reminded through signage on school grounds that they must maintain physical distancing at all times when in common areas, such as hallways.
- b. Floor decals will be placed in typical gathering areas, i.e. the Main Office, so visitors are instructed to abide by physical distancing guidelines.
- c. Within classrooms, seating will meet physical distancing requirements.
- d. Arrival and dismissal times will be staggered to allow for distanced wellness screenings upon arrival, decrease in density in hallways as scholars head to classrooms and dismissal locations, and to reduce parent/guardian gatherings on school grounds.
- e. Multiple arrival and dismissal entrance and exits will be utilized to ensure for proper physical distancing.

Masking

- a) In accordance with the Commissioner's determination issued pursuant to 10 NYCRR 2.60, all students, personnel, teachers, administrators, contractors, and visitors must wear masks at all times indoors, regardless of vaccination status.
- b) People with medical or developmental conditions that prevent them from wearing a mask may be exempted from mask requirements, as documented by a medical provider.
- c) People do not need to wear masks when eating, drinking, singing, or playing a wind instrument; when masks are removed for these purposes, individuals must be spaced six feet apart. This may mean that meals cannot be eaten in classrooms that have been arranged to accommodate shorter distances between students during instruction time. Students should not be excluded from in-person learning in order to meet a minimum distance requirement.
- d) All mask requirements must be applied consistently with any state and federal law (e.g., Americans with Disabilities Act).
- e) Information on how to properly wear a mask can be found here:

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/prevent-getting-sick/about-face-coverings.html>

The school will be responsible for maintaining adequate supply of disposable masks for distribution to scholars, faculty and staff that arrive without one.

Mask Breaks: Breaks can occur when individuals can be six (6) feet apart and ideally outside or at least with the windows open. Classrooms will establish a six (6) foot, mask-free zone in which scholars may take their mask breaks. If such zones cannot be safely established, other arrangements will be made to accommodate mask breaks.

Transparent Face Coverings: Transparent face coverings provide the opportunity for more visual cues. These will be considered as an alternative for younger scholars, scholars who are deaf/hard of hearing, and their teachers. For example, the School may provide alternate PPE (i.e., masks that are transparent at or around the mouth) for therapies or interventions that require visualization of the movement of the lips and/or mouths (e.g. speech therapy). These alternate coverings may also be used for certain scholars (e.g. hearing impaired) that benefit from being able to see more of the teacher's face.

Operational Activity

The building is closed to non-custodial staff from 6 PM to 5 AM for disinfecting/cleaning to occur without disruption. One exception will be for the School's Board of Trustees to hold meetings on a scheduled basis, adhering to all physical distancing guidelines, once the Open Meetings Law does not allow for further virtual meetings.

School Events/Field Trips/Open Houses

- Scholar assemblies/gatherings may be held, by cohort, but will be determined on a case-by-case basis
- Performances where scholars can be social distanced shall be live streamed to parents/guardians/caregivers; at this time, where possible events and gatherings will be held virtually.
- Field studies may be approved on a case-by-case basis, ensuring that cohorts travel together and there are health and safety procedures to be followed at the destination site.

Groups who request to utilize Finn Academy space will not be permitted to do so at this time so that the building and classrooms can be disinfected each night, and no outside individuals are introduced into the school setting. This policy will be reviewed regularly.

Finn Academy will participate in extracurricular activities or programming on a case-by-case basis; if held in person, they will be held by cohort and it will be determined if outside visitors will be able to attend in person.

Entrances: Signage is posted at each entrance advising entrants to wear cloth face coverings and to properly social distance. Hand sanitizer is available at all entrances for scholars to sanitize prior to their arrival in the building. Visitors will be encouraged to sanitize hands upon entrance to the building.

