

## The Manhattan Star Academy

### COVID-19: Reopening Plan Fall 2020 Revised (May 2021)

#### Plan, Preparedness, & Response

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This safety plan will be utilized as a guideline based on CDC and DOH recommendations. We hope to prevent further cases or the spreading of the COVID-19 virus in a school setting. Compliance and sound judgment will help us in achieving that goal. Any COVID-19 related questions should be directed to the Executive Director, Director, Social Work Department, or the School Nurse. Medical emergencies and serious injuries should immediately be reported to the school nurse and school director, or 911 if warranted.

#### Returning to the School Building

Communication with parents, staff, and local health officials will be established in order to be able to communicate efficiently in the event of need. Classrooms have been set up to maximize distance between students (**six feet apart**) and individualized student material bins and pencil cases have been established to ensure there will be no sharing of materials. We will continue to consult the most recent federal guidance for school programs, including ongoing prevention and mitigation strategies, support, and communication resources. Families can opt to continue with a remote academic plan and remote services.

Within the school, physical distancing will be practiced to the greatest extent possible. Staff will be required to wear masks in the school building (they will be provided with KN95 masks supplied by MSA daily). Students will be encouraged to wear masks but may be unable due to the nature of their disability. Desks will be spaced to comply with physical distancing among students and will be monitored throughout the day and maintained by classroom staff. Classroom composition (students and staff) will be limited to class and direct instructors and therapists. Staff will remain with the classroom cohort and can access break areas that are designated to individuals from that classroom to minimize exposure. Students and staff will have their own materials to minimize the risk from sharing.

#### Communication

Regular communication with staff and families is important. We will be communicating with parents using the Everbridge alert notification system. This

alert system will communicate any updates regarding school with all families via text, email and phone call.

We will continue to hold monthly parent meetings. During this time, the Manhattan Star Academy social work team will discuss any new updates with families. These meetings will be held via zoom.

The executive director and director will be providing weekly updates from DOHNYC to the families. We have established an email and text alert delivery to update our staff and families.

If parents have questions, they should contact the social work department, school nurse, or the directors of the schools. MSA will continue to have an open-door policy for all questions and concerns. Our nursing department will continue to be in touch with the department of health for reporting any test positive cases.

### Health and Safety

Staff must wear face coverings at all times when interacting with children and when within 6 feet from other staff. Our school has stocked up on personal protective equipment (PPE) and cleaning/disinfecting supplies in order to combat COVID-19. Our staff will be supplied with KN95 masks, and other PPE as necessary. Staff will be trained in how to wear and maintain PPE. Students have been training during our remote learning program and with families to wear and tolerate masks.

MSA will provide acceptable face coverings to employees at no cost and maintain an adequate supply for replacement in addition to the KN95 masks. Acceptable face coverings include cloth (e.g., homemade sewn, quick cut, bandana) or masks. We will be limiting the sharing of objects and materials, and discourage touching of shared surfaces, or require the use of gloves when in contact with shared objects or frequently touched areas. A rigorous hand-washing schedule will also be enforced before and after contact with shared surfaces.

Staff and student's families must fill out a questionnaire that includes COVID-19 exposure, symptoms, and temperature checks before leaving to come to school. Each day, this form will be sent to the school nurse before your child arrives at school. If a member of the staff/student's household or direct environment

exhibits symptoms of COVID-19, they are mandated to remain at home, and communicate with the school nurse and school administration. The staff or student will be required to quarantine for 72 hours.

The school nurse and support staff will additionally conduct temperature checks using a no-contact infrared thermometer as personnel and students enter the building at the start of the school day. The school nurse will also be aware of any symptoms that may be COVID-19 related. Temperature checks and medical assessments will also be conducted during the school day as warranted.

A visitor log will be set up and maintained for essential visitors **ONLY** entering the school building. It will be used in the event that case contact tracing is needed. Anyone outside of employees and students who enters the school building are required to input contact information for contact tracing.

Upon arriving at the building, staff will participate in a health screening. The elevator vestibule on the ground level of the school will be designated for screenings as employees/essential visitors enter the building. No more than one individual will be allowed in the elevator vestibule area at a time. All other individuals must wait outside the vestibule until screening areas are free.

### Screening Questions

1. Have you had any COVID-19 symptoms in the past 14 days?
2. Have you had a positive COVID-19 test in the past 14 days?
3. Have you had close contact with a confirmed or suspected COVID-19 in the past 14 days?
4. Have you traveled lately to any international destinations?

