

*Revised version of the [Reignite * Reopen * Reimagine](#)
Reignite * Reopen * Reimagine
Return To In-Person Instruction
2021-22
{Version: October 5, 2021}



Introduction

The purpose of this document is to outline Amani Public Charter School's priorities, guiding principles, and approach to maintaining a healthy school community for the 2021-22 school year.

The Return To In-Person Instruction (RTIPI) is aligned with the guidance from the New York State Governor and New York State Board of Regents, Westchester County Health Department, Center for Disease Control, and the American Academy of Pediatrics.

It is ambitious to attempt to reopen a 30,000 square foot facility with 355 scholars and 60 adults in a safe and healthy manner. We need to be realistic and be aware of the community's lived experiences and perceptions of the current conditions. We feel that this plan addresses the perception and the reality of those fears. It allows Amani to focus on what it does well - Rigorous Academic Program and Strong School Culture - while establishing the logistics, process, and protocols around creating a safe and healthy facility.

Guidance

Below is an overview of the CDC guidelines and the known practices and procedures that will inform the specific protocols of Amani Public Charter School. Links to information regarding strategies to encourage behaviors to reduce the spread are included. Primarily please refer to the following Importance links which provide the guidance that the school will follow:

[CDC Guidance for Covid-19 Prevention in Schools](#)

[NYSED Health and Safety Guide for the 2021-22 School Year](#)

[American Academy of Pediatrics COVID_19 Guidance for Safe Schools](#)

Layers of Protection



Red

Universal Masking

Orange

Physical Distancing and Cohorting

Yellow

Daily Health Evaluations/Temperature Taking

Green

Sanitizing

Blue

Testing

Purple

Vaccinations

Minimizing the spread of COVID-19 in the school will require a layered approach. While some layers are more impactful than others, all the layers interlock to present the most robust approach to preventing the spread of the virus within the community and to keep individuals healthy. This section presents the layers of protection. Please note that this updates the process and procedures that were previously presented in our opening documents for the 2020-2021 school year - [Reignite * Reopen* Reimagine](#).

Universal Masking

[Mask Policy](#) Consistent with recommendations from the CDC and the American Academy of Pediatrics, all students and staff will be required to wear masks covering the nose and mouth when indoors. The only exceptions are when eating/drinking or alone in a private office. Additionally, when a small group of vaccinated adults is in meetings when children are not present may remove masks **if all participants are comfortable**. We will provide barriers for each individual scholar to utilize when they take their mask down for eating or for mask breaks. We will have mask breaks built into the daily schedule for scholars and staff. All members of the community should have a comfortable and tight-fitting mask. Masks must have at least two layers.

Masks are our most important layer to prevent the spread of COVID-19 in the school. [Correct](#) and consistent [mask use](#) is a critical step that people can take to protect themselves and others from COVID-19. For information about appropriate masks please see this [link](#). For information on the school's specific policy for staff please [see here](#). According to the CDC, "COVID-19 spreads mainly from person to person through respiratory droplets produced when an infected person coughs, sneezes, or talks. These droplets can land in the mouths or noses of people who are nearby or possibly be inhaled into the lungs". As of now (fall 2021) the Delta variant can spread from vaccinated individuals to those who are not vaccinated.

The school has a sufficient stock of extra masks and all classrooms will be provided with extra masks. Face shields can be worn in addition to but may not be worn as a substitute for a cloth face covering or mask. Masks are not required outdoors unless in groups of 25 people or more.

