

# De La Salle Academy



## **Reopening Plan for 2021-2022:**

**Prepared by Angel Rubiel Gonzalez, Head of School  
Soobin Lim, Pandemic Coordinator,  
and Zach Craun, Trustee**

**On behalf of the COVID-19 Task Force of De La Salle Academy**

**REVISED: September 14, 2021 by Angel Gonzalez**

**De La Salle Academy  
332 West 43rd Street, New York, NY 10036**

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## **Introduction:**

It is in times of great difficulty and adversity that we truly understand the strength of our community. As we continue to confront the challenges presented by the COVID-19 pandemic, I am reassured that De La Salle Academy (DLSA) will continue to be guided by the immense love shared by its students, faculty, families, alumni, Board of Trustees and its generous supporters.

As schools and districts across the country make decisions on their plans for reopening their schools, it is abundantly clear that what must guide our decision making is the unique context and needs of our school community. **De La Salle Academy plans to reopen full time, in-person instruction, 5 days per week to begin the 2021-2022 school year.**

In May 2020, the Board of Trustees and I convened a COVID-19 task force to discuss, study and discern possibilities for reopening the school under different scenarios. The task force consisted of Board members with expertise in the areas of medicine, education, law and facilities. In addition, we made sure to be in touch with faculty, families and students through town halls, surveys and one to one conversations. At the heart of our decision making was always the health safety of students, families and faculty, the integrity of the school program, as well as the guidance provided by state, local, and scientific authorities.

In March of 2021, DLSA successfully pivoted to providing an in-person hybrid option for all students. The school opened 2 days a week splitting the students into two cohorts. The school invested heavily in air ventilation, health screening, cleaning and disinfecting protocols, podding students, masking, physical distancing, and weekly testing of all students and staff. The result was a successful return to in-person learning for many students and valuable experience in conducting a safer return to in-person instruction.

As we prepare to open fully for the first time since March of 2020, I feel confident that the school has done all that it can to put the health and safety of the students, families, and staff first. As long as we continue to center our mission, values and the essential elements of the De La Salle Academy experience, I have no doubt that we will continue to navigate these uncertain times with great confidence and care for our beloved community.

Sincerely,

Angel Rubiel Gonzalez, Ph.D., '99  
Head of School

### Communicating our Plan to Family & Community

De La Salle Academy maintains a healthy dialogue with its constituency and will leverage all our usual communication methods to communicate our reopening plans, as well as safety information pertaining to mitigating the risk of COVID-19 infection. In addition to our website, we will send out a bi-monthly e-newsletter, and use both Instagram and Facebook to reach our families. We will also continue to provide virtual town hall meetings in order to update our school community.

Specifically, we will:

- Share our reopening plans via email and virtual town hall meetings
- Provide resources and education on COVID-19 prevention and safety, including information on CDC and DOH COVID-19 guidelines
- Ensure that students and faculty are trained in how to follow COVID-19 prevention protocols safely and correctly, including but not limited to hand hygiene, proper face covering wearing, social distancing, and respiratory hygiene
- Use verbal and written communication (e.g., signage) to encourage all students, faculty, staff, and visitors to adhere to CDC and DOH guidance regarding the use of PPE, specifically acceptable face coverings, when social distance cannot be maintained.

### **Section 1: Health and Safety:**

#### Admittance to the Building

Non-student family members, Board members, outside tutors, vendors, contractors, guests or other individuals will not be permitted entry without proof of vaccination or a negative COVID-19 PCR (within 3 days) or rapid test (within 48 hours) of their visit.

#### Health Checks

##### Mandatory Daily Online Screenings

For those entering the building, including students, faculty, staff, and where applicable, contractors, vendors, and visitors, DLSA will implement mandatory health screening to identify any individuals who may have COVID-19 or who may have been exposed to the COVID-19 virus.

All individuals entering the building must have their temperature checked before they enter the building each day – ideally, at home, prior to departing for school. If an individual presents a temperature greater than 99.9°F, the individual will be denied entry into the facility, or sent directly to a dedicated area prior to being picked up or otherwise sent home.

Our daily screening program will have the following components:

- A daily online screening questionnaire filled out at home via our Titan HST health screening app or google form (paper copies will be available for those who need them)

and submitted before departure for school in the morning. These screening forms will be required for any student enrolled in the school or faculty member who would normally be present at the school, whether or not they are in attendance that day.

○ For faculty and other adults, the questionnaire will provide a short list of adult-specific symptoms or situations that might indicate a COVID-19 + status, and the individual will certify whether or not any apply to them that morning. The short list of symptoms/conditions in the questionnaire will include (but is not limited to):

■ Having tested positive through a diagnostic test for COVID-19 in the past 14 days.

■ Having tested for COVID-19 and are STILL WAITING for a result

■ Having experienced any symptoms of COVID-19 in the past 10 days, including:

❖ **A temperature greater than 99.9°F**

❖ **Cough or runny nose**

❖ **Shortness of breath or difficulty breathing**

❖ **Sore throat**

❖ **New loss of taste or smell**

❖ **Chills**

❖ **Head or muscle aches**

❖ **Nausea, diarrhea, and/or vomiting**

■ Having traveled internationally or from a state with widespread community transmission of COVID-19 within the past 10 days.

