

Brilla Public Charter Schools

Reopening Plan

School Year 2020-21



Note: This packet reflects the reopening plan as of August 14, 2020. Given the uncertainties of the COVID-19 public health situation, this plan is subject to change.

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Introduction

When Coronavirus forced us to shut the physical doors of our Brilla Schools on March 13, we shifted to a fully remote education model and worked to support our families and staff during the early months of the pandemic. We are proud of our families, scholars, and staff, who worked tirelessly under challenging conditions.

Since the end of the school year on June 19th, we've shifted our focus to planning for a new school year like one we've never seen before. We've also been planning for the opening of two new schools, Brilla Caritas and Brilla Pax.

Our holistic mission has informed our planning. One of our priorities has been to bring our scholars and staff back to school safely. There simply is no substitute for in-person care and attention and you, our families, believe so too. Over 60% of those who responded have requested that their scholars return physically to school. This plan outlines how we will continue to deliver rigorous academics, lively instruction in the Fine and Applied Arts, robust character formation, and emotional support to our students and families in an intentionally joyful way.

We need to reopen buildings in a safe way, one that meets or exceeds state and city guidelines. Because all of Brilla schools are located in private facilities, we have a great deal of control over the safety of our spaces, including the quality of our air circulation.

This packet describes how we will continue to deliver a quality program in a safe and prudent way. Since the COVID-19 situation is rapidly evolving, the plans outlined here are subject to

change. We will keep you updated regularly.

We will begin our school year on **August 31st** remotely. We plan to begin in-person instruction when the NYC DOE opens for classroom instruction, so September 14th at the earliest.

When we do open for in-person instruction, we will offer:

1. An **in-person, blended** option where scholars
 - a. Alternate between on-campus learning and remote learning **weekly (one week at school, one week learning from home)** for **grades 1st-8th**.
 - b. Attend on-campus, in-person learning **100% of the time** for **kindergarten and some SpEd students**
2. A **fully 100% remote** option for grades K-8th for those families who desire it

By August 7th, all families chose which option they will pursue. As we have articulated, families will have the ability to change their selection at a few select times later in the year.

In designing this reopening plan, we have consulted families, staff, board members, community partners, and health experts. This packet outlines key programmatic elements as well as the safety procedures we plan to implement.

We remain committed to honoring families as the first educators of their children. We want to help you and your family make this school year fruitful and formative. We ask that you continue to communicate your needs as we cannot help what we do not know. We are deeply grateful

for your flexibility, dedication, and support.

Guiding Norms

Over the past four months, Brilla leadership engaged a variety of staff, parents, families, health experts, and educational leaders in crafting a reopening plan. The following norms have guided our thinking.

Reopening Norm	Description
Urgency	We need to quickly diagnose and intervene with best practices, decisions, and plans to ensure healing and growth is responsive and timely
Flexibility	Structures and systems will need to bend and adapt to ongoing needs and guidance, people face the challenges with grace and an adaptive mindset
Safety	Emotional and physical well-being are essential to strong reopening; a focus on health both mental and physical provides comfort and safety for all stakeholders
Prioritization	Not everything can or should be done "first;" tough decisions are made with an objective view of reality and need
Support	Individuals require flexible and individual support to operate fully and with quality; supporting diverse needs ensures no one falls through the cracks

Health and Safety Overview

In order to reduce the risk of contamination, we will implement extensive health and safety measures. All practices are in accordance with guidelines from the Department of Health (DOH) and Centers for Disease Control and Infection (CDC).

Cohort Model

One important way we will limit virus transmission and effectively contact trace is through the cohort model. Students will be placed into a cohort (with approximately 12-16 other children) and will remain with those classmates throughout the day. Should someone in the cohort contract the virus, we can immediately notify all parties who came into contact with the positive case.

