



# DIRECTIVES FOR EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTIONS IN THE CONTEXT OF THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

FOR THE SCHOOL NETWORK

Last update: 03-12-2021

This document was produced by the Ministère de l'Éducation.

**Title of original document**

*Consignes applicables en milieu scolaire en contexte de pandémie (COVID-19) : Informations complémentaires à l'intention du réseau scolaire*

**Coordination**

Direction générale des ressources et encadrements pédagogiques

**Graphics and editing**

Direction générale des communications

**English version**

Services linguistiques en anglais

Direction du soutien au réseau éducatif anglophone

Ministère de l'Éducation

**For more information:**

General Information

Ministère de l'Éducation

1035, rue De La Chevrotière, 21<sup>e</sup> étage

Québec (Québec) G1R 5A5

Telephone: 418-643-7095

Toll-free: 1-866-747-6626

© Gouvernement du Québec

An electronic version of this document is available on the government's website at [www.quebec.ca](http://www.quebec.ca).

# Table of contents

Message from the Deputy Minister .....	4
Introduction .....	5
Introduction to the three areas guiding school organization in 2021-2022 .....	5
Note to readers .....	6
Health and well-being of students and staff.....	7
Wearing of masks.....	7
Distancing measures .....	10
Vaccination passport.....	11
Hygiene and disinfection.....	13
Circulating within the school .....	13
Visitor access .....	14
International students or students returning from international travel.....	16
Air quality .....	18
School organization.....	20
Presence in class .....	20
Distance education .....	21
Minimum number of hours of educational services .....	23
Support resources for distance education.....	24
Organization of groups.....	25
Special pedagogical projects.....	26
Arts Education.....	27
Physical Education and Health.....	28
Laboratories and workshops .....	29
Extracurricular activities .....	30
Field trips .....	31
Complementary educational services.....	33
Pedagogical support.....	34
Recess .....	35
Cafeterias .....	36
Food assistance .....	37

School libraries .....	38
Auditoriums and amphitheatres .....	38
Sports facilities* .....	39
School transportation .....	40
School daycare services .....	41
<b>Modifications made to the directives that apply in 2021-2022 .....</b>	<b>42</b>
<b>Governance .....</b>	<b>44</b>
<b>Memory aid – Emergency protocol / reconfinement plan.....</b>	<b>44</b>
<b>Management of cases and outbreaks .....</b>	<b>44</b>
Rapid testing.....	45
<b>School staff.....</b>	<b>45</b>
Guides published by the MSSS, public health authorities, INSPQ and CNESST .....	45
<b>Vaccination of school staff.....</b>	<b>46</b>
Applicable health measures.....	47
Ministerial orders .....	47
Remote work policy .....	48
Strategy to provide academic assistance and support well-being at school (Tutoring)...	48
Distance education .....	49
Secure digital environment .....	49
Vulnerable individuals, specific situations and applicable working conditions .....	50
Support measures for school staff.....	53
<b>Costs related to COVID-19 .....</b>	<b>54</b>
<b>Appendix.....</b>	<b>55</b>
List of regions and territories where contingency measures apply .....	55
Examples of potential organization for alternating attendance in Secondary III, IV and V .....	56
Summary table of the minimum number of hours of distance education services .....	58
Strategy to provide academic assistance and support well-being at school (Tutoring)...	62
Secure digital environment .....	64
Applicable working conditions .....	65

# Message from the Deputy Minister

---

Since the emergency measures were announced in March 2020, the school network has demonstrated its ability to adapt with creativity and commitment to the restrictions imposed by the pandemic. Over time, and with your help and the help of our partners in the Direction générale de la santé publique, we have learned much about the best strategies to implement to allow students and staff to continue developing in learning environments that offer an appropriate balance between safety, well-being and the pursuit of the three-fold mission of our Québec schools, which is to educate, to socialize and to provide qualifications.