■ Having knowingly been in close or proximate contact in the past 14 days with someone who has tested positive through a diagnostic test for COVID-19 or who has or had symptoms of COVID-19.

■ Having received all two doses of vaccine (either Pfizer or Moderna), or have received one dose of vaccine (Johnson & Johnson), and it has been 2 weeks or more since my last vaccination shot (Your answer will NOT affect the entry into the school).

○ For students, the questionnaire will provide a short list of symptoms or situations that might indicate a Covid+ status, similar to the ones outlined above, but also including some child-specific symptoms. Our students may fill out the form themselves.

○ These forms will be updated periodically to make sure they reflect any updated guidelines of Covid-19 as expressed by the CDC and/or DOH.

○ The school will not retain individual medical or health information from this online questionnaire. Only the “clear/not clear” status of the individual as determined by the questionnaire will be available to the school or kept on file.

- A daily greeting at the door from a staff member who will check for a confirmation page that a student is clear to enter the building, and if not, provide a form for the parent/guardian/ student to fill out on the spot. The greeter will also have access to a contactless temperature device with which to take the individual's temperature on the spot to make sure that aspect of the form is filled out.
- An immediate review will be made each morning of all the data from the forms by the staff responsible for attendance, including follow-up calls to families of children who are not in school that day if those families have not already submitted their daily form.
- Reporting of any "not clear" statuses (of children who have been turned away or have stayed home) to a designated school administrator or school nurse (if available) for follow-up according to DOH guidelines.

### *Student Shows Symptoms of COVID-19 While in School*

As per the New York City Department of Health (NYCDOH), DLSA has designated areas (1st floor counseling rooms and 3rd floor conference room) to hold students who are experiencing symptoms of COVID-19, (Note: these rooms can be used for other purposes when not holding an ill student). The space(s) will be thoroughly cleaned after holding a student who showed signs of COVID-19.

DLSA will follow the steps below when a student has symptoms of COVID-19 during the school day:

1. A student showing one or more symptoms of COVID-19 (including a fever higher than 99.9 degrees Fahrenheit, chills, new cough, new loss of taste or smell, and/or new shortness of breath) will go to or be escorted by a staff member wearing a well-fitting mask over their nose and mouth to the designated area.
2. The area or classroom where the student was showing symptoms will be cleaned and disinfected as soon as possible.
3. The school will call the student's parent or guardian for pick up.
4. Upon arrival of the student's parent or guardian, a staff member will escort the student to the entrance for pickup, advise the student to visit a health care provider and get tested for COVID-19, and provide information on the closest testing site.
5. The student can return to school when they fulfill the criteria for returning to school.

### *School-Based Staff Member Shows Symptoms of COVID-19 While at School*

As per the NYCDOH, DLSA will follow the steps below when a staff member shows symptoms of COVID-19 during the school day:

1. The staff member immediately notifies the Assistant Head of School and/or Pandemic Coordinator that they are not feeling well and are experiencing COVID-like symptoms.
2. DLSA will advise the staff member to get tested for COVID-19 as soon as possible and provide information for the closest testing site. The staff member must go home.
  - a. If the staff member needs to wait for transportation assistance, the staff member should leave the building, stay somewhere away from others and wear a face mask.

- b. The area or classroom where the staff member was showing symptoms must be cleaned and disinfected as soon as possible.
  - c. The staff member can return to school when they fulfill one of the criteria for returning to school.
3. If the staff member was vaccinated against COVID-19 within the past three days, the staff member may be experiencing post-vaccine symptoms such as fatigue, fever, headache and/or chills. The staff member must go home and can return to work if symptoms disappear within two days.

*Student or School-Based Staff Member Calls Out Sick With COVID-Like Symptoms (or Because Someone in Their Household Has COVID-19 or Symptoms of COVID-19)*

As per the NYCDOH, should a student or staff member call out sick because they are experiencing symptoms of COVID-19 or because someone in their household has COVID-19 or symptoms of COVID-19, the person should remain at home until they fulfill the criteria for returning to school after showing symptoms. Individuals who were vaccinated against COVID-19 within the past three days may experience post-vaccine symptoms such as fatigue, fever, headache and/or chills. The staff member should stay home and can return to school when they fulfill the criteria for returning to school.

*Confirmed Cases*

As per the NYCDOH, in the event of a confirmed COVID-19 case, the Head of School or pandemic coordinator will:

1. Confirm the person had a positive diagnostic test for COVID-19 (molecular or antigen test) and not an antibody test. Ask the parents and guardians and staff to send a copy of their test result through a secure method to the appropriate school administrator.
2. Determine whether the person was in the school during their infectious period, potentially exposing others to COVID-19.
3. If the persons attended school during their infectious period, identify everyone who was a close contact of the person with COVID-19 during the person's infectious period.
4. Report all new COVID-19 cases and information on close contacts to the NYC Health Department via the online COVID-19 Facility Exposures form, which will also enroll them in the NYC Test & Trace Corps assistance and monitoring program. If the NYC Health Department determines that additional follow-up is needed, the person will be contacted with instructions.
  - a. Fully vaccinated individuals who are considered close contacts will be included in the close contacts spreadsheet.
5. Provide information to the individual about how to isolate safely at home and when they may return to school.
  - a. The person needs to be isolated if they test positive for COVID-19, whether or not they have symptoms or are fully vaccinated.
6. Exclude all unvaccinated close contacts from school, **except** those who have fully recovered from laboratory-confirmed COVID-19 in the past three months. Inform them



that they must stay home and quarantine (separate from others, including household members) for 10 days from the date of their last close contact.