Social Distancing

In accordance with CDC guidelines, we will arrange furniture to allow for a physical distance of at least 6 ft or a physical barrier between persons. Procedures for walking in the hallways and bathroom breaks will also allow for social distancing and will keep scholars in their cohort to minimize exposure.

Handwashing

Schedules include multiple times for hand washing or hand sanitizing throughout the day. Hand washing/ sanitizing will occur at classroom entry, before and after lunch, before and after bathroom usage and at other times as needed.

Building Capacity and Facilities

Our buildings look a bit different from how we left them in March. We have reconfigured spaces to accommodate social distances. Other renovations include improving ventilation and upgrading to touchless fixtures in bathrooms.

Personal Protective Equipment/Masks

Everyone who enters a school building is required to wear a mask. Masks will be available at the door and throughout the day when needed. Additionally, each classroom will have a wall mounted caddy with personal protective equipment and disinfecting materials available throughout the day.

Health Screenings

Upon entering the school building, individuals must fill out a health questionnaire and will have their temperature taken. Anyone who presents with a temperature greater than 100.0° F will be immediately sent home with instructions to contact their health care provider for assessment and testing.

Arrival and Dismissal

Arrival and dismissal will consist of a multi-door staggered time entry and exit. A longer time will be allocated in the school schedule to accommodate this new procedure. In order to reduce risk of transmission, a parent or guardian will not be allowed in the building during arrival and dismissal time.

Drop-in Parent Meetings/ Adults in School Building and Main Office

We will limit adults in the building and restrict free access to the main office. Needs like medication drop-off should be handled during arrival. All visitors must be approved by the Principal ahead of time. Entrance to the building will only be granted if deemed essential and to limited areas of the building only. Parents should reach out to school based operations teams if they have any questions or need additional support. As a reminder, parents can contact teachers via phone call, text, or email. Contact information for your child's teacher will be provided by school operations teams.

School Nurse

A school nurse will be available in each building to provide needed medical attention and screening should an individual become symptomatic in the school building. Any individual who becomes symptomatic during the school day will be asked to go home and remain in a designated space while waiting to be picked up.

Scholar Meals

Scholars will eat breakfast and lunch in their classrooms in order to reduce risk of virus transmission. Breakfast and lunch will be provided as grab and go cold meals. Scholars can also bring a brown bag lunch from home. Hand sanitizer will be given to scholars and surfaces wiped down before and after they eat.

Positive Case Protocol

Should a scholar or staff member test positive for the virus, we have developed a protocol to respond swiftly and prudently. Our positive case protocol relies on two methods: determining the link between positive cases (i.e. did Person A test positive because he was in contact with Person B who tested positive?) and asking all other individuals who have come into contact with the individual who tested positive to self-quarantine for 14 days. Our cohort model enables us to effectively do both: we can determine if two individuals came into contact with each other and we can notify all persons who may have come in contact with the positive case at school. All communication related to positive cases will be via OneCall, OneText, ClassTag, and email. Additionally, in order to assist in city-wide efforts to contain the spread of the virus, we will report all positive cases to the DOHMH. Please note that, according to government officials, if the percent of positive tests in New York City is equal to or greater than 3% using a 7-day rolling average, all New York City schools will close until the rate returns to below 3%.

Scenarios:

I. One Confirmed Case

If a scholar or staff member tests positive for COVID-19, the cohort(s) of students who have been in close contact with the positive case are asked to stay home from school to self-quarantine for 14 days. The classroom(s) will remain closed for 14 days. Scholars who are self-quarantining will continue with remote learning.

II. At least Two Cases Linked From the Same Classroom

If more than one scholars and/or teachers from the same classroom test positive, those scholars/ teachers who have come into contact with the positive cases will be asked to stay home from school and self-quarantine for 14 days. The classroom will remain closed for 14 days.