The guidelines presented in this guide reflect this balance. In combination with the measures proposed by the public health authorities, they make it possible to minimize and control the risk of spreading the virus, thereby reducing the need to rely on distance education resulting from an outbreak.

Progress in the vaccination campaign, along with monitoring and implementation of the proposed guidelines, enables us to anticipate a year in which students can attend school in person for the majority of the time.

We are certain that this plan will allow all the flexibility required to offer educational services in the best possible conditions. My colleagues, the Assistant Deputy Ministers, and I will continue to listen to your needs and suggestions regarding modifications to these measures. We also encourage you to consult this guide regularly, as it will be adjusted based on changes to the epidemiological situation.

Sincerely,

Alain Sans Cartier

Deputy Minister of Education

# Introduction

---

## Introduction to the three areas guiding school organization in 2021-2022

As was explained by the Minister of Education on August 11, three areas will guide school organization in 2021-2022.

**Organization of a back-to-school period that is as close to normal as possible:** There will be no requirement for students in Québec to maintain stable class groups, whether they attend elementary school, secondary school, adult general education or vocational training. In order to continue to protect themselves and each other, students in elementary and secondary school, adult general education and vocational training must wear procedural masks in common areas (cafeteria, library, auditorium, etc.), when circulating indoors (hallways), as well as while in their assigned place on school transportation.

**Maintenance of health measures and remain vigilant about air quality:** Ongoing vigilance regarding the appearance of symptoms, hand hygiene routines for staff as well as students, and cleaning and disinfection measures continue to apply.

**Implementation of contingency measures by the public health authorities in case of an outbreak or if the health situation worsens in a given region. For some regions, this will already be the case when school resumes.**

## Note to readers

This document is intended as a guide for stakeholders in the school network. It provides necessary details on the application of the guidelines and measures originally introduced in the *Back-to-School Plan* presented by the Minister on August 11, 2021. The contingency health measures that may also be put into place if the epidemiological situation worsens are also discussed in each section.

The methods and requirements planned for the 2021 return to school apply in the same manner, without exceptions to public and private educational institutions.

Indigenous educational organizations are asked to take into account the realities of their communities when applying the guidelines and measures.

This guide is regularly updated and improved based on the most recent government guidelines, especially those issued by ministerial orders and orders-in-council, as well as questions and case studies that are brought to the attention of the Ministère.

**Note that the measures listed in the “Contingency measures” sections are to be applied only when ordered by the public health authorities.**

# Health and well-being of students and staff

---

## Wearing of masks

### Guidelines for back-to-school

- In preschool, wearing a mask is permitted but not required.
- In regions that are not covered by the contingency measures (see below), wearing a procedural mask is required for students in Elementary 1 and in all higher grades, including secondary school students, in common areas, when circulating indoors and while using school transportation. Masks are not required to be worn outdoors or during class.
- In adult general education and vocational training, wearing a procedural mask is required in common areas, when circulating indoors, while using school transportation and while in class. Masks are not required to be worn outdoors.
- **Exceptions to this requirement:** Individuals who meet the conditions listed below are not required to wear a mask or face covering and are not required to provide a doctor's note:
  - people who are receiving treatment, receiving a service or engaging in a physical activity or other activity that requires removal of the mask (e.g. drama, dance or music). In these cases, they may remove their mask or face covering for the duration of the treatment, service or activity only. Exceptions apply for [Physical Education and Health classes](#).
  - people who are unable to put on or take off a procedural mask by themselves due to a physical disability
  - people with facial deformities
  - people who, due to cognitive impairment, an intellectual disability, an autism spectrum disorder or a mental health problem, are unable to understand the requirement or for whom wearing a mask or face covering causes significant disorganization or distress
  - people with any other medical condition that makes wearing a procedural mask difficult or dangerous, and for which a doctor's note from a professional qualified to make a diagnosis may be required



As well as:

- people who are eating or drinking, or for identification purposes
  - people with specific needs related to speech, language and communication or who are receiving welcoming services and help with learning French as part of educational and teaching services
  - people who are interacting with one of the people listed in the previous paragraph
  - people in class, when the outdoor temperature, as determined by Environment Canada, is 25 degrees Celsius or higher, unless the room is air-conditioned
- However, students who are required to wear a mask in class by the public health authorities due to a case of COVID-19 must wear a mask at all times, even during physical or artistic activities. This applies to physical activities as part of Physical Education and Health or Arts Education classes, as well as to students enrolled in sports concentrations, Sports-études programs and other projects of the same type provided as part of educational services.
  - The Ministère will provide procedural masks with windows to school service centres, school boards, the Montreal Oral School for the Deaf and the École Oraliste de Québec in order to meet specific needs, such as those of staff working with students with hearing difficulties.
  - Staff members are required to wear procedural masks, in compliance with [the CNESST guidelines](#).
  - Measures that apply to bus, minibus and sedan drivers can be consulted in the [Workplace Sanitary Standards Guide for the School System](#) published by the CNESST.

**See the infographic:** [Guidelines regarding the wearing of masks](#) – Regions where the epidemiological situation is stable

## Potential contingency measures during the year

The following contingency measures are in force in some regions.

### **Preschool**

As of October 4, preschool students must wear procedural masks while using school transportation that is shared by multiple levels only, meaning buses or sedans carrying students from different grade levels.

[List of regions and territories where contingency measures apply](#)

### **Elementary**

Wearing a mask is required in certain circumstances other than in indoor common areas, such as in class, at daycare or during activities that make physical distancing more difficult. The regions and territories covered by these measures are listed in the [Appendix – List of regions and territories where contingency measures apply](#).

### **Secondary**

No additional measures are planned, unless stated otherwise in an advisory issued by the public health authorities.

### **Adult general education and vocational training**

No additional measures are planned.

### **Possible exceptions to the requirement to wear masks in regions covered by the contingency measures for elementary, secondary, adult general education and vocational training**

The exceptions are the same as those listed above, in the “Guidelines for back-to-school” section.

**See the infographic:** [Guidelines regarding the wearing of masks](#) – Regions where the epidemiological situation is worsening

## Distancing measures

### Guidelines for back-to-school

- In class and at daycare: standard school organization applies, without restrictions for class groups or physical distancing.
- For staff: wearing a mask continuously is not required, provided that a 1-metre distance is maintained or a physical barrier is present. School staff must wear procedural masks in common areas, when circulating indoors and when using or providing school transportation. The guideline concerning 15 minutes of contact no longer applies, as this concept was used at the start of the pandemic to apply to workers who can easily work in isolation and may, for example, accidentally meet a colleague in a hallway.

### Potential contingency measures during the year

The following contingency measures are in addition to the guidelines for back-to-school and will be implemented if the public health authorities so require.

#### **Preschool and elementary**

Some distancing measures may be added in order to keep students with their class groups while at lunch, recess or daycare. This measure limits contact with students in other classes, which reduces the risk of transmission and facilitates contact tracing.

#### **Secondary**

No additional measures are planned.

#### **Adult general education and vocational training**

No additional measures are planned.

## Vaccination passport

### Guidelines for back-to-school

Students under 13 years of age are not required to provide the vaccination passport under any circumstances.

Students who are over 13 years of age will not be required to provide the vaccination passport to participate in any of the activities provided as part of educational services, which include any sports or activities that are part of the Physical Education and Health program, Sport-études, Art-études and sports concentration programs as well as other related special pedagogical projects offered by a school service centre, a school board or a private school as part of general education in the youth sector or adult general education.

Students who are 13 years of age and older are therefore not required to show the vaccination passport for activities that take place within the educational institution and in other facilities (municipal arena, private training facility or gym, ski resort, etc.) so long as the activities are taking place as part of the educational services provided by the educational institution. This means that the activities are compulsory and planned as part of a student's schedule, such as Physical Education and Health classes, [field trips](#), training with a Sport-études team, etc.