Cohorts: To minimize the number of scholars who would potentially be exposed in the event of a COVID-19 event, the school will keep scholars in the same group throughout the day. A cohort shall be defined as

Shared Materials: Teachers will avoid sharing of electronic devices, toys, books, and other games or learning aids, where practicable. Classrooms will have adequate supplies to minimize sharing of high touch materials to the extent possible (art supplies, music equipment, technology equipment, general classroom supplies) or use of supplies and equipment will be limited by one group of children at a time and cleaned and disinfected between use.

Shared spaces: the use of shared spaces, i.e. Cafeteria, Library, will be limited.

Special Area Classes: special area teachers will work with crews on a two-week rotation.

PlaySpace: The outdoor PlaySpace will be sectioned off for use by one class/crew at a time in one area and the classes/crews will not mix; in the case of inclement weather, scholars will remain within their classrooms for their recess block and be encouraged to work on individual projects. Masks will be required for scholars while outdoors at Recess.

Ventilation

The Maintenance team will ensure ventilation systems operate properly and are being controlled as designed. Circulation of outdoor air will be increased as much as possible through both natural and mechanical means. Established HVAC inspection and maintenance requirements will be followed that will preserve our system's ability to achieve proper ventilation of our buildings.

Hygiene, Cleaning & Disinfection

The School will provide hand hygiene stations around the school including hand washing stations (existing in restrooms, various classrooms) with soap, running water, disposable paper towels and hand sanitizing stations with alcohol-based sanitizer (at least 60% alcohol).

Employees and scholars will be instructed and trained to wash their hands for at least 20 seconds with soap and water frequently throughout the day, but especially at the beginning and end of their day, prior to any mealtimes and after using the toilet.

Main entrances, common areas, classrooms, and office spaces will be provided with hand sanitizer that can be used for hand hygiene in place of soap and water, as long as hands are not visibly soiled. The School will ensure disinfecting products will be provided and located on/near commonly shared equipment and supplies (e.g. copiers). Prior to use of a shared piece of equipment, an employee should disinfect the surfaces that will be touched. After use of a shared piece of equipment, the employee should disinfect the surfaces that were touched. Employees should then practice hand-washing or hand sanitization procedures.

Signs will be posted throughout the building reminding employees to stop and sanitize before and after use of equipment and supplies. Disinfecting products will be

provided in various locations throughout the buildings for faculty and staff to disinfect commonly used surfaces periodically throughout the day. Hand sanitizers will be available near high-touch surfaces throughout the building. Receptacles will be available around the school for disposal of soiled items (paper towels, masks, etc). Signs will be posted throughout the building to instruct staff and scholars about proper hand washing procedures and reminding them to hand-wash and/or hand sanitize frequently.

In terms of Cleaning/Disinfection, the CDC provides Reopening Guidance for Cleaning and Disinfection with specific guidance for schools along with the Cleaning and Disinfection Decision Tool to aid in determining what level of cleaning and/or disinfection is necessary. School wide cleaning must include classrooms, restrooms, cafeteria, library, PlaySpace, and busses that will be transporting Finn Academy scholars.

Transportation

Every effort will be made by Finn Academy to encourage parents/legal guardians to drop off or walk scholars to school to reduce density on school buses.

AM Transportation:

Finn Academy scholars are transported to school on morning buses by host districts, i.e. Elmira City School District, Horseheads Central School District, Waverly School District, etc. Finn Academy will coordinate and support these Districts with the communication to these families re: protocols and procedures re: transport on school buses in the morning.

PM Transportation:

Afternoon transportation for Finn Academy scholars is provided through a private bussing company, Terps Enterprises.

Terps Enterprises will be following the NYSED guidelines regarding transportation for the school year. Per the guidance:

In accordance the Commissioner's determination, issued pursuant to 10 NYCRR 2.60, masking is required on public transportation in accordance with the CDC recommendations and as also referenced in the CDC's school guidance. To that end, passengers and drivers must wear a mask on school buses, including on buses operated by public and private school systems, regardless of vaccination status, subject to applicable exclusions and exemptions.

