

July 29, 2021

ascendlearning.org

Dear Ascend Families:

We hope you are well and enjoying the summer. Ascend is currently finalizing preparations to welcome every student back to in-person learning five days per week. We can't wait to welcome back our returning students and welcome many new additions to our incredible Ascend community!

In our June communication, we shared the potential of a limited remote learning option to accommodate medical exemptions. Currently, neither CDC or state guidance have specified conditions for medical exemptions; in fact, the CDC guidance states "Students benefit from in-person learning, and safely returning to in-person instruction in the fall 2021 is a priority," and similarly, the NYC DOE plans to open fully in-person. Furthermore, and as proven this past spring, we believe our enhanced health and safety protocols will allow us to safely open our schools for all scholars. Therefore, we will not offer a remote learning option unless public health guidance changes.

As stated in our June letter to families, the first day of school will come slightly earlier than past years with *students in grades K-8 beginning on August 16 or August 17th*. We believe that learning happens best when students and teachers are together in person, and the health and safety protocols we implemented earlier this year have proven effective in providing a safe learning environment for students and staff alike.

Ascend will continue to follow [health and safety protocols](#) consistent with evolving state and local guidance. Examples of these protocols include:

- daily health screenings
- required face covering for every individual on campus
- regular use of hand sanitizing stations for students and staff
- multiple daily cleanings of each building
- optimized ventilation and air filtration

While all of these practices have proven effective in preventing the spread of the COVID-19 coronavirus in schools, all health agencies and officials agree that *the very best way to keep our students, staff and community safe is to ensure that everyone who is eligible gets vaccinated as soon as possible*. All Ascend staff will be required to either provide proof of vaccination or participate in weekly COVID-19 testing.

We strongly encourage **everyone** to learn about the vaccines that are now readily available and consider protecting yourself and our Ascend community by getting vaccinated. To support simplified access to vaccination for all staff and families, *Ascend will host a vaccination clinic on Friday, Aug 13 at our campus at 1501 Pitkin Ave* with our partners from Adirondack Health & Wellness. You can sign up for 15-minute appointments [here](#) to receive the Pfizer vaccine, administered by a registered nurse.

Thank you again for being part of our Ascend community. Over the next two weeks you will receive additional communication from your school with the most current information available about health and safety protocols, daily schedules, and all of the details your family needs to be ready for our exciting return to school this fall. As always, if you have any additional questions, please contact your school leader.

In partnership,

Recy Dunn
Chief Executive Officer

Danique Day
Chief Schools Officer