Physical Distancing and Cohorting

The CDC recommends that schools maintain at least 3 feet of physical distance between students within classrooms, combined with indoor mask-wearing, to reduce the transmission of COVID-19. The classrooms at Amani have been set up to maintain at least 3 feet by eliminating clutter and removing extraneous furniture. However, given the constraints of the physical building and the importance of RTIPI, it is important to maintain the layers of protection strategies which in this instance also include cohorting. The CDC guidelines recommend at least 6 feet between students and teachers/staff, and between teachers/staff who are not fully vaccinated. We will continue the use of the personal dividers for the opportunity for mask breaks and when eating and drinking in the classroom. Other physical distancing measures will include:

- handshakes and other routines that call for direct physical contact will be discouraged.
- scholars will utilize chrome books and continue to employ 1:1 technology to avoid sharing
- the school will avoid sharing materials and equipment, without compromising the educational experience
- Drinking fountains will be converted to bottle filling stations. It is critical that all members of the community have a personal water bottle for this purpose.
- Large group meetings such as conferences, community circles, and other events will be held virtually - including PTA, Scott Show, and Parent Conferences.
- Visitors will be limited in the building. Lunch drop-offs will be suspended during this period. Needs such as medication drop-off should be handled when scholars are dropped off in the morning.

Specific protocols regarding visitors will include:

- All visits by appointment in advance through the main office
- All visitors will be required to complete [the Covid-19 questionnaire](#).
- All visitors will be required to have temperature checked when arriving or beforehand attesting that their temperature is not above 100°F through the use of a specific App.
- Wear a face covering while in the building
- Staff will not be allowed to bring their own children to work under any circumstances
- Meetings with outside parties will continue to be held virtually

Daily Health Evaluation/Temperature Taking

We will follow the guidance from the DOH that daily health screening forms are no longer required as a COVID-19 mitigation strategy. Accordingly, students and staff **will not** be required to complete a Daily Health Questionnaire or complete the Test Alerts form each day. We will continue to conduct health screening with the monitoring of temperatures and continue to rely on members of the community to track and monitor their own health. We will continue to monitor temperatures in the mornings. All scholars, staff, and visitors will have their temperature checked using non-contact thermometers upon entry into the building. Any scholar or staff member with a temperature above 100.0 degrees will be restricted from

accessing the classroom and sent home. Visitors will be denied entry. All visitors will also be required to complete a screening form prior to entering the building.

Self-Screening: We will continue to support policies that encourage sick employees and scholars to stay at home without fear of reprisal, and ensure employees, scholars, and scholars' families are aware of these policies. [Staff and scholars should stay home](#) if they have tested positive for or are showing COVID-19 [symptoms](#), or have recently had close contact with a person with COVID-19. Any flu-like symptoms are a sign that someone should stay home. There are four COVID symptoms in particular that are a focus: fever; shortness of breath; fatigue; loss of taste or smell. **In addition, we ask parents to please keep scholars home even if they think they just have a cold; scholars with symptoms of sneezing, coughing, or complaining of a sore throat will be sent to the nurse and a parent will be called to pick them up. We are strongly advising that no one comes to school sick.**

Except in certain circumstances, people who have been in close contact with someone who has COVID-19 should [quarantine](#). **Close contact is defined as** someone who was within [6 feet of an infected person](#) for a cumulative total of 15 minutes or more over a 24-hour period. Students who are between 3 and 6 ft. apart will not have to quarantine provided that both the student who is infected with COVID-19 and the students who would otherwise be a close contact was properly wearing masks. For more details please see [Close Contact](#)

Guidance on Quarantine

The following people with recent exposure may NOT need to quarantine:

- People who have been [fully vaccinated](#)
- People who were [previously diagnosed with COVID-19](#) within the last three months

If you are considered to be a close contact needing quarantine, you must quarantine for 10 days from their last exposure (i.e. if you are exposed on Monday, the 1st, you are quarantined through Thursday the 11th and can return to school if asymptomatic on Friday the 12th.). You can return from quarantine after 7 days if you have a negative PCR test.

For more details please see [Quarantine and Isolation](#)

Sanitizing

We will continue to encourage all members of the community to engage in healthy handwashing habits. Hand sanitizer will be available in all classrooms. Scholars will be encouraged to wash their hands frequently, particularly before meals. The building will be regularly cleaned and sanitized. We have stocked supplies for good hygiene including soap, hand sanitizer, and wipes. Additionally, we have installed touchless mechanisms in all bathrooms.