Food Services

A successful nutrition program is a key component to a successful educational environment. Children cannot focus on learning when they are hungry. School meals boost learning, and studies show that scholars perform best academically when they are well nourished.

1. PHYSICAL DISTANCING

Staff: Staff will be staggered in reporting to work and where their workstations will be during food production to allow for appropriate physical distancing between staff. Breaks will be staggered to allow for ample space to eat meals in the break area.

Scholars: Scholars will eat in classrooms or outdoor areas if weather permits, maintaining the appropriate distancing.

There will be no salad bar service until further notice.

2. FOOD ALLERGIES: We will maintain our procedures for communal eating where staff is trained, provided with appropriate sanitizing materials and food is packaged separately and safely for children to consume in order to protect our scholars with food allergies.

3. MEAL SERVICE LOCATIONS: Breakfast will be grab and go, located at entrances to the building so scholars can pick up and bring to their classrooms. Lunch will be eaten in each scholar's respective classroom.

4. HYGIENE: All scholars will eat their meals in their classroom spaces in order to maintain the cohort system that has been established.

Scholars will be trained on proper hand hygiene and will wash hands before and after eating. If no sinks are available in their spaces, they will use sanitizer to clean their hands. Masks will be worn up until the time the children are seated in their designated areas and have their food ready to eat. They will remove their masks while eating then put back on immediately after.

Following food consumption, teachers, aides, or custodial staff will properly clean surfaces so that the scholars can return to learning.

5. COMMUNAL FOOD SHARING will be prohibited, and all school meals will be prepackaged.

6. MOVEMENT: Carts will be set up so scholars can grab a bag to take back to their classrooms. They will be placed far enough apart so children can move efficiently by the bags and grab one. All allergy meals will be packed separately, and signage provided. Staff will monitor the pickup of these bags until the process is efficient and safely implemented.

Lunch will be delivered to each classroom; food service staff will not enter these spaces to set up food. All meals will be left on a cart or table outside of the classroom.

9. WATER SERVICE: per NSLP, there must be potable water available to all children during their mealtime. All classrooms will receive multiple water bottles for the scholars to have water throughout the day; the teachers will monitor the water service.

Scholars at older grade levels will be encouraged to bring a water bottle to school and to fill them at new no touch water filling stations.

Physical Education and Recess

Per NYSDOH guidance: In general, people do not need to wear masks when they are outdoors (e.g., participating in outdoor play, recess, and physical education activities). CDC recommends those who are not fully vaccinated wear a mask in crowded outdoor settings or during activities that involve sustained close contact with others. Therefore, Finn Academy will require masks be worn while outdoors.

The Commissioner's determination for masking in schools issued pursuant to 10 NYCRR 2.60 applies to indoor settings, including physical education that takes place in a gymnasium or indoor recess (such as takes place during inclement weather). For indoor physical education activities in which masking is not possible (e.g., swimming), a minimum distance of 6 feet must be maintained to deviate from the above referenced Commissioner's determination.

Mental Health, Behavioral, and Social-emotional Support Services and Programs

Since Spring 2020, our school community has experienced disruption of our typical routines and schedules, separation from one another, illness or even loss of family and friends, and isolation from many of the things that typically bring comfort and a sense of belonging and safety. Given the social-emotional and mental impact on scholars, staff, and families, the school's plan has prioritized supports that will address the needs of all stakeholders to aid in healing, coping, and building crucial skills to move forward. Throughout the upcoming year, the school will remain focused on the "3-R's" of relationships, routines and resilience.

Through collaborative partnerships with local agencies, curriculum designers, and national experts, we will work to provide support, professional development and training, and resources to address the needs of our key stakeholders in the areas of: mental health and trauma, social-emotional learning (SEL), school-wide procedures and classroom environment, and adult wellness. The goal is to begin by preparing staff during August professional development sessions, emphasizing that the first two weeks of school will prioritize social-emotional learning, and to then continue to build on this foundation with continued training and support throughout the year.

