



**NEW YORK CITY DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH  
AND MENTAL HYGIENE**  
Dave A. Chokshi, MD  
*Commissioner*

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**  
**Friday, September 25, 2020**  
**(347) 396-4177**

## **Health Department Issues Commissioner’s Order to Non-Public Schools in Brooklyn and Queens ZIP Codes to Safeguard Public Health**

*Schools must comply with certain risk reduction measures in order to prevent spread in the school community*

*Schools not in compliance of the Orders will face violations and possible closures*

**September 25, 2020** – The Health Department today announced it has issued a Commissioner’s Order to non-public schools in six Brooklyn and two Queens ZIP codes. Any school found to be out of compliance will be issued a violation and face a possible closure. The fine for violating a Commissioner’s Order is \$1,000.

“This may be the most precarious position with COVID-19 we have experienced in months, and we must immediately take action to protect our communities,” said **Health Commissioner Dr. Dave A. Chokshi**. “Protecting against COVID-19 requires a group response. It is critical for us to follow public health guidance, most importantly the Core 4: Wear face coverings, keep physical distance, keep your hands clean, and stay home if you are sick.”

The COVID-19 risk reduction measures for non-public schools include:

- All individuals on the school premises should remain at least 6 feet apart at all times, except in emergencies or when doing so would create a safety hazard;
- Face coverings are required in school buildings at all times, except for individuals who cannot wear a face covering because of developmental, medical or age reasons;
- Coordinating with the Health Department and the Test + Trace Corps to identify, isolate and prevent the spread of COVID-19; and
- Following established protocols for opening and closing schools if a student or staff is confirmed with COVID-19, and excluding students and staff who have symptoms of or are confirmed with COVID-19 or have been identified as a close contact to someone with COVID-19.

The ZIP codes under the Commissioner’s Order are:

- 11204 (Bensonhurst/Mapleton)
- 11223 (Gravesent/Homecrest)
- 11230 (Midwood)
- 11691 (Edgemere/Far Rockaway)

- 11415 (Kew Gardens)
- 11219 (Borough Park)
- 11229 (Gerritsen Beach/Homecrest/Sheepshead Bay)
- 11210 (Flatlands/Midwood)

The Order goes into effect immediately, and inspectors will be visiting the non-public schools in the covered ZIP codes to check for compliance. The Health Department will be sharing additional documents over the weekend and posting online to further help schools understand these requirements. Failure to comply could result in a violation subject to a \$1,000 fine.

### **Outreach**

The City is working with leading physicians, local elected officials, and communities to respond to the increase in cases in these ZIP codes.

- To date:
  - Call with leading physicians to improve outreach plans in that community and reinforce Core 4 messaging.
  - Calls with local elected officials regarding the concerning data.
  - Over 200K robocalls (2 rounds) to Borough Park, Bensonhurst, Borough Park, Midwood, Crown Heights, Williamsburg, Forest Hills, and the Rockaways.
  - Over 3,500 pieces of COVID-19 info material (palm cards, flyers, etc.) distributed across Borough Park, Bensonhurst, Williamsburg, Brighton Beach, and Flushing.
  - Over 13,000 masks distributed across Borough Park, Bensonhurst, Williamsburg, Brighton Beach, and Flushing.
  - Nearly 60 newspaper ads placed in community papers
  - Letter from Commissioner of Health to local journalists.
  - Over 200 healthcare providers (providers and pharmacies) reached in Borough Park and Bensonhurst.
  - 20 synagogues reached in Borough Park and Bensonhurst with palm cards and over 10,000 masks.
- Ongoing:
  - The NYC Test & Trace Corps and Department of Health have continued on-the-ground outreach and engagement with 38 canvassers and partner Community Based Organizations distributing literature, face coverings and hand sanitizer in the areas.
  - Test & Trace is deploying mobile testing units to areas in Midwood, Williamsburg, Borough Park, Kew Gardens and Far Rockaway.
  - To support this push for testing, a new round of robocalls were made to communities of concern and a direct mailing will go next week.
  - Newspaper ads in local and community papers continue with a focus this week on Yom Kippur.
  - Five sound trucks and multiple ambulances to amplify testing messaging in English and Yiddish were sent out today and will continue through Friday.

**To prevent COVID-19, all New Yorkers should follow the Core 4:**

1. **Stay home if you are sick**  
Only leave for essential medical care or other essential errands.
2. **Keep physical distance**  
Stay at least 6 feet away from other people and avoid large indoor gatherings.
3. **Keep your hands clean**  
Wash your hands often with soap and water. Use hand sanitizer if soap and water are not available.
4. **Wear a face covering**  
You can be contagious without symptoms. Protect those around you by wearing a face covering.

### **Get Tested**

All New Yorkers should get a COVID-19 diagnostic test, whether or not they have symptoms or are at increased risk. Tests are free. [Look for a testing site](#) near you.

The City will continue to monitor mask compliance in the affected neighborhoods and engage residents on “Core 4” messages and mask distribution. The City encourages implementing the most rigorous standards of health and safety for all non-public schools, both in the affected ZIP codes and beyond.

###

**#027-20**

**MEDIA CONTACT:** Patrick Gallahue (347) 396-4177, [PressOffice@health.nyc.gov](mailto:PressOffice@health.nyc.gov)