Ventilation

Amani will maintain all windows and doors open in classrooms as a way to increase ventilation with outdoor air to the greatest extent possible. We will also discontinue the use of spaces in the building that do not allow for ventilation with open windows, specifically spaces on the ground floor and the gym.

Cleaning Protocols - Daily Cleaning Schedule

During the daytime (while the building is occupied)

- The facility will be regularly and thoroughly cleaned with solvents that eliminate 99% of bacteria and are lethal to COVID-19, with an emphasis on high-contact surfaces and high traffic areas.
- Frequent cleaning & disinfecting of bathrooms including all touch surfaces
- Disinfecting door knobs to classrooms and offices throughout the day
- Cleaning & disinfecting building main entry point hourly

Nightly Schedule

- Disinfect all classroom touch surfaces (desk, chairs, doorknobs, windowsills, light switches)
- Disinfect all hallway touch surfaces
- Deep clean and disinfect bathrooms
- Disinfect stairwell handrails
- Disinfect all touchpoints on entry/exit doors
- Clean & Disinfect offices
- Clean & disinfect gym and cafeteria if in use

Testing

We will be instituting weekly COVID-19 testing for portions of the staff as part of our overall strategy to keep the community safe. Unvaccinated staff members will be tested weekly. We are presently exploring testing protocols for students and will continue to update the community going forward.

Please note that outside partners may require vaccination status for participation in programs, i.e. sports, YAA/Sing for Hope, field trip venues etc..).

Vaccinations

We strongly encourage all members of the community who are eligible and able to get vaccinated. We strongly believe that it is important to have layers of protection with regard to fighting the spread of COVID-19 in the community, and access to Vaccines for all members of the community over age 12 is an important part of this. It is important to recognize that the vaccines are safe and effective and critical to reducing the spread of the virus and mitigating severe disease and hospitalization. We understand that there may be hesitancy with members of the community and are committed to sharing [facts and helpful information](#) including addressing misinformation.

Staff Vaccinations

At this time we are not requiring staff to be vaccinated, however, if you have not yet been vaccinated, please do so as soon as possible to protect your health, your family, and our community. Getting vaccinated reduces the likelihood of COVID_19 transmission and spread, and it severely reduces illness should a vaccinated individual still contract the virus. Additionally, because the majority of our school population is under the age of 12 and is ineligible for a vaccine at this time, it is imperative that adults in the community do their part to get vaccinated, prevent transmission and spread, and contribute to this pressing health care initiative.

Those members of the adult community at Amani (staff) who are not vaccinated will be required to submit a weekly COVID test.

Students Vaccination

At this time we are not requiring students to be vaccinated. Please note that for some activities scholars who are eligible may be required to show proof of vaccination to participate (including sports and other programs sponsored by vendor partners). We are presently pursuing options to conduct COVID-19 testing

for students who are not vaccinated during the school year. More information will be forthcoming and this issue will be reviewed within the RTIPI/COVID Policy Committee.

COVID COORDINATOR

The Director of Operations and Nurse serves as the point person for managing contract tracing efforts, communicating with the Department of Health, coordinating the COVID testing program, and maintaining vaccination records and information for contact tracing purposes.

COVID 19 EXPOSURE/QUARANTINE

Protocols

If a scholar or staff has exposure or experiencing COVID symptoms and are awaiting test results do not come to school.