1) Mental Health and Trauma

- Continued partnership with Family Services (FS) of Chemung County to provide school-based mental health counseling to our scholars in-building in live sessions. For remote learners, therapeutic sessions will be conducted at the FS Clinic or via tele-therapy. Referrals to this program are initiated by teachers, parents/guardians, and other community agencies, and are approved by the Dean of Scholars, in concert with the school counselor.
- Short-term individual and crisis counseling with our school counselor will continue to be made available through the below referral sources, and can be facilitated live or virtually:
 - Teacher referral (via email, phone, in-person, or Google Form)
 - Parent/guardian referral (via email, phone, in-person, or Google Form)
 - Self-referral by scholar (via hard copy form, in-person, or Google Form)
- Small group counseling sessions with our school counselor will be provided, as physical distancing allows, and will be provided in-person.
- Ongoing training will take place for staff surrounding trauma-informed teaching practices, and how to identify and support scholars in need

2) Social Emotional Learning

- Training for all staff on the CASEL competencies and NYSED SEL benchmarks
- Consistent implementation of Second Step SEL curriculum across grades K-6.
- Implementation of the DESSA (Devereux Scholar Strengths Assessment) Mini for all scholars K-6 to quickly identify opportunities for growth in the areas of self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, relationship skills, goal-directed behavior, personal responsibility, decision making and optimistic thinking. The full DESSA will be facilitated for scholars identified as at-risk

- Tentative pilot of EduMotion in Dance class; a program that explores the world through cultural dance and movement while focusing on SEL themes, such as, diversity, empathy and kindness
- Resources and additional professional development connected to integration of social-emotional and academic learning and mindfulness practices
- Creation of a school climate team to ensure continued review of the school's social-emotional learning supports and programming and to maintain fidelity to the school's mission and culture. Team members include: teachers at both lower and upper grade levels, special area teacher, Dean of Scholars, school social worker, and option for parents, community members, and Board members to participate and provide input.

3) School-wide Procedures and Classroom Environment

- Alignment of school's norms and core values with all models of instruction
- Training for staff on building crew and community utilizing restorative practices and positive discipline approaches
- Consistent facilitation of daily crews, live or virtually, to encourage growth of relationships and social-emotional skills
- Reflection space in all learning spaces to provide scholars an opportunity to reset their emotional state, reflect on choices, and practice coping strategies
- Built-in opportunities for staff and scholars to maintain relationships and connections from previous school year (i.e.: crew mail)
- Policies to support universal staff response to scholar removal of masks, refusal to physical distance, inappropriate conduct in virtual sessions (if applicable) and/or on message boards

4) Adult Wellness

- Professional development for staff regarding mindfulness practices and self-care
- Ongoing opportunities for support sessions with staff and school leaders
- Continued partnership with Family Services of Chemung County to offer staff EAP (Employee Assistance Program) counseling
- Supporting staff in identifying and reflecting on individual social-emotional strengths and areas of need
- Continued crew-building as a staff during professional development sessions, and extracurricular activities. Prioritizing staff culture via Wellness and Sunshine Committee initiatives.

- The school's coaching program and weekly grade level team meetings will also continue to provide an outlet and support for school staff
- Ongoing dissemination of mental health and social-emotional learning resources to families to support their scholars at home; including, but not limited to: school social worker spotlight in biweekly newsletter, school social worker Google Classroom, and Second Step lesson follow-up

Communication

Finn Academy has a robust communication system in place for both regular and urgent communications. Urgent messages, as well as up-to-date policies and protocols, will be communicated through multiple channels that families and staff rely on for information from the school, including:

- Kaymbu (school-wide messaging system) e-blasts, robocalls and text messages
- School website – the school's reopening plan will be available on the school's website. A dedicated section created in the spring specifically to support remote learning will be refreshed with updated information for fall reopening.
- Official Finn Academy Facebook feeds, with messages amplified by shares from family members and other official groups, i.e. Finn Family Crew (parent organization)
- Family and staff newsletters are produced in alternating weeks during the school year. As circumstances require, the school will transition to more frequent newsletters. Both parent and staff newsletters were produced during the spring school closure to cover the unprecedented and evolving news, to support remote learning, and provide families with additional resources.
- Other communication outreach on reopening and COVID-19 will include town hall-style webinar meetings and Q&A sessions hosted by the school leadership and/or Board of Trustees, videos, fact sheets, FAQs and infographics.
- During August staff professional development, time will be designated to review all new health and safety policies and protocols to ensure consistent implementation school-wide

Daily Health Screenings

NYSED/NYSDOH guidance does not require that schools implement daily health screenings in the 2021-2022 academic year. However, Finn Academy has determined that this has been a helpful tool and reminder for staff and families in determining whether they should report

to work/school; therefore, Finn Academy will continue with daily screenings. Specifically, all individuals must have their temperature checked each day.

Faculty and Staff Screening:

Daily, staff will be required to submit confirmation that they answer NO to all of the following statements, prior to arrival in the building:

- knowingly been in close or proximate contact in the past 14 days with anyone who has tested positive through a diagnostic test for COVID-19 or who has or had symptoms of COVID-19;
- tested positive through a diagnostic test for COVID-19 in the past 14 days;
- experienced any symptoms of COVID-19, including a temperature of greater than 100.0°F in the past 14 days: and/or

Scholar Screening:

It will be the parent/guardian responsibility to perform temperature checks on their child before arriving at the bus stop, or at school.

The school has no touch infrared thermometers, and all scholars will be screened at their designated entrance prior to entering the building.

Daily screening emails will be sent to all families as a reminder not to send scholars to school if they have been in contact with someone with COVID-19, and/or are experiencing any symptoms that are consistent with COVID-19.

Positive Screen Protocols:

Any individual who screens positive for COVID-19 exposure or symptoms, if screened at the school, must be immediately sent home with instructions to contact their health care provider for assessment and testing.

Scholars who are being sent home because of a positive screen (i.e. onset of symptoms within the school day or upon arrival) must be immediately separated from other scholars and supervised until their parent/guardian or emergency contact can retrieve them from school. Upon pick up, the parent/guardian will be provided information on health care and testing resources.

The school will notify the state and local health department about the case, if the diagnostic test results are positive for COVID-19.

Testing Requirement

On September 2, 2021, Governor Kathy Hochul announced that the Public Health and Health Planning Council passed an emergency regulation and the Health Commissioner issued a determination requiring all teachers, administrators and other school employees to submit to weekly COVID-19 testing unless they show proof of vaccination, with either a CDC vaccine card or the Excelsior Pass. The details of that guidance can be found here:

https://regs.health.ny.gov/sites/default/files/pdf/emergency_regulations/COVID-19%20Reporting%20and%20Testing.pdf

The Chief Operations Officer (COO) will gather vaccination information from all staff; those who are not vaccinated will be instructed to be tested weekly and report their results to the COO. The school is working with the local Health Department to determine an efficient means to test non-vaccinated employees on a weekly basis.

School Health Office

The School Health Office will remain open for the day to day needs of scholars within the school building, i.e. administration of medications, injured scholars, etc. An Isolation Room is maintained in order to isolate and treat any staff or scholars who demonstrate or develop symptoms of COVID-19 during the school day.

Our main School Nurse will continue to staff the School Health Office; a part time Nurse will be present and available to staff the Isolation Room if/when needed. On the days we do not have two nursing staff members available, a member of the School Leadership Team will be responsible for staffing the Isolation Room until a family member can pick up a scholar exhibiting symptoms.

Isolation

Any individual who screens positive for COVID-19 exposure or symptoms, if screened at the school, must be immediately sent home with instructions to contact their health care provider for assessment and testing.