7. Communicate to families, students and staff about the confirmed case.

a. DLSA will not reveal the name of the person with COVID-19 or share other identifying information, such as personal information (age, address, phone number), grade or classroom, or information about the symptoms the person may have had. Likewise, no one should reveal the name or any identifying information about the people identified as close contacts. This information is confidential and will only be shared with the NYC Health Department staff assisting in the investigation.

#### *Protections for Individuals Conducting Screenings*

DLSA will ensure that any personnel performing in-person screening activities, including temperature checks, are appropriately protected from exposure to potentially infectious individuals entering the facilities. Personnel performing screening activities will be trained by individuals (identified and approved by DLSA) who are familiar with CDC, DOH, and OSHA Protocols.

Screeners will be provided and use PPE, which includes at a minimum, a KN-95 mask or equivalent, and may also include gloves, a gown, and/or a face shield.

#### *Staff and Student Testing*

De La Academy will partner with LabQ to provide mobile preventative COVID PCR testing in front of the school building. The preventative weekly testing is mandatory for all unvaccinated students and will be available to all vaccinated students and staff who wish to take the test as an added layer of mitigation. The school reserves the right to test ALL of its students and staff, regardless of vaccination status, if community spread reaches levels of higher risk.

#### *Policy on Staff and Student Vaccines Requirements:*

As of August 2021, De La Salle Academy has **mandated** vaccines for all faculty and staff, and **expects** all eligible students to be vaccinated. If all students become eligible for vaccination, DLSA anticipates mandating COVID-19 vaccine for all students. If the eligibility comes in the middle of this school year, families opting not to vaccinate their students may be asked to:

- Test more than once weekly on their own time and resources
- Keep students home for remote classroom access during periods of high community transmission
- Not participate in programming that requires extensive mixing of pods as in after school or extracurricular programming

### *Immediate Response and Cleaning Protocols*

If COVID-19 cases are discovered at school, the immediate response will include closing off areas or classrooms where individuals were infected and engage in a process of “deep cleaning” either in the affected area, portions of the school, or more broadly the entire school, as determined in consultation with DOH guidelines or conversations with our local DOH contact. We may choose to modify operations prior to instituting school-wide closures to help mitigate a rise in cases.

### *Contact Tracing Support*

In the case of an individual testing positive, DLSA is required by NY State to report to the DOH the rise in cases as is required by federal and state law regulations. DLSA is also required by law to cooperate with state and local health department isolation, and quarantine efforts. Whereas State and local health departments will implement monitoring and movement restrictions of COVID-19 infected or exposed persons, DLSA is responsible for notifying faculty and families of students that they have come in close or proximate contact with a person with COVID-19. Please note that medical laws explicitly prohibit DLSA from revealing the name of the individual who has tested positive for COVID-19. We may only reveal that the student or faculty member has come in close or proximate contact with an unnamed person, and how we came to know this information (school tracking systems, governmental contact tracing or another mechanism).

### *Criteria for Returning to School After Showing Symptoms (Not for Close Contacts)*

As per the NYCDOH, the table below outlines the criteria for returning to school for any individual not identified as a close contact (student or staff) showing symptoms of COVID-19:

If the individual received a <b>positive COVID-19 diagnostic test*</b>	If the individual received a <b>negative COVID-19 diagnostic test*</b>	If the individual <b>was not tested for COVID-19</b>	If the individual was <b>vaccinated against COVID-19 within the past three days</b>
They can return to school when they have: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Isolated for 10 days</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Been fever-free for 24 hours without the use of medication and</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Overall symptoms are improving</li> </ul>	They can return to school when they have: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Been fever-free for 24 hours without the use of medicine and</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Overall symptoms are improving</li> </ul>	They can return to school when: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> At least 10 days have passed since their symptoms started</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Have been fever-free for 24 hours without the use of medicine and</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Overall symptoms are improving</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> If the <b>only</b> symptoms are fatigue, headache, chills, or muscle or joint pain, people may return to work if symptoms resolve within two days. If symptoms persist beyond this time frame, manage as potential COVID-19 infection (exclude them from school).</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> If symptoms include cough, shortness of breath, runny nose, sore throat, loss of taste or smell, fever, nausea, vomiting or diarrhea, manage as potential COVID-19 infection (exclude them from school).</li> </ul>

\*A lab-based molecular test (PCR) is required to rule out COVID-19 if a person is symptomatic.

Self-Reported Positive Case

Any student or staff member who reports that they have tested positive for COVID-19 while at school will be asked to leave the school, or in the case of a student, a guardian will be called to pick up the student. Should a student or staff member report having tested positive for COVID-19, the Head of School or Pandemic Coordinator should:

1. Report the case to the New York City Department of Health and Mental Hygiene (NYC Health Department) via the online COVID-19 Facility Exposures form.
2. If the NYC Health Department determines that additional follow-up is needed, you will be contacted with instructions.