III. At Least Two Cases Linked Together in School from Different Classrooms

Our cohort model is designed to reduce the risk of this scenario because individuals from different classrooms will rarely come into contact with each other. In the event that it does happen, we will study student schedules to determine if there is a link. For example, could the individuals have been present in the bathroom at the same time? If a link is determined, the classrooms of each case remain closed for 14 days and members of the classes are asked to self-quarantine for 14 days. Additional school members may be quarantined based on where the

exposure was in the school.

IV. **At least Two Cases Linked Together by Circumstances outside of school**

In the event that two individuals from a school test positive but they acquired infection by a setting and source outside of school, the school will still report cases to the DOHMH. The classrooms will remain closed for 14 days and scholars and staff from those classrooms will be asked to self-quarantine for 14 days.

V. **At least Two Cases and Link Unable To Be Determined**

In the event that two or more scholars and/or staff members test positive for the virus and the link is unable to be determined, we will not adequately be able to contain the spread of the virus, so the most prudent decision will be to close the school for 14 days. Scholars will continue with remote learning.

Fully Remote Option

In line with our conviction that families are the first educators of their children, we are giving all families the option to pursue a fully remote option for their child's education. For elementary scholars, this option will be similar to what scholars did last Spring. At the Middle School level, scholars will be able to participate in live sessions with their teachers and peers. Scholars will receive daily instruction across all content areas for approximately 5-7 hours per day. They will include both live and self-paced instruction. Scholars and families will use familiar online tools and programs like NearPod, Clever, and Zoom video conferencing. Your child's teacher will also be in communication with your child a few times per week. Students will participate in self-paced Fine and Applied activities three times per week. The Character Initiatives block will be live three times per week.

At the end of Quarter 1, if families who chose the fully remote option want to change to the hybrid option, they will be permitted to do so. Your school will notify you about how to make this change as the date approaches.

Families who would like to transition from the hybrid model to the fully remote option may do so at any time. They must contact their school's operations team and have the request approved by the principal before their child will officially start receiving instruction entirely remotely.

SpEd Remote

Fully remote SpEd students will be required to participate in the general education program as part of our inclusive model. Students who receive specialized support services will still be eligible for receiving all services outlined in their IEP.

Blended Model Overview

In consultation with staff, families, and educational leaders, we have studied what a strong reopening would look like. We believe our blended model will ensure that we can execute our mission with fidelity while keeping our school community safe. Below are key aspects of this design.

Remote and On-campus Learning

We have established predictable weekly and daily routines to make school opening as convenient as possible for our families while optimizing program delivery. Based on feedback from a family survey, scholars will alternate between on-campus learning and remote learning *by week* (i.e. one week learning at home, one week learning at school). As stated previously, we have the capacity to welcome all kindergarteners and students who qualify for certain Special Education (SPED) accommodations on campus 100% of the time. A sample week-by-week breakdown of which grades will be on campus could look like this:

Schedule				Schedule			
W1	W2	W3	W4	W1	W2	W3	W4
K	K	K	K	5	6	5	6
1	2	1	2	7	8	7	8
3	4	3	4	SPED	SPED	SPED	SPED
SPED	SPED	SPED	SPED				

Scholars will receive daily instruction across all content areas both on campus and while they are learning remotely.

For those weeks when scholars are remote, scholars and families will use familiar online tools and programs like NearPod, Clever, and Zoom video conferencing. Scholars will have approximately 5-7 hours of school work per day. You will receive your child’s schedule from your school.

Modified School Hours and Partnership with El Camino

On Monday through Friday, the elementary in-person school day is from 7:30 AM to 2:30 PM. At the middle school on Monday through Friday, the in-person school day will be from 7:45 AM- 2:45 PM. El Camino After School Faith Formation Program is offered at all campuses after school until 4:00 PM Monday through Thursday. If you are interested in enrolling your child in El Camino, please email elcaminotuition@setonpartners.org or call:

- BCPE and BCPM: 917-924-0136
- Brilla Veritas, Pax, and Caritas: 917-525-6037

Special Education Supports

If your child receives certain special education services, your school will notify you if your child qualifies to be on campus full-time. On those weeks when your child's grade-level is in school, they will be with their cohort and receive counseling in person. On those weeks when your child's cohort is not in school, your student will still be on campus but grouped with their learning specialist in order to receive services outlined in their IEP. Students will still participate with their grade-level cohort virtually via video conferencing.