Scholars who are being sent home because of a positive screen (i.e. onset of symptoms within the school day or upon arrival) must be immediately separated and isolated from other scholars and supervised until their parent/guardian or emergency contact can retrieve them from school. Upon pick up, the parent/guardian will be

provided information on health care and testing resources and instructed on the possibility of a return to the building for their scholar (see Return to Work/School).

The Isolation Room identified for the Finn Academy building is the room located near our parent and bus drop off entrances—this way, if any individual screen positives, they will be ushered to the Isolation Room nearby, minimizing their movement throughout the building. A staff member (either a member of the Nursing Staff or a member of the School Leadership Team) will don PPE (gown, eye protection, gloves and an N95 mask) to protect themselves while supervising the scholar until a parent/guardian can take them home.

Following the dismissal of any scholars in the room, all surfaces will be disinfected for future use.

Quarantine and Close Contact

Consistent with CDC guidance, all “close contacts” with someone with COVID must quarantine unless they are fully vaccinated. People who are fully vaccinated do not need to quarantine after contact with someone who is suspected or confirmed to have COVID-19 unless they also present possible symptoms of infection; however, they should be tested 3-5 days after exposure and must wear a mask indoors for 14 days or until they receive a negative diagnostic test result.

In general, a “close contact” is anyone who was within 6 feet of an infected person (laboratory-confirmed or a clinically compatible illness) for a cumulative total of 15 minutes or more over a 24-hour period (for example, *three individual 5-minute exposures for a total of 15 minutes*). However, in the P-12 indoor classroom setting, the CDC specifies that students who were within 3 to 6 feet of an infected student (laboratory-confirmed or a clinically compatible illness) where both students were engaged in consistent and correct use of well-fitting masks are not considered close contacts. This exception to the close contact definition does not apply to teachers, staff, or other adults in the indoor classroom setting.

For further information about quarantine requirements for vaccinated and unvaccinated individuals, please refer to [NYS's Guidance on Quarantine for Community Persons Exposed to COVID-19](#).

Lastly, in accord with 10 NYCRR 2.13, Local Health Departments (LHD) may establish and enforce isolation or quarantine orders within local communities, including schools/districts, based on local conditions. Additionally, Local Health Departments may order that certain

non-essential school activities (e.g., extracurricular activities) cease operations when transmission levels are high and risk of potential transmission is present.

Return to School for Individuals Displaying Symptoms of COVID-19

Please see below for the guidance from the NYSDOH re: return to school for individuals displaying symptoms of COVID-19 (also can be found [here](#)):

1. According to the Commissioner's testing determination issued pursuant to 10 NYCRR 2.62, all school students, teachers, and staff with new or worsening symptoms of COVID-19 must be excluded from school, regardless of vaccination status, and either (a) provide a negative COVID test result, or (b) remain excluded from school for a minimum of 10 calendar days from symptom onset, prior to returning to school.
2. If student, teacher, or staff symptoms are improving AND they are fever-free for at least 24 hours without the use of fever reducing medicines, they may return to school with either a note from the healthcare provider indicating the test was negative OR a copy of the negative test result. Given the growing prevalence of breakthrough infections among vaccinated populations nationwide, there is no recommended exemption for symptomatic vaccinated people.
3. After Exposure to COVID-19: Diagnostic testing refers to the testing of symptomatic individuals or asymptomatic individuals exposed to a person with COVID-19 within the last 14 days. According to the Commissioner's testing determination issued pursuant to 10 NYCRR 2.62, schools must have the capacity (either directly on-site or via referral) to provide diagnostic testing for any students, teachers, and staff who, regardless of vaccination status and community level of transmission per the CDC, are: a) Symptomatic; or b) Asymptomatic following exposure to someone with COVID-19.
4. No Exposure/No Symptoms: Screening testing refers to the testing of asymptomatic individuals even if there is no reason to suspect infection. Schools must establish the capability to conduct or offer screening testing according to the Commissioner's testing determination issued pursuant to 10 NYCRR 2.62. Schools have flexibility in how they operationalize screening testing: a) On-site Testing at Schools: Schools need to be registered as a limited service laboratory (LSL) to perform waived rapid point-of-care testing using molecular or antigen tests. Meeting all requirements for testing, including procurement of PPE, providing staff for testing, and the reporting of test results to the NYSDOH is the responsibility of the entity who holds the LSL which can be either the school or the LHD. For this scenario, NYSDOH may be able to assist in providing schools outside of NYC with Abbott BinaxNOW COVID-19 antigen cards at no cost. b) Off-Site