However, the vaccination passport will be required in order for students over 13 years of age to participate in sports and physical activities as extracurricular activities or outside of school hours under the following conditions:

- sports and physical activities that take place indoors
- sports and physical activities that take place outdoors and involve frequent or prolonged contact, such as basketball, football or soccer
- activities that require the use of a ski lift

Therefore, the vaccination passport is required for participation in physical activities and sports at lunch time, provided these activities are outside of Physical Education and Health class, Sports-études and Art-études programs, sports concentrations and other special pedagogical projects.

The vaccination passport is also required for all students aged 13 and older who are participating in sports competitions, leagues and tournaments between schools or against teams from associations, whether they take place indoors or outdoors, as well as for spectators of these events.

The vaccination passport is not required for coaches, officials, employees and volunteers, to whom the CNESST rules apply.

## List of sports and physical activities requiring the vaccination passport

Due to the vaccination passport requirement for participation in sports activities, field trips with overnight stays are permitted.

Other types of extracurricular activities (cultural, scientific, etc.) do not require the vaccination passport.

For field trips, see the "[Field trips](#)" section.

### **Students completing practicums in the health network**

All students visiting, volunteering or completing a practicum in a health care setting have been required to be appropriately protected against COVID-19, as stated in [Ministerial Order 2021-070](#). If they must be supervised by staff other than school staff or staff from the health care setting, such as a food services subcontractor, these staff members must also be appropriately protected.

Students are required to provide **their educational institution** with proof of their vaccination status. The educational institution is responsible for ensuring that students being sent to the health care setting are appropriately protected against COVID-19.

For school staff members, see the section on "[Vaccination of school staff](#)."

## Hygiene and disinfection

### Guidelines for back-to-school

- Cleaning and disinfection measures applied in schools are maintained, particularly with regard to frequently touched surfaces.
- Hand hygiene routines are maintained for students and staff, in accordance with the CNESST guidelines.
- The use of reusable and unshared bottles is recommended for student and staff.
- Using water fountains to refill reusable water bottles is permitted if the health measures are applied during this use and the fountains are regularly cleaned and disinfected as a frequently used surface. For drinking from the same fountain, using a clean container is recommended. For example, small single-use paper cups may be made available near the fountain.

For more information, see the [Workplace Sanitary Standards Guide for the School System \(Preschool, Elementary, Secondary, General Adult Education and Vocational Training\) – COVID-19](#).

### Potential contingency measures during the year

No additional measures are planned.

## Circulating within the school

### Guidelines for back-to-school

#### For everyone

- With the exception of preschool: while circulating indoors, all students and school staff are required to [wear a mask](#).

### Potential contingency measures during the year

No additional measures are planned.

## Visitor access

### Guidelines for back-to-school

#### For everyone

Visitor access is permitted. At all times, as stated in the Order regarding the wearing of masks or face coverings by the general public, a parent or visitor must wear a procedural mask or face covering when present in an educational institution or the administrative building of a school service centre or school board. Showing the vaccination passport and keeping a register of visitors are not required.

### Potential contingency measures during the year

The following contingency measures are in addition to the guidelines for back-to-school and will be implemented if the public health authorities so require.

#### For everyone

If the health situation worsens, visitor access to the building or grounds of educational institutions may be restricted or stopped, including for parents. Visitor access for administrative buildings may also be revised.

#### Meetings with parents

- Meetings with parents inside facilities are permitted. Showing the vaccination passport and keeping a register of visitors are not required.

#### Graduation ceremonies

- Like annual general assemblies, meetings of the board of directors and parents' committees, graduation ceremonies in schools are not subject to the requirement to show a vaccination passport, unless there are more than 250 participants indoors or 500 participants outdoors.
- However, the health measures in force in the relevant regions, such as the wearing of masks or face coverings, continue to apply. The visitor access rules that apply to educational institutions and those that apply to the building capacity of venues and theatres must be respected as well.
- For more details, see the "[Auditoriums and amphitheatres](#)" and "[Sports facilities](#)" sections.