Face Coverings & Personal Protection Equipment (PPE)

Who Must Wear Them and When

All persons in the building must wear masks indoors as a general rule. This applies to all students, faculty, staff, and any other individuals in the building **whether vaccinated or unvaccinated**. There are exceptions and special circumstances as outlined below.

Masks must always be worn when entering “public areas” such as hallways, stairwells, bathrooms, or other spaces multiple individuals or groups may pass through, and especially in situations where social distancing may be difficult to maintain, such as entering/exiting

classrooms with others, or in narrow halls and passageways. Individuals should have their masks with them at all times, as they must be prepared to put them on if someone else who is unmasked is unexpectedly unable to socially distance.

Exceptions to general mask-wearing are outlined below:

- Students may take mask breaks when outdoor access is provided by an adult or at their desk with dividers in classrooms where they can socially distance.
- A student who is having difficulty breathing should immediately be given a mask break and if the difficulty continues, be evaluated by a designated administrator or nurse (if available).
- Students may remove their mask to eat provided that it is done in an area of the school determined to have the appropriate capacity for social distancing during mealtimes.
- A teacher has discretion in determining if a child is safe or not to remove.

### What Types of Masks and Protection are Appropriate

#### General Guidelines

Acceptable face coverings for COVID-19 **include but are not limited to cloth-based face coverings, and surgical masks that cover both the mouth and nose.** Face shields worn without other face coverings are not considered adequate protection against COVID-19 and should not be used except in combination with an acceptable mask.

Faculty and students may use face coverings that are transparent at or around the mouth for instruction or interventions that require visualization of the movement of the lips and/or mouths (e.g., circle time, speechwork, or speech therapy). These alternate coverings may also be used for certain students (e.g., hearing impaired) who benefit from being able to see more of the face of the faculty or staff member.

For staff engaged in workplace activities that require a higher degree of protection due to the nature of the work (e.g. health screenings, nurse's office work), N-95 masks, N-95 respirators, or other PPE used under existing industry standards should be used, in accordance with OSHA guidelines.

#### Provision of Masks

Reusable face masks should be labeled with the child's name or initials so it is clear to whom the mask belongs. For children who forget their masks or for families who prefer to use disposable masks, the school will have a supply of disposable surgical masks on hand (adult and child-sized) that community members can use at no charge.

Teachers are provided by the school with surgical masks since teaching often involves projecting the voice, leading to greater aerosolization. Teachers are encouraged to wear surgical masks when leading class at a minimum.

Face masks should be washed, disinfected, or replaced after each day's use and must not be shared. Students and families should take responsibility for maintaining their individual face coverings. The CDC provides guidance on its website for additional information on cloth face coverings and other types of PPE, as well as instructions on use and cleaning.

DLSA will provide all students and faculty with training on how to adequately put on, take off, clean (as applicable), and discard PPE, including face masks.

## **Hygiene**

### **Handwashing**

DLSA follows all hygiene requirements as advised by the CDC and DOH. These include:

- Training all students, faculty, and staff on proper hand and respiratory hygiene, including providing information to families and guardians on ways to reinforce this at home
- Creating extra time in the schedule for handwashing, especially after restroom breaks, recess, using shared equipment, or other higher risk activities
- Installing touchless hand sanitizer dispensers filled with at least 60% alcohol-based sanitizer for areas where handwashing is impractical. Hand sanitizer use will be minimized where hand washing is preferable for safety reasons.
- Providing hand sanitizer and wipes in common areas or near shared workplace items (copy machines, computers).

Parents who do not wish their child to use hand sanitizer should inform the school administration in writing, and provision will be made for the child to use a sink instead.

### **Cleaning & Disinfection**

The school's custodial staff is primarily responsible for cleaning and disinfection. A comprehensive COVID-19-specific cleaning plan per State guidelines has been developed for the school. Per DOH guidelines, custodial staff will keep logs that include the date, time, and scope of custodial cleaning and disinfection. In addition to the work of the custodial staff, classrooms and common areas will be stocked with child-safe, CDC-approved disinfectant spray so that students and teachers can also contribute to cleaning efforts at periodic intervals during the day. Extra time has been built into the schedule for hygiene maintenance--both handwashing and the disinfection/cleaning of surfaces. In addition to these measures, the following extra steps will be taken in classrooms, offices and common areas:

- Water drinking fountains will be closed. Students, faculty, and staff are encouraged to bring their own labeled water bottles.
- In general, students will attend and travel to classes in restricted pods except for periods where they take world languages. World language classes will be held in larger rooms to lower the amount of risk in mixing cohorts of students. However, shared items (lunch tables, gym equipment, etc) will be cleaned and disinfected between each cohort's use.
- Children will each have their own personal classroom supplies (of pencils, crayons, paper, etc) that they will draw from rather than using common materials. Each child's supply will be labeled and stored either in a desk, individual file, or other method that ensures separation of materials.
- Materials and tools used by staff or employees are regularly cleaned and disinfected using registered disinfectants. If cleaning or disinfection products or the act of cleaning and disinfection causes safety hazards or degrades the material or machinery, DLSA will supply disposable gloves and/or place limitations on the number of employees using such machinery.
- Custodial staff will keep logs that include the date, time, and scope of custodial cleaning and disinfection.