Test Reporting

- As required by the New York State Department of Health for contract tracing purposes. All students and staff are required to report that they have undergone covid testing, including the results to the schools via the [COVID REPORTING FORM](#) on the day, or immediately following a test.
- If a scholar or staff member tests positive for COVID you will need to be quarantined for 10 days and show proof of a negative PCR test in order to return to the building. Parents must complete the [COVID POSITIVE CASE REPORT](#) for their students, so the school may track return times and contact tracing.
- Individuals who are exposed to a confirmed COVID-19 positive person, who are not fully vaccinated, are required to quarantine for 10 days after exposure. If a scholar or staff person hasn't shown any symptoms they can get tested 5 days after exposure (PCR test) and bring the results to school for reentry. The return to school date will be day 7 with negative test results. The test results have to be shown to a member of the SEL team for scholars or COVID Coordinator for staff at check-in - no results no entry.
- Individuals who are vaccinated do not need to quarantine.
- Testing is not required to end quarantine if no symptoms have been reported during the quarantine period for the exposed individual. However, a test should be sought immediately if any symptoms develop during the 14 days after exposure.

For all communication related to Covid cases emanating from a parent or guardian.

The receiver of call or email from a parent	Complete the COVID NOTIFICATION FORM
Next step	COVID coordinator updates the quarantine list daily Appropriate people will know about the form..... The nurse will follow up with the parent to obtain all appropriate documents and

	information
Next step-	Refer to communications to parents/ guardians

Definitions:

Cohort: a group of students assigned to one homeroom.

Exposure: Having come into contact with a cause of, or possessing a characteristic that is a determinant of, a particular health problem.

Close Contact: Close contact through proximity and duration of exposure: Someone 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. An infected person can spread SARS Cov-2 starting from 2 days before they have any symptoms. (or for asymptomatic patients, for 2 days before the positive specimen collection date), until they meet the criteria for discontinuing home isolation.

In order to RTIPI, we are returning to our full schedule and enrollment for the fall 2021- 2022 school year. We will not be limiting the size of classes, we will be minimizing transitions, maintaining cohorts when possible, and minimize overlapping between cohorts to the greatest extent possible.

Staff Expectations for Contact Tracing

- We will ensure careful class rosters for all student movements, and teachers will need to ensure accurate attendance so that contact tracing can be performed.
- In settings of student discipline or pull out that cause groups to mix that might not otherwise, staff must keep careful records of who they are in contact with and students who occupy the shared space, for more than 10 min.
- Test Reporting All parents and staff are required to report a covid test, whether negative or positive to the Director of Operations on the day, or immediately following a test. This is a requirement by the New York Department of Health for data reporting and contact tracing. If a positive test comes back the employer should be informed immediately.

Key Definitions for Contact Tracing

- **Suspected Case:** Scholars and staff who have a suspected case will be asked to stay home and to get tested.
- **Exposure:** Scholars or staff who have come into close contact with someone who is diagnosed with COVID-19, that scholar or staff member should not attend school in-person for a period of 10 days, and display no symptoms before returning to school. Can return after 7 days with a negative PCR test result being tested on Day 5
- **Confirmed Case:** Scholars and staff who have a confirmed case must stay home for a minimum of 10 days and have no symptoms before returning to school with a covid negative PCR test result

- **Definition of Close Contact:** having spent a cumulative 10 minutes of time, within 6 feet of distance, with someone over a 24 hour period.
- **Contact Tracing:** If someone is determined to be a close contact or if someone is contacted via the New York contact tracing program and told that they have been in contact with someone who has tested positive, and is told to quarantine, they should do so.

Response Protocol for Suspected and Confirmed Cases

- For any of the above, staff will implement a normed response protocol ([COVID NOTICES](#)) that will:
 - Communicate cases to the Department of Health and ensure that they can take appropriate contact tracing measures.
 - Inform relevant stakeholders, while taking measures to protect the privacy of scholars and staff members.
 - Coordinate with the local health department regarding discharge from isolation and return to school.

School Closures

While we aim to minimize the risks to the health of our community and to prevent the spread using the already detailed measures, we recognize that it is likely inevitable that we will have a case of COVID-19 in our school community. Given this, we will follow Westchester County Department of Health and CDC protocols.

We will coordinate with the local health department regarding the quarantine of individuals and the length of closure of the school