## **Open house events**

Open house events are permitted, without the requirement to provide a vaccination passport, provided that the current health measures and those listed below are respected:

- Events cannot involve more than 250 participants for indoor events and 500 participants for outdoor events at one time.
- Wearing a procedural mask is required for all visitors, workers, students and volunteers during the activity.
- The spaces used must allow 1 metre of distance to be maintained between individuals.
- The hand hygiene and disinfection measures must be applied in the same manner as during regular class days.
- As visitors may come from other schools or neighbourhoods, and in order to facilitate tracing in case of an outbreak, a register of participants (visitors, workers, students and volunteers) must be kept.
- In order to reduce the risk of transmission as much as possible, participants should be reminded not to attend the event if they are experiencing symptoms related to COVID-19.



## International students or students returning from international travel

### Guidelines for back-to-school

#### Screening test

In the next few days, all fully vaccinated travellers arriving by air from a country other than the United States will be tested for COVID-19 on arrival. Fully vaccinated travellers will also be required to quarantine while waiting for the results of their arrival screening test.

#### Quarantine

International students or students returning from international travel may be required to complete a quarantine period before returning to school.

For unvaccinated children under the age of 12 who are not experiencing symptoms and who are travelling with fully vaccinated parents or guardians, please see the rules applicable to quarantines under the federal *Quarantine Act*, found on [this page](#).

Students who are returning from international travel and who are required to quarantine are not covered by the [minimum number of hours of educational services](#) and cannot benefit from [distance learning services](#) during this period.

Since August 9, 2021, travellers who are fully vaccinated are no longer required to book a three-night hotel stay when entering Canada. See the [federal rules that apply to international students](#).

However, all international students, including those who are fully vaccinated, must make a quarantine plan that includes a location where they can stay for at least 14 days, in case they are not granted a quarantine exemption. The decision on whether or not each student is required to quarantine is made by the immigration agent who welcomes them.

See the [list of requirements for obtaining an exemption](#).

All international students must hold a valid study permit or a letter of introduction that indicates that their application for a study permit has been approved, and they must attend a [designated learning institution](#) (DLI) with a COVID-19 readiness plan. All elementary and secondary schools in Canada are DLIs.

## Vaccination

As of November 30, 2021, Canada has expanded the list of acceptable COVID-19 vaccines that a traveller can have received in order to be considered fully vaccinated for the purposes of travel to Canada.

The government of Canada has announced that starting on January 15, 2022, international students aged 18 and over who are currently exempt from some requirements related to entering Canada will not be permitted to enter the country unless they are fully vaccinated with one of the vaccines approved for travel to Canada.

International students who are leaving Canada, who are not permanent residents of Canada and who were permitted to enter Canada without being fully vaccinated will be permitted to leave Canada until February 28, 2022, with their current vaccination status. After that date, international students who are leaving Canada must be fully vaccinated to board a plane or train in order to leave Canada.

(Source: IRCC)

## Potential contingency measures during the year

No additional measures are currently planned.

## Air quality

### Guidelines for back-to-school

#### Ventilation of rooms

As stated by the INSPQ experts, appropriate ventilation in schools helps reduce the risks of COVID-19 transmission. In order to maintain appropriate ventilation, educational institutions must apply the following guidelines:

##### For all buildings

- Involve all stakeholders to encourage proper airflow in rooms.
- Leave the classroom doors open whenever possible.
- Apply the required corrective measures in response to the CO<sub>2</sub> measurements taken in 2020-2021.
- Apply corrective measures in rooms with insufficient ventilation.
- Avoid using equipment that generates significant movement of air (through-the-wall air conditioners, fans, portable air purifiers, vacuums).
- Maintain ongoing air extraction in bathrooms, showers and locker rooms, in order to maintain negative pressure at all times in these rooms.