### Food Service

As a majority of the students at DLSA receive their meals from the Archdiocese of New York (ADNY) Child Nutrition Program (CNP). The CNP will provide meal service for in-person instruction. The CNP will provide individually packaged breakfast and lunch meals that will be distributed by staff in cafeteria pods where students are spaced 6 feet apart. As of now, the Archdiocesan schools will be following CDC recommendations (subject to any changes that may be released in guidance from the local, state, and/or federal government). The mechanics of this will be a partnership with school staff assisting in this process. CNP staff will be wearing masks while in the building and will be regularly sanitizing their equipment and frequently touched kitchen surfaces. However, sanitization and cleaning beyond that limited scope is the school's responsibility through its building maintenance staff.

Students at DLSA will be assigned a classroom or alternative lunch space for the duration of breakfast, lunch or snack and have meals within those assigned rooms. Open or touch-free closed top trash receptacles capable of handling this amount of refuse will be supplied in the classrooms. Hand sanitizer stanchions will be provided in each classroom to allow for cleansing before and after eating.

Teachers and students will:

- Wash or sanitize hands before and after eating.
- Sit a minimum of six feet apart while eating indoors.
- Refrain from sharing food of any kind with each other.
- Disinfect tables and/or sneeze guards both before AND after using the room, even at tables where no one was seated.

- Any student with food allergies will be made known to the classroom teacher in order to provide proper interventions if necessary and to monitor proper hygiene and discourage the sharing of food.

### Restrooms

- Restrooms designed for multiple people will be limited to half their usual capacity. Signage demarking the maximum capacity will be posted on doors.
- Faculty and staff likewise will use designated bathrooms on the third floor to limit cross-exposure.
- Restrooms will be cleaned and disinfected frequently during the day, following recommendations established by the DOH.
- Toilets will be refitted with lidded seats, and students will have regular reminders to close lids before flushing.
- Wherever possible given ADA compliance rules, DLSA will install barriers between toilets and sinks to reduce the risk of aerosolization.

### Cleaning & Disinfection After a Suspected or Confirmed COVID-19 Case

In the event an individual at the school is confirmed to have COVID-19 while at school, DLSA will immediately:

- Close off areas used by the person who is suspected or confirmed to have COVID-19.
- Open outside doors and windows to increase air circulation in the area.
- Wait 24 hours before cleaning and disinfecting. If waiting 24 hours is not feasible, we will wait as long as possible to allow aerosolized particles to settle.
- Clean and disinfect all areas used by the person suspected or confirmed to have COVID-19, such as offices, classrooms, bathrooms, lockers, and common areas.
- Reopen the area once it has been appropriately cleaned and disinfected.

If more than seven days have passed since the person who is suspected or confirmed to have COVID-19 visited or used the facility, additional cleaning and disinfection is not necessary, but routine cleaning and disinfection should continue.

### Physical Distancing

DLSA will strive to maintain appropriate social distancing (generally 3 feet in classrooms when possible and 6 feet during breakfast and lunch) between all individuals while in school facilities and on school grounds, unless safety or the core activity (e.g., instruction, moving equipment, traveling in common areas) requires a shorter distance or individuals are of the same household. Mask-wearing will also help address cases where three or six feet of distance cannot be maintained.

### Creation of Cohorts and Pods

In the event that hybrid instruction is required, an “A and B Cohort Model” where group A will attend 2-3 days per week, and Group B will attend 2-3 days per week, will be employed. No more than 50% of the student population is planned to be present at the school on any given day, or approximately 85 students when the school decides that hybrid learning is needed.

Upon arriving at the school, students will go directly to their designated classroom or “cohort room,” organize their personal belongings at their designated seats, and use the provided hand disinfectant. Prior to leaving at the end of the day, students that attended world language last period will return to their cohort room to gather their belongings. This cohort will also be used for meals.

During each period (1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6) there will be approximately 5-10 classes taught or a total load of 30-60 classes per day. Per period, 5 of these classes will be taught in the student’s POD, with faculty members switching their locations per period, utilizing the proper hygiene protocols for any shared high-touch materials such as markers, desks, white boards, etc. The remaining 3 classes per period are language courses, and the students will be leaving their homerooms to attend these classes.

Daily deep cleaning and disinfecting of high touch surfaces, following CDC and NYC DOH Guidelines will occur.

### Arrival, Departure, and Scheduling

DLSA will designate the 8th Avenue doors as its entrance and “up stairs”, and the 9th Avenue doors as its exit and “down stairs.” Physical distancing signage will be present on the front steps and along the front of the school building to guide students/parents/guardians in case there is a line to get into school. If there is a line to enter the school outside the designated entryway, parents/guardians may wait in line with children outside the school. However, parents/guardians will not be allowed inside the building, and will be expected to say goodbye to their children outside. Students will proceed directly to their cafeteria classroom after leaving any materials they will not need for the day in their lockers (protocols permitting). Students will check their cellphones in Carson Hall before turning them off for the remainder of the day.