### Physical Space, Disinfecting, & Cleaning

The building has been equipped with signage and taping for six-foot social distance. We have marked our walls, classrooms, and floor hallways to ensure six-foot social distance between individuals within the building. Once back in our physical space, we will implement practices to maintain adequate physical distancing, such as in restrooms and breakrooms. Signage and systems will be added to restrict occupancy (e.g., flagging when occupied) when physical distancing cannot otherwise be maintained in small areas.

We have modified and upgraded our HVAC systems at both our upper and lower campuses to ensure adequate air circulation throughout our buildings. At the

Lower School campus the landlord has assured MSA that MERV11s have been installed. At the Upper School HVAC filters have been upgraded to a combination of Merv13 and MERV11 filters, our two main HVAC units will house the MERV13s where fresh air enters the building then all ceiling units will house MERV11 filters. All air ducts, unit filters, and unit coils have all been cleaned and sanitized. Additionally, ultraviolet lights and ionization will be added. The combination of these 3 factors; MERV filters, UV lighting and Ionization will contribute to risk mitigation.

We are adhering to hygiene, cleaning, and disinfection requirements as outlined from the CDC and NYS Department of Health, and will maintain logs on site that document the date, time, and scope of the last cleaning and disinfection. As such, we've ordered and secured disinfecting supplies (e.g., disinfectant wipes, disinfectant spray, bleach, hand sanitizer) to supply throughout the school buildings. Our custodial staff will increase the frequency of cleaning and disinfecting throughout the day. Trash pails will be emptied out more often to prevent masks and gloves from overflowing. Trash will be kept near the door to limit custodial access to room while occupied. Handrails, push doors, phones, computers, doorknobs, and restrooms and any item frequently in contact with multiple individuals will be disinfected frequently throughout the school day. Water fountains will be cordoned off.

We will provide and maintain hand hygiene stations: hand-washing with soap, running warm water, and disposable paper towels; alcohol-based hand sanitizer will be available in areas where handwashing is not available or practical. Hand-sanitizer will also be available throughout common areas of the school buildings. Hand hygiene for staff and students will be mandatory immediately upon entering the school building, after using the restroom, before eating, before leaving for related services, and upon arriving back to the classroom after related services.

Restrooms will be cleaned and disinfected more than once a day using EPA approved chemicals to disinfect against COVID-19. Two students and two adults are permitted to enter each bathroom at a time to maintain social distancing. Restrooms will be continuously stocked with hand soap, paper towels or automated hand dryers. CDC posters, as well as proper hand-washing technique posters will be maintained in and around restroom areas. Where possible, doors

will be propped open to minimize door handle/push bars handles being used. Synagogue members will participate in a pre-screening and temperature check before entering the building. Additionally, high touch areas inside elevators (e.g. buttons, doors, etc.) should be routinely sanitized, using EPA approved chemicals to disinfect against COVID-19.

### Suspected Case

If at any time and individual displays any COVID-19 related symptoms or signs, it will be handled as a suspected COVID-19 case, and follow the steps outlined below:

1. The individual will immediately be brought to an isolation room (Lower School- director's office, Upper School- COVID-19 isolation room) designated for containment from possible spreading of the virus. The student will be accompanied by a staff member wearing full PPE.
2. The school nurse and administration will be notified, and arrangements will be made for the individual to return home as soon as possible. The student will be escorted down the North Side Stairwell at the lower school and stairwell D at the upper school.
3. The student/staff who will be sent home and can only return to school with a negative COVID-19 test and should be fever-free for 24 hours without medications. Pre-COVID19 sick protocol for other symptoms will still be followed.

### Living with somebody who is exhibiting symptoms/Person Under Investigation (PUI)

1. The student or staff should quarantine and provide proof of exposure for the absence to be excused.

### Positive COVID-19 Result

NYC DOH and NYS DOH will be notified for any positive cases of COVID-19 in our school. The information of the close contacts will be submitted to contact tracers. Vaccinated individuals are responsible to inform DOH about their vaccination status.

The closure of our school will be determined by a DOH case investigator.

- ☐ COVID-19 updates will be communicated to the MSA community on a weekly basis.
  - It is critical to maintain confidentiality of the student or staff member as required by the Americans with Disabilities Act, the Family Education Rights and Privacy Act, and the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act
- ☐ Clean and Disinfect Thoroughly
  - Close off areas used by the individuals with COVID-19 and wait as long as practical before cleaning and disinfection to minimize potential for exposure to respiratory droplets. Open outside doors and windows to increase air circulation in the area. The room will not be accessed for at least 24 hours before beginning cleaning and disinfection.
- ☐ Decisions about extended the school dismissal will be made in conjunction with local health officials
  - School administration will work with local health officials to make dismissal and scope of cancellation decisions. School dismissals and cancellations may be extended if advised by local health officials. The nature of these actions (e.g., geographic scope, duration) may change as the local outbreak situation evolves.
  - Administrations will seek guidance from local health officials to determine when students and staff should return to schools and what additional steps are needed for the school community. In addition, students and staff who are not displaying symptoms, but are taking care of or share a home with someone with a positive COVID-19 case, must follow instructions from local health officials to determine when to return to school or work.
- 4. Surveillance testing:
  - ☐ Bi-monthly testing will be done for asymptomatic staff and students.