##### For naturally ventilated buildings

- Consistently apply the policies regarding opening windows, and open the windows as often as possible.
- Open the vent sashes (small windows above the classroom doors) as wide as possible, if the room has them.
- Increase the amount of fresh air (increase the intake in the system and open the windows regularly to bring in some fresh air).

##### For mechanically ventilated buildings

- Ensure the ventilation system is running two hours before the building is in use and two hours after the end of the building's use, and deactivate energy-saving measures during this period.
- Increase the filtration level to MERV 13 (or higher), if possible, for heating, ventilation and air conditioning (HVAC) systems that recirculate air; ensure that the fan motors are able to support the increased static pressure due to the installation of higher-rated filters.

If necessary, the following measures can be taken in buildings that are ventilated either mechanically or naturally:

- Ensure that windows are being opened, as per the protocol.
- Install air exchangers in rooms with insufficient ventilation.

### **Summer maintenance program for ventilation equipment and windows**

Appropriate ventilation also requires adequate maintenance of air intake systems, which must take place based on the recommendations of the manufacturer. Before the fall and winter, educational institutions must prepare their buildings by completing the following work, when required:

- Clean the ducts of HVAC systems
- Change filters in ventilation systems
- Add small HVAC systems or air exchangers
- Improve the building's automated systems or the setback setting on control systems
- Check window screens and replace or repair them as needed, repair mechanisms for windows that open and vent sashes

### **Installation of sensors for comfort parameters**

A call for offers for the acquisition of 90 000 sensors for comfort parameters was launched on July 16. The goal of the Ministère is to install all of the sensors in all classrooms across Québec before the end of December 2021. This equipment allows for:

- Ongoing monitoring of the CO<sub>2</sub> concentration, the relative humidity and the temperature in classrooms
- Identifying problematic classrooms and buildings
- Implementing corrections that are targeted and adapted to each situation

## **Potential contingency measures during the year**

No contingency measures are planned.

# School organization

---

## Presence in class

### Guidelines for back-to-school

#### For everyone

It is planned to provide all educational services in person, including special pedagogical projects as well as [field trips](#) and [extracurricular activities](#). There will be no requirements related to stable class groups or [physical distancing](#) for students.

### Potential contingency measures during the year

The following additional measures are in force.

#### Preschool and elementary school

If the epidemiological situation worsens, the measures planned in the “[Wearing of masks](#),” “[Minimum number of hours of educational services](#)” and “[Distance education](#)” sections may be applied.

#### Secondary

If the epidemiological situation worsens, the measures planned in the “[Wearing of masks](#),” “[Minimum number of hours of educational services](#)” and “[Distance education](#)” sections may be applied.

#### Adult general education and vocational training

If the epidemiological situation worsens, the measures planned in the “[Distance education](#)” section may be applied.

## Distance education

### Guidelines for back-to-school

#### For everyone

- It is planned to provide full educational services in person, to everyone.
- However, some exceptions are planned for students whose particular circumstances make them, or a relative living at the same address, more vulnerable to COVID-19. Distance education services must be organized for these students by their school service centre, school board or private school. These services must meet the established [minimum number of hours of educational services](#).
- Medical exemptions for the 2020-2021 school year cannot be carried over. The student must be reevaluated by a physician as their condition may have changed, and the rules that apply to exemptions are different. The public health authorities will inform physicians of the rules that apply, and physicians will be responsible for determining whether an exemption should be awarded based on the condition of their patient, be they a student or a relative living in the same household as the student. Please ensure that this information is communicated clearly, especially to allophone families.
- School service centres, school boards and private schools providing distance education for the 2021-2022 school year to students whose particular circumstances make them, or a relative living at the same address, more vulnerable to COVID-19 are required to declare these students using the usual methods. Therefore, for budget purposes, students must be enrolled at the school they would normally attend if they had not been exempted, and the declaration of enrolment on September 30 must declare their enrolment at that school.
- Distance education services provided for these students may be organized and provided using a centralized services model, or another model, without affecting the declaration of enrolment.