Finalized schedules will be released at the end of August, but **families should plan to be precise in their arrival and pickup times since we will not be able to accommodate children in Carson hall or the library as in past years.**

### Physical Distancing Considerations for Faculty and Staff

faculty and staff are expected to be in the building five days a week for either in-person or hybrid teaching. As the course of the pandemic shifts, other changes may include:

- The reconfiguration of the faculty lounge to accommodate only TWO persons at a time.
- The reconfiguration of staff offices to allow for social distancing within the space. If the size of the space makes this impossible, staff members may be reassigned office space in



an area that allows for proper distancing. Under no circumstances should faculty/staff be present together in small spaces (storage closets, small offices, conference room or tutoring rooms) for longer than 15 minutes.

### Metrics Used for School-Wide Decisions

De La Salle Academy will closely monitor community transmission indicators and thresholds, as recommended by the CDC, to determine its approach to academic and extracurricular programming. In particular, we will be guided by the total new cases per 100,000 persons in the past 7 days and the percent positivity in the city (or the state if city data is not available) in the past 7 days. In addition, DLSA will monitor state vaccination rates in NY state and weekly testing of our unvaccinated students (and vaccinated students if needed).

### Quarantine for Students and Staff Identified as Close Contacts (to Someone with COVID-19)

Students will be grouped in PODS to allow for fewer opportunities for cross-exposure, and easier containment of the virus if there is an outbreak. As per the NYCDOH, in the event there is a positive case in a classroom, students or staff will be asked to quarantine due to exposure to COVID-19. As per the NYCDOH, students or staff who are:

- **At least 12 years old, fully vaccinated\* and not showing symptoms** may continue to attend school in person. Out of an abundance of caution, these students are encouraged to take a COVID-19 test three to five days after exposure.
- **At least 12 years old, fully vaccinated\* and showing symptoms** will be directed to quarantine for 10 calendar days. *See below for protocols for return to school after symptoms policy.*
- **Unvaccinated** will be directed to quarantine for 14 calendar days. DLSA may revise this policy in conjunction with available guidance throughout the course of the pandemic.
- **Fully recovered from laboratory-confirmed COVID-19 in the past three months and show no symptoms of COVID-19 since the current exposure** may continue to attend school in person. Three months is measured from the date a person first had COVID-19 symptoms or, if they had no symptoms, the date of their first positive diagnostic test.
- **Students or staff members with COVID-19 symptoms as outlined above can only return to school once they satisfy conditions 1 and 2 below.**
  1. They have seen a doctor (in-person or through a telehealth appointment) and meet the following criteria:
    - They are confirmed by a PCR COVID-19 test as not having COVID-19;  
**AND**
    - It has been at least 10 days since their symptoms started.
  2. Their symptoms have resolved/reduced significantly and there has been no fever in the last 24 hours without the use of fever reducing medicines.

\*An individual is fully vaccinated two weeks after a single-dose vaccine or second dose of a two-dose vaccine, where the vaccine has received emergency approval from the FDA or World Health Organization.

All individuals identified as close contacts to someone with COVID-19 must continue daily symptom monitoring through Day 14. If symptoms occur, they should isolate themselves, contact their health care provider, get tested for COVID-19 and must not attend school.

DLSA will require proof of vaccination or previous (recent) positive test from individuals who are exposed but exempt from quarantine. DLSA will request submission of documentation of COVID-19 vaccination status. Keeping in mind the burden imposed on children and their families, DLSA may choose to enforce a more restrictive quarantine policy (for example, excluding an entire classroom or pod from school for 10 days).

## **Section 2: Social and Emotional Well-Being:**

As made clear by the NY State Education Department, schools must ensure that the social-emotional well being of our school community remains a top priority. Building on our proud tradition of educating the whole child, DLSA will build upon our strong commitment to incorporating Social-Emotional Learning (SEL) and support services into our planning.

### **Tiered Support System**

DLSA has developed a clear and robust tiered support system to address the social and academic needs of our students. This three-tiered model takes preventative and reactive approaches to ensuring students do not fall through the cracks.

### **Social Supports**

Social supports consist of school wide, small group and intensive individual support. All students at DLSA are grouped into core class groups that average 20 students. This small class size enables faculty to develop meaningful and authentic relationships with students. It also provides students with a personalized approach to academic and social-emotional support in all their classes. Additionally, each student is assigned a faculty advisor along with approximately 9 other students. Advisory takes place everyday between 8:45am - 9:00am. In addition, students meet as grade level homerooms twice a week by gender. This coming year, all students will also have access to a dedicated school counselor. This counselor will provide preventative and responsive support to all families and students; track and monitor social and emotional progress of students identified with needs or concerns; provide 1-1 student sessions, group counseling and walk-in appointments; and professional development workshops for faculty on mental health and adolescent development. For students and parents experiencing acute social-emotional distress, the school counselor and assistant principal will recommend external services which may include therapy through our partnership with the Institute for Psychoanalytic Training and Research (IPTAR).

### *Academic Supports*

Academic supports consist of school wide, afterschool and individualized and personalized supports. All students at DLSA have access to after school homework opportunity time where one teacher from each department is available to support students after school. We also offer peer tutoring as well as partner with high school students from across NYC to provide additional support during the day. Quarterly progress reports are also provided to families to support students who are of academic concern. If school wide and after school supports are not effective, the Academic Dean convenes teachers in the student's schedule to create an academic plan to support both the students and the family. Our Academic Dean provides preventative and responsive support to all families and students; tracks and monitors academic progress of students identified with needs or concerns; trains peer tutors; and provides professional development workshops for faculty.