Testing: Schools can have testing performed off-site by a laboratory, Local Health Department, pharmacy or other local health care provider partner. In this scenario, people are sent to a partner for testing, or schools can arrange for a partner to conduct sample collection on-site. Schools may be eligible for free testing through Operation Expanded Testing, a program established by the United States Department of Health and Human Services to expand testing availability. Additional information can be found at affinitytesting.com/hhs/. c) Pooled testing is one approach some laboratories offer that may provide schools with a practical option to implement testing. Pooled testing involves mixing several samples together into a “pool;” the pooled sample is then tested using a NAAT. This approach increases the number of individuals that can be tested using the same amount of resources. Pooled testing is widely used for the purpose of surveillance testing. Surveillance testing is primarily used to gain information at a population level, rather than an individual level, and the test result is not reported to the individual who was tested. Surveillance testing like this is different from diagnostic and screening testing; offering surveillance testing does not meet the requirement that schools maintain capacity to conduct screening testing, unless results are reported to the individual tested.

- However, there are laboratories that are approved to perform pooled testing where test results are reported to the individual who was tested. If a school is using a laboratory that is performing pooled testing, the school will need to ensure that the test is being used for screening or diagnostic purposes and that the laboratory is reporting tests results for each individual to the NYSDOH.

d) Please see the “Resources to Support School Testing Programs” section of the CDC guidance for additional information, including on available funding. e) Schools must adhere to the Commissioner’s testing determination, issued pursuant to 10 NYCRR 2.62, which sets forth required parameters for COVID-19 screening.

Finn Academy is working with the local Health Department to determine the most efficient means to conduct the testing as recommended in the above guidance.

Instructional Program

For the 2021-22 school year, Finn Academy will once again be open for five days a week of in-person learning for all scholars.

Attendance

Scholars will be required to attend in-person all five days of the week. As in any other school year, if a scholar is unable to attend school, the parent/guardian is required to provide an excuse. There is no remote option available, therefore all scholars are required to attend school when it is in session.

As a reminder, if a scholar is feeling ill, they should stay home. Parents/guardians should contact the Main Office to report their absence, and they will be directed to the school nurse to discuss next steps for a return to school. Scholars will need to proceed through COVID-19 protocols to return. If it is determined to be a non-COVID illness, students should only return to school no sooner than 24 hours after all symptoms have resolved.

Quarantines

During instances when a student has been placed in a quarantine or isolated as a result of a positive COVID-19 diagnosis, the school will work with the scholar and parents/guardians to send work home for completion. However, scholars should focus on their health before engaging in learning.

Preparing for 100% Remote Instruction

Schedule

If the school is required to move to remote instruction, the remote instructional schedule will be similar to the daily in-person schedule. Scholars and parents/guardians will need to be prepared to transition to daily remote instruction upon notification by the school.

Technology and Devices

Laptops have been purchased for all scholars for use in their classroom spaces for the 2021-2022 academic year. If it's necessary to move to remote instruction, parents/guardians will be given a window of time to pick up their scholars' laptop.

Internet hot spots will also be available for those families who need support in accessing internet services.

Closure Triggers

The Leadership Team will work closely with the local Health Department to determine the appropriate time for closure of in-person activities under the following circumstances:

1. Infection rate within the school, or within the local community.
2. Absentee rate trend for scholars.
3. Absenteeism of essential personnel to the extent that it creates a health and safety concern or prevents the school from complying with mandates.

At closure, the school will engage in its remote learning program.

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