### Potential contingency measures during the year

The following additional measures are in force.

#### Preschool and elementary school

In case of an outbreak or a worsening of the epidemiological situation, the public health authorities could order selected groups or schools to isolate. In these circumstances, distance education services that meet the [minimum number of hours required](#) must be provided.

## **Secondary**

In case of an outbreak or a worsening of the epidemiological situation, the public health authorities may order educational services to be provided to students in Secondary III, IV and V using an alternating schedule. Examples of potential schedules are provided in the [Appendix](#).

## **Adult general education and vocational training**

In case of an outbreak or a worsening of the epidemiological situation, the public health authorities may order selected groups or centres to isolate. In this case, students in adult general education and vocational training will have to receive distance education services, with the exception of exams, [workshops and labs](#).

## Minimum number of hours of educational services

### Guidelines for back-to-school

The minimum number of hours for educational services in preschool and in elementary and secondary school were determined to ensure that students can receive the educational services that are part of their right to education, even in the context of a pandemic. The minimum requirements apply to two categories of students:

- Students with long-term medical conditions
- Students living with someone with a long-term medical condition

To benefit from these services, students must provide a recent doctor's note. Doctor's notes provided during the last school year are not automatically carried over; the student must undergo a new medical evaluation. The epidemiological situation, the affected person's vaccination status and the characteristics of their immediate environment are all factors that entitle a student to this exemption and that may have evolved since last year.

See the [Summary table of the minimum number of hours of distance education services](#) in the Appendix for more details.

### Potential contingency measures during the year

The following contingency measures are in force.

#### **Preschool and elementary**

The minimum number of hours for educational services applies if, in case of outbreaks or worsening of the epidemiological situation, the public health authorities order certain groups or schools to isolate. Under these circumstances, distance education services must be provided.

#### **Secondary**

No additional measures are planned.

#### **Adult general education and vocational training**

Not applicable



## Support resources for distance education

### Guidelines for back-to-school

#### EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTIONS IN THE PUBLIC SYSTEM

##### For everyone

##### Digital equipment

- Teachers who choose to do so may use the audiovisual equipment available to them to allow students who are absent due to COVID-19 to simultaneously follow the activities taking place in class with their normal group.
- Digital equipment may be distributed immediately to students who do not have dedicated devices at home, provided that the equipment remaining at the school is sufficient for regular activities to continue.
- If the distribution of digital equipment is scheduled to take place only as part of a transition to distance learning, the equipment must be distributed within 48 hours, in order to avoid any interruption to educational services.
- School service centres and school boards are responsible for lending equipment to students who do not have access at home to an appropriate digital device and Internet connection (based on the availability of a network) to continue with distance education.
- As a result of the \$150 million in funding made available last year and the equipment distributed from the reserve supply of digital equipment created by the Ministère, school service centres and school boards have all of the necessary materials (appropriate digital devices and Internet connection equipment) to respond to the needs of students who do not have dedicated equipment at home.

##### Support and guidance

- Support and guidance for distance teaching will remain available. It may be provided by RÉCIT or as part of ongoing training provided by CADRE21 or the “J’enseigne à distance” training program from TÉLUQ. The Open School platform (<https://www.ecoleouverte.ca/>) will also continue to provide resources for school staff, students and parents.
- To facilitate the use of audiovisual equipment, a community of practice for information technology has been created to allow expertise and best practices to be shared.
- As part of the *2021-2022 Revitalization Plan for Educational Success: Education Beyond the Pandemic*, another \$15 million in funding will be added to the resources already available for developing digital competency.

## PRIVATE EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTIONS

- Institutions must have the technological equipment required to provide educational services. All private educational institutions are required to provide [distance education services](#) based on the health guidelines in force. Measures have been planned in the budget rules for subsidized private schools to support their digital transition.

