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# School Reopening Case Study Report

June 2020





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Photo by Frank Oudeman Courtesy MBB Architects

## A Mission-Centered Approach

Reopening a school during a global pandemic presents a countless number of challenges and choices, each of which can potentially have a profound impact on the experience of the students, families and staff that make up the school’s community. Any approach to reducing the risk of exposure for this community requires prioritization and adaptation based on institutional values. In partnership with school leadership, MBB took a mission-centered approach to these challenges, prioritizing those solutions that reflected the values of the community, the identity of the institution and best facilitated the ongoing mission - through this pandemic and into the future.



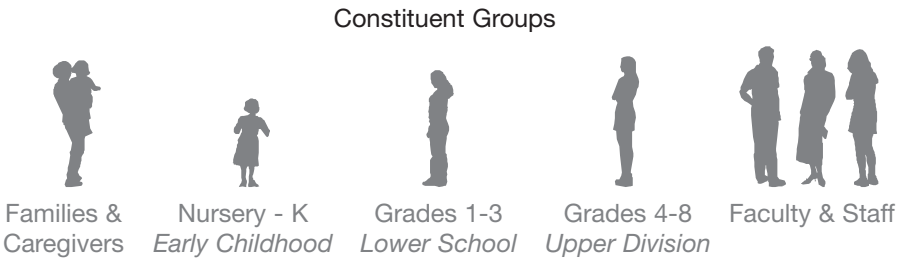
# Introduction

## Introduction: Case Study Structure and Purpose

MBB set out to gather resources to aid educational institutions and allied professionals with reopening planning amid the ongoing global COVID-19 pandemic. We determined that the most effective way to identify key decisions and explore alternative solutions was to create a detailed case study of a specific NYC school. The conclusions that follow emerged from an analysis of one school but will be applicable to many institutions grappling with the same issues.

This study was developed in close collaboration with the Head of School from “School A”. We consulted with [Derive Engineers](#) on building systems modifications, with Zubatkin Owners Representation on research and resources, and with Dr. Krystina Woods, an epidemiologist and infection prevention specialist at Mt. Sinai Hospital.

*This study is structured as a sequence of events, where hypothetical students are followed through a typical day (from getting to the school, getting through their day and getting back home) anticipating every opportunity to reduce exposure to infection. This presents a range of challenges that will in aggregate shape the school’s reopening plan.*



## Case Study Subject: School and Building Description

The name of the school that served as the subject for this case study has been withheld and is referred to as “School A”.

“School A” is a private independent school that occupies a seven story Brutalist style building, constructed in 1967, on a dense urban site in Manhattan. “School A” has a student population of approximately 380 from Early Childhood (2s-3s) through 8th grade. The 80,000 square foot building includes a cafeteria, gymnasium, chapel and rooftop play deck divided into areas for different ages.

MBB has been working with “School A” for twenty years on the incremental implementation of a master plan that was completed in summer of 2018. “School A” is in the process of planning their reopening and has agreed to serve as MBB’s reopening case study to be shared with the education community for use by other institutions.

This is a working document that will continue to evolve through school reopening.

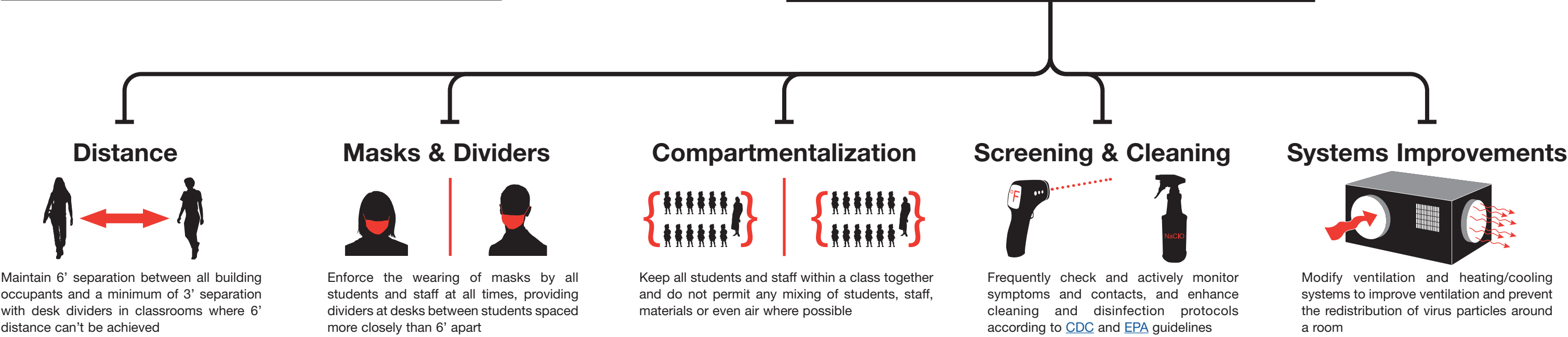
Disclaimer:  
This study represents the judgement of the individuals and institutions involved and should not be regarded as compliance guidelines, nor a guarantee to prevent the spread of COVID-19 within schools.





Priority Measures

There are a handful of measures that have proven to be most effective in preventing the spread of COVID-19. How schools choose to prioritize each of these solutions will largely shape the reopening plans for each educational facility. These measures are interconnected, complementary and often inversely proportional in their relative effectiveness.



*These measures were prioritized to address the specific constraints of the building and the needs of the students by age*