### *School Procedures & Teacher/Staff Professional Development*

In addition to our support system, we will strive to provide opportunities for students, families and faculty to increase the tools they have to confront the challenges posed by COVID-19:

- Beginning the school year slowly, with ample time to re-orient students to the “new normal,” gives them time to unpack and process the previous year, and focus on rebuilding the social fabric of the classroom.
- Offering parent/guardian led support groups and “coffees” on a monthly basis.
- Offering support to faculty, as well as families, through resources shared by our COVID-19 resource navigator and school counselor.
- Professional development for teachers on how to work with children in class during a prolonged crisis--lessons taken from other trauma-informed schools and settings. Expectations of what “normal” child development and behavior looks like under these circumstances will be discussed, as well as opportunities for professional and personal growth around meeting childrens’ needs in NYC during and after COVID and the extreme social unrest many neighborhoods have experienced.
- Professional development for teachers around identifying signs of depression, anxiety, and trauma in children of different ages, and how to appropriately refer them to support staff for follow up.
- Town Halls and workshops for families to provide resources and tools to support their students with technology, social-emotional development, and academic progress.

## **Section 3: Facilities**

### *Ventilation*

In addition to physical distancing when possible, DLSA has improved ventilation within the building, by the following measures, among others:

- Increase the percentage of outdoor air.
- Increase total airflow supply to occupied spaces, if possible.

- Using natural ventilation (i.e., opening windows if possible and safe to do so) to increase outdoor air dilution of indoor air when environmental conditions and building requirements allow.
- Using portable high-efficiency particulate air (HEPA) fan/filtration systems to help enhance air cleaning (especially in higher risk areas).
- Ensure exhaust fans in restroom facilities are functional and operating at full capacity when the building is occupied.

DLSA opens windows and has installed portable high-efficiency particulate air fan / filtration systems for all classrooms, offices and common areas. Turning the mini-split air-conditioning system on will not diminish the effects of either of these recommendations and may assist in facilitating clean-to-less-clean air movement.

For the communal and individual bathrooms, the exhaust fan will be kept on during operational hours, and windows will be closed. Bathroom use should be staggered and toilet lids should be in the closed position prior to flushing.

### *Flow of Traffic*

In order to provide a more controlled and low risk flow of traffic, the 8th Avenue staircases will be designated as “up only” and the 9th Avenue staircases will be designated as “down only.” Each floor will be a one way corridor indicating movement to either the 9th or 8th Avenue staircases. Students leaving cohorted classrooms to attend world languages classes in 5AB will be allowed to cross the fifth floor in order to attend their class provided they are wearing their facemasks. Teachers transitioning classes may also ignore corridor arrows as long as they are wearing facemasks. Stick adherence to the flow of traffic will be supervised during arrival and dismissal times.

### *Safety Drills*

DLSA maintains an internal guide for conducting drills entitled “Lockdown and Fire Drill Procedures.” This will be reviewed and updated before the start of the 2021-2022 school year to take into account health and safety requirements by, for instance, indicating that students and faculty are to maintain a distance of three feet when they gather on the sidewalks outside for our headcount, and by reviewing where each class should gather in order to preserve maximum distance.

## **Section 4: Transportation**

As a school that serves students from all five boroughs, Long Island, Westchester and New Jersey, our students arrive at our school by car, bus and subway. A majority of our students use the subway system through student metrocards and passes provided by the MTA. The MTA has instituted additional procedures to provide more hygienic and safer conditions.

## **Section 5: Data Collection and Compliance**

DLSA will continue to collect data and provide fiscal and other information as required by the State.

### **Attendance**

The school collects attendance data every day, both for in-person and online settings for every class section. Attendance records are collected and maintained as outlined in our school's *Family Handbook*.

### **Chronic Absenteeism**

DLSA will work to identify any children at risk of becoming chronically absent due to sickness, family situation, or other circumstances, reaching out to families and providing educational support services that include:

- Daily phone calls by our systems manager to inquire about students whereabouts
- Targeted follow-up phone calls by school counselor, as needed
- Check-ins with the class teacher to provide work at a rate and level that is appropriate to the student's situation
- Additional support from our Academic Support team and Academic Dean, if needed
- Help obtaining the necessary technology to ensure continuity of learning
- Appointments with our school counselor who can refer out to additional services, as needed

To achieve these goals we will use phone, email, and even socially distant meet-ups to engage and converse with family members and students who are experiencing difficulty.

## **Section 6: School Schedules**

DLSA takes safety as its first priority, then social-emotional well-being to lay the foundations for learning, and then academic skill building and maintenance. In general, our three scenarios (In-person, Hybrid, and Remote Learning) are designed to be relatively seamless by maintaining a version of the same schedule in both situations. Differences would emerge in terms of slight differences in period length as well as space made for handwashing and hygiene protocols.

### *In-Person Learning*

Students and faculty attend classes in the school building five days a week. When students arrive in the morning, each student undergoes a health and safety process that includes a health questionnaire, temperature screening, and hand sanitizing. Each grade has been divided into pods. The sixth grade has three pods, the seventh grade has three pods, and the eighth grade has four pods. There are 15 - 18 students per pod. Students and faculty follow a seven-day rotating schedule. Periods each day are divided into six 45-minute periods. There is a ten minute break after period two, a 40-minute lunch period after period three, and a 45-minute recess after period five. While in class, students remain three feet apart. Students receive classes in ELA, Spanish/French, Math, Social Studies, and Science. Pods are also assigned to special topic classes in music, art, drama, civil and human rights, sociology, philosophy, moral, science, or math. At the end of the school day, students are dismissed by groups in order to minimize congestion at the exit.

Breakfast and lunch take place in classrooms. Students eat in their pods and are spaced six feet apart. In classrooms where the spacing is not possible, pods are split into nearby unoccupied classrooms that allow for the physical distancing requirement. While eating, students are silent and each has a barrier that they put up. When possible, students will have a 45-minute recess at the nearby McCaffrey Park.

### *Remote Learning*

Our remote learning plan takes into account what is developmentally appropriate for children in terms of their relationship to the screen and its effects on their well-being. Periods are divided into six 45 minute periods with faculty instructed to provide no more than 20-30 minutes of synchronous instruction per period. Faculty are also instructed to provide screen breaks to students every 25-30 minutes. In total this provides between 3-4 hours of synchronous work time as recommended by many educational and professional experts for middle school students. Students will receive classes in math, ELA, spanish/french, social studies and science. In addition, each student will be placed in one or more elective courses per semester in the areas of music, art, drama, social justice, philosophy, moral or sociology. When possible and permitted by State and local guidance, DLSA will host small grade-level events at school or at nearby parks to allow for low-risk gatherings and community building.

In addition, faculty will be available Tuesday - Thursday from 3:30-4:30pm for after school homework support for any student that needs it. Students experiencing academic challenges will be supported with 1-1 tutoring and remedial work during this time as well.

### *Hybrid Learning*

In order to pursue occupancy limits and to minimize the spread of COVID-19 an “A and B Cohort Model” where group A will attend the school Mondays and Wednesdays, and Group B will attend the school Tuesdays and Thursdays, has been developed and stands ready for use. In-person Fridays will be made available for each cohort every other week. There would be six 45 minute periods. No more than 50% of the student population is anticipated or planned to be

present at the school on any given day, or approximately 80 students for the Fall 2021 Semester. Periods are divided into six 45 minute periods. Students who are home will be provided links to live classes with the understanding that live classes are primarily designed for students in class and not at home. Students at home will participate in asynchronous work that prioritizes independent tasks while prioritizing group work, discussion and assessments during in-person time. Students will receive classes in math, ELA, spanish/french, social studies and science. In addition, each student will be placed in one or more elective courses per semester in the areas of music, art, drama, social justice, philosophy, moral or sociology. Students not participating in a hybrid model, for medical or other reasons, will be provided asynchronous course modules as well as access to live classes.

## **Section 7: Technology and Connectivity**

### **Access to Technology**

DLSA has conducted and will continue to conduct a number of surveys of its parents and faculty to determine what access they have to technology and the internet. With the help of our supporters and alumni, we have also made critical investments in ensuring access to laptops or netbooks, more robust learning management systems, educational tools, and enhanced technological support. DLSA has created a tech support team consisting of an Information Technology Specialist, IT Assistant, Academic Dean and our Systems Manager. As with our academic and social supports, the team stands ready to provide tiered tech support to faculty, students and families. Thanks to support from generous donors we have the capacity to provide every student who needs a device with a chromebook or similar device. We are also providing support for troubleshooting internet service issues. Ongoing tech support will be provided to families by appointment on Tuesdays for any hardware or tutorial services. Faculty will be provided similar services on Fridays.

### **Platforms and Educational Technology**

DLSA will use CANVAS as its Learning Management System for teachers to communicate with families, structure asynchronous activities, and upload assignments that guardians and students can access in a single place.

Now that Zoom has improved security to a level appropriate for schools, the functionality offered by that platform, particularly its “breakout group” function has resulted in our adoption of it as our preferred videoconference tool.

### **Education for Families and Teachers**

Over the summer faculty have been engaged in a number of professional development opportunities as well as in-house workshops provided by administration. Four checkpoints were established during the summer to review progress and collect any concerns from faculty about educational technology.

This summer DLSA provided access to a four week virtual summer program to all students. This provided invaluable time to deepen our students' capacity to use educational technology, assess specific needs and build community. During late August and early September, students and families will receive additional workshops and support in navigating our Zoom and CANVAS platforms.

## **Section 8: Staffing & Human Resources**

### *COVID-specific HR Considerations*

DLSA is updating its 2021-2022 Faculty Handbook with a COVID-19-specific addendum covering all points of HR policy as they relate specifically to the pandemic. Copies of the addendum were made available to the faculty over the summer.

### **Conclusion**

**De La Salle Academy plans to reopen full time, in-person instruction, 5 days per week to begin the 2021-2022 school year. We will reevaluate the need to shift to other instructional modalities based on the CDC's guidelines for assessing community transmission of COVID-19.**