## Organization of groups

### Guidelines for back-to-school

#### For everyone

There will be no restrictions related to stable class groups.

### Potential contingency measures during the year

The following contingency measures are in addition to the guidelines for back-to-school and will be implemented if the public health authorities so require.

#### Preschool and elementary

In case of a worsening of the epidemiological situation, keeping students in class groups, if possible, may be required during meals, during recess and at daycare.

#### Secondary

No changes are planned, as optional courses are being offered in the 2021-2022 school year, meaning that stable class groups are not applicable.

#### Adult general education and vocational training

Not applicable

## Special pedagogical projects

### Guidelines for back-to-school

#### Preschool and elementary

All special pedagogical projects continue (concentrations and other projects of this type). Interscholastic activities planned as part of these projects are permitted to take place.

#### Secondary

All special pedagogical projects continue (concentrations, Sport-études and Art-études programs and other projects of this type), including those involving team sports or frequent or prolonged contact. The [vaccination passport](#) is not required for students registered in sports concentrations, Sport-études programs and other projects of the same kind, provided as part of the educational services, whether or not these activities take place at the school. However, it is required for participation, alone or as part of a team, in interscholastic activities covered by the requirement to provide the vaccination passport, such as a competition or a match against another school, when these activities take place outside of the scheduled educational services. The vaccination passport is not required for students from different schools who have gathered in the same location as part of the normal activities related to their special pedagogical project.

#### Adult general educational and vocational training

Not applicable

### Potential contingency measures during the year

#### For everyone

No additional measures are planned.

## Arts Education

### Guidelines for back-to-school

- There are currently no restrictions related to teaching Arts Education programs for elementary and secondary school students, nor to the methods teachers use for these courses. If necessary, see the “[Distancing measures](#),” “[Wearing of masks](#)” and “[Extracurricular activities](#)” sections for more information.

### Potential contingency measures during the year

The following contingency measures are in addition to the guidelines for back-to-school and will be implemented if the public health authorities so require.

#### Preschool and elementary

Certain distancing measures may be added in order to keep students separated into class groups when more than one group is present at the same time. Wearing a procedural mask may be required for elementary school students in certain other circumstances (e.g. in class or during activities where distancing is more difficult). See the “[Presence in class – Contingency measures](#)” section for more details.

#### Secondary

Wearing a procedural mask may be required in certain other circumstances (e.g. in class or during activities where distancing is more difficult). See the “[Presence in class – Contingency measures](#)” section for more details.

#### Adult general education and vocational training

No contingency measures are planned.

## Physical Education and Health

### Guidelines for back-to-school

- There are currently no restrictions related to health measures for Physical Education and Health programs for elementary and secondary school students, as well as in the adult education sector, with the exception of regions where the epidemiological situation is worsening. If necessary, see the "[Distancing measures](#)" and "[Wearing of masks](#)" sections for more information.

### Potential contingency measures during the year

#### Elementary

- The public health authorities recommend that, for now, Physical Education and Health classes take place outdoors.
- If this is impossible and the classes must take place inside, teachers must adapt the lesson plan to ensure that there is a distance of 2 metres between students.
- If maintaining 2 metres of distance is not possible, wearing a procedural mask, even while exercising, is the best mitigation measure. Therefore, it is recommended that teachers adapt the level of intensity and ensure that students are constantly monitored.

This directive from the public health authorities applies to elementary students only. It does not cover specific programs, extracurricular activities or sports concentrations.

#### Secondary and adult general education

See the "[Wearing of masks – Contingency measures](#)" section.

## Laboratories and workshops

### Guidelines for back-to-school

- There are currently no restrictions related to the use of laboratories and workshops as part of the programs of study for general education in the youth sector (elementary and secondary), adult general education or vocational training. However, hand hygiene, cleaning and surface maintenance measures must still be applied.

### Potential contingency measures during the year

The following contingency measures are in addition to the guidelines for back-to-school and will be implemented if the public health authorities so require.

#