## Classrooms & School Environment

In an effort to socially distance as best as possible, our classrooms will be operating at 100% capacity. The following provisions will also be made to minimize risk in our school building:

- Designate paths and limit hallway movement
- Increase physical space between students in the classroom (desks will be six feet apart from one another)
- Reduce or halt interactions among groups of adults or students
- Group activities outside the classroom within the building will be cancelled (e.g., no field trips, no afterschool programs, no assemblies)
- Bathrooms will be monitored so that no greater than **two** students and **two** staff members will be allowed at a time, and adequate physical distancing can be accomplished.
- Students will eat at their desks (six feet apart from each other)
- Arrivals/Dismissals: Lower School- no more than two students and two staff members will be permitted in the elevator at one time. Upper School- no more than one student and one staff member will be permitted in the elevator at one time.

Team meetings within the classroom cohort will be held, with participants from outside the classroom cohort participating on Zoom. In the event that a meeting must be held in person, no more than 10 people can be in the room, as long as 6 feet of social distancing can be maintained. Chairs will be configured so that 6 feet of distancing is maintained.

Congregation will be discouraged before, in between and after meetings. Shared electronic equipment such as microphones, phones, etc. must be disinfected between each use. Public pens and writing utensils should not be used. Eating and drinking will not be permitted during meetings. In large rooms where space is shared, all hard surfaces such as light switches and door handles must be disinfected before a new group comes in.

Any interaction between a greeter/security and the public, staff, students should be done using either 6-foot social distance, a glass window with a slider, or a plexiglass barrier. Lines of demarcation will be placed on the floor and are to be adhered to by employees for social distancing upon entering the school building.

## Related Services & Specials

Students will be kept at least six feet apart from one another during related services (speech, occupational therapy, physical therapy, counseling). In situations where social distancing cannot be maintained between students, physical barriers will be utilized.

All clinicians will be provided with masks, face shields, gowns, gloves, hand sanitizer, and disinfectant supplies for use before, after, and during therapy sessions. Handwashing will be mandated before and after each therapy session.

Mats and other equipment will be disinfected after use. Soft surfaces such as cloth bean bags and cloth equipment must be put away or laundered after each use. Equipment such as balls are permitted for individual use and used one at a time. After use, toys and equipment must be disinfected. Climbing equipment will be put away or cordoned off. The use of shared objects (e.g., gym or physical education equipment, art supplies, toys, games) will be limited as much as possible (e.g., assigning each student their own supplies).

Equipment and mats will be used only when absolutely necessary to achieve mandated treatment goals and must be sanitized immediately after being used during a session. Smaller items must be placed into a “disinfecting bin” for sanitation at the end of the day.

Therapy services will be delivered in a 1:1 pull-out modality only. Pushing into classrooms is not permitted at this time. Group sessions are not permitted.

In-person feeding therapy services will commence for all students who have no documented risk for aspiration. The use of suctioning equipment is not permitted at this time and thus students who are at risk for aspiration will continue to receive indirect feeding support through the provision of materials outlining a feeding plan, best practices for safe feeding, and techniques to facilitate functional feeding skill development.

To minimize the potential spread of COVID-19, vision therapy and hearing therapy will no longer take place in the school building. Instead, each of these services will be conducted remotely via a synchronous telecommunication platform with the support of an MSA staff member.



All specials classes (Yoga, Music, APE, Art) will be delivered synchronously on a live synchronous videoconferencing platform. These classes will be streamed onto the classroom SmartBoard. Social distancing will be enforced during these periods for the students who are in the school building.

### Visitors, Pick-up, Drop-off

In an effort to continuously minimize the spread of COVID-19 in our school environment, we will be prohibiting non-essential visitors indefinitely. We established designated no-contact areas for pick-ups and deliveries arriving to and from the building. Additionally, we will limit in-person gatherings of employees (e.g., breaks, meetings). All meetings including individuals outside of the classroom environment will join via telecommunication (i.e. Zoom, Microsoft Teams) to prevent over-crowding and cross-contamination of environments.