Social-Emotional Support

Brilla seeks to help children grow in all aspects of their personhood: academically, physically, socially, emotionally, and spiritually. We sense a greater urgency to support our students and their families emotionally given the challenges and trauma they have faced over the past five months.

- Character Initiatives: Our instructional minutes used for Social Emotional Learning (SEL) will be increased at re-entry and scaffolded down to our typical number of minutes over the course of 8-16 weeks. Our SEL efforts and offerings will be guided by the 4 CASEL SEL Critical Practices for Re-opening and will utilize our in-house curriculum and best practices as well as Promoting Alternative Thinking Strategies, Human Dignity Curriculum, and Thriving Communities curricula.
- We are providing more intensive training on trauma-informed practices to all staff prior to student school start and have formed a 3-month partnership with Maria Droste Counseling Services to provide grief and crisis counseling group therapy to students, families, and staff upon the launch of the school year. Each school also has a full-time Social Worker.

Fine and Applied Arts

Fine and Applied Arts is an important part of our mission. During in-person instruction, scholars will participate in Fine and Applied Arts classes every day. During those weeks when they are learning from home, Fine and Applied Arts will be self-paced and occur 3 times per week.

Representative On-Campus Daily Schedule for Kindergarten

Kindergarten will be on campus full time (i.e. five days a week every week). A sample schedule might look like this:

7:30 am	Arrival/ Breakfast
8:05 am	Virtual Bird Call
8:15 am	Morning Meeting + Character Studies
9:00 am	Fine and Applied Arts
9:40 am	Skills
10:10 am	Bathroom Break
10:20 am	TLB
11:00 am	Recess/ Brain Break
11:15 am	Lunch
11:35 am	Read Aloud
12:05 pm	Writing
12:35 pm	Bathroom Break
12:45 pm	Math
1:50 pm	Pack-up
1:55 pm	Quietest Moment of the Day
2:00- 2:30 pm	Dismissal

Representative On-Campus Daily Schedule for Grades 1-4

With the exception of some students who receive certain Special Education services, scholars in grades 1 through 4 will rotate between learning on campus and learning at home on a weekly basis (i.e. one week learning at home, then one week learning on campus). A representative on-campus daily schedule for grades 1-4 might look like this:

7:30 am	Arrival/ Breakfast
8:05 am	Virtual Bird Call
8:15 am	Morning Meeting + Character Studies
9:00 am	Intervention
9:45 am	Math
10:45 am	Bathroom Break
10:55 am	Extended Read Aloud + Writing
12:10 pm	LUNCH
12:30 pm	Fine and Applied Arts
1:10 pm	Bathroom Break
1:20 pm	Math Stories
1:40 pm	Brain Break
1:50 pm	Pack-up
1:55 pm	Quietest Moment of the Day
2:00- 2:30 pm	Dismissal

Representative On-Campus Daily Schedule for Grades 5-8

With the exception of some students who receive certain Special Education services, scholars in grades 5 through 8 will rotate between learning on campus and learning at home on a weekly basis (i.e. one week learning at home, then one week learning on campus). A representative on-campus daily schedule for grades 5-8 might look like this:

7:45 am	Arrival/ Breakfast
8:45 am	ELA
9:30 am	Advisory
10:15 am	Bathroom Break
10:30 am	Music
11:15 am	Math
12:00 pm	Nonfiction Studies
12:45 pm	LUNCH
1:15 pm	Intervention
2:00 pm	Bathroom Break
2:15 pm	Quietest Moment of the Day
2:20-2:35 pm	Dismissal