

October 5, 2020

Dear Families,

I hope this finds you and your loved ones safe and healthy.

You and all your fellow New Yorkers have done an incredible job fighting COVID-19 since March. However, as you likely are aware, some areas of the city have been experiencing elevated rates of COVID-19 transmission. These areas cover nine zip codes in Brooklyn and Queens, including the zip code where your child’s school is located.

Out of an abundance of caution, and to keep you and your family safe, yesterday Mayor de Blasio announced a plan to help stop the spread of COVID-19 in these areas. This plan includes closing all school buildings and non-essential businesses in these zip codes beginning on Wednesday, October 7 for at least a two-week period. This would mean your child’s school is planning to transition to fully remote teaching and learning beginning this Wednesday, October 7 for a two-week period. You will hear from your principal prior to Wednesday to confirm a building closure, along with important next steps.

The city is taking these steps to ensure we can contain spread of the coronavirus across our communities. When transmission rates decrease to under 3%, then your child’s school can reopen—as soon as Thursday, October 22. If the transmission rates persist above 3% in these zip codes, the Mayor has proposed keeping school buildings closed and other precautions in place for a longer duration. We will proactively provide you with updates on reopening.

It is important to note that there is no evidence that schools in these zip codes have had an increase in positive cases, nor is there any indication that higher transmission rates in these neighborhoods is due to school buildings being open. The step to close school buildings is one of many steps being taken to help reduce transmission in these specific zip codes.

The nine zip codes, which collectively are home to approximately 100 DOE school buildings, are:

Neighborhood	ZIP
Edgemere/Far Rockaway	11691
Borough Park	11219
Gravesend/Homecrest	11223
Midwood	11230
Bensonhurst/Mapleton	11204
Flatlands/Midwood	11210
Gerritsen Beach/Homecrest/ Sheepshead Bay	11229
Kew Gardens	11415

Kew Gardens Hills/Pomonok

11367

I know that for many of you, this decision to temporarily close school buildings that we just opened up will be disappointing, and I understand. I saw the joy of students and educators reuniting in person over the last two weeks. But please know that we are here to support your student and your school in this transition. We'll take all necessary steps to ensure teachers can teach dynamically and effectively while remote. We are committed to academic excellence for your child—no matter where they are learning.

The Mayor and I consider your family's health and safety, and that of everyone in your school community, to be our top priority, and we have pledged to keep it at the forefront of everything we do. I know that working together, we can continue to fight back against COVID-19.

It's up to all of us, no matter where we are, to continue to take the steps we know are so important in preventing the spread of this virus. Remember the "Core Four": wash your hands, wear a face covering, keep six feet of distance from others, and stay home if you're feeling sick. These are critically important steps that all of us can take every day.

We will continue to unequivocally support you and everyone in the DOE family as this public health crisis continues to evolve. Please do not hesitate to reach out to your child's school with any questions or concerns.

Sincerely,



Richard A. Carranza  
Chancellor  
New York City Department of Education