Designated pick up and drop off areas will be established and will be conducted outside the school building. Anyone who is not an MSA staff member or student will no longer be permitted to enter the school building for pick-up and drop-off.

Parent meetings, and parent-teacher conferences will be conducted via Zoom.

### Transportation

Procedures, guidelines, and protocols will be provided by the Office of Pupil Transportation (OPT). All busing for MSA students is provided by Office of Pupil Transportation (OPT). Students will be encouraged to wear masks when boarding and disembarking the bus but may be unable due to the nature of their disability.

### Lockdown

MSA conducts a lockdown drill once a month. A “lockdown” implies that there is imminent danger in the building or within our school. In the event of a lockdown, staff will be notified by our Everbridge alert system and an announcement will be made “ATTENTION: the school is in lockdown. Take proper action.” The staff member who announces the lockdown will alert police. The lock-down

procedures are posted in every room on our floors. You must review these procedures regularly.

## Fire Prevention

Fire Prevention Education is extremely essential. The building is equipped with a sprinkler system and our facility is inspected by the Fire Department annually. Students are required to receive classroom instruction appropriate to their developmental level as part of the student's education by the classroom teacher or supervisor. Fire drills are conducted throughout the year to assure that we can evacuate the building quickly and safely in the event of a fire or other emergency.

Each employee should be familiar with the type and operation of the manual Pull Box Alarm system nearest his/her working station. Each employee will receive instructions in the use and operation of firefighting equipment, fire extinguishers and fire prevention annually. There are fire extinguishers mounted throughout the building. They are inspected regularly to assure that they are in good working order.

Fire Prevention requires every employee to follow basic regulations:

- Keep corridors, fire and smoke barrier doors and exits clear of obstructions.
- Keep fire exit doors closed at all times.
- Know where the Fire Alarm Box is located in your work area and how to use it.
- Know where the fire fighting equipment is located in your work area and how to use it.
- Keep work areas uncluttered and free of non-essential materials.
- Keep materials and supplies stored in proper places.
- Dispose of trash properly.
- Keep flammable liquids only in approved safety containers and only in quantities required for immediate use.
- Employ good maintenance practices by keeping equipment, exits and our building in good repair. If you find hazards caused by faulty

equipment, do not use the equipment, but have it repaired promptly. These defects should be immediately referred to your supervisor.

### Remote Program Overview

The Manhattan Star Academy will be open for in-person learning for all students. We will continue to offer a remote program for those families who choose to remain remote. Remote learners will receive math, reading, and writing instruction from both the special education teacher, and NYS certified teaching assistant, as well as enrichment specials (music, yoga, APE, and art), and instructional/social lunch.

### Schedule Expectations for Remote Learners

- Math 5x/week
- Reading 5/week
- Writing 3/week
- Students will attend all mandated related services
- Students will attend specials (Yoga, Music, Art, APE) via zoom (being held online only)
- Students will have the option to attend social / instructional lunch via zoom

### Teacher & TA Expectations

- The teacher's responsibility will be to lesson plan and provide in-person scaffolded instruction to the students physically in the building each week with the support of the teaching assistant.
  - Both teachers and teaching assistants will provide instruction in the domains of math, reading, and writing to the remote learners

### Technology Infrastructure

As Manhattan Star Academy transitioned to the remote learning program, an extensive review of our technology infrastructure was assessed, including students' access to technology and devices, as well as teachers/therapists' access to technology and devices. Loaner devices for online instruction were made available. During remote learning, ongoing monitoring of computers, software and

any technical matters are addressed immediately by our IT department to ensure no disruption in services.

All remote learning synchronous services are taking place on the Zoom video conference platform. All faculty and staff have full licensed accounts, enabling the school to fully recreate daily student schedules, meet with students as a group and individually and perform the majority of activities that otherwise would have been completed in person.

Manhattan Star Academy has implemented maximum Zoom security protocols, including password protection for all classes/sessions, automatic “waiting rooms,” with no unidentifiable users allowed.

### Paraprofessional Support

MSA will continue to maintain the levels of support that have been determined and agreed upon through assessment of each student, as outlined on their education and therapeutic plan. The students’ safety and safety of the MSA staff is of paramount importance as we phase into in-person learning. Paraprofessional tuition will only be charged for the delivery of in person services.

### Support for multilingual learners

All instruction at Manhattan Star Academy is delivered in English, as outlined by the students IEP. All instruction that needs to be supported by a parent whose first language is not English, is translated prior to dissemination. Parent conferences and communication continues to be translated into the families first language.

### Tuition

MSA tuition does not cover the cost of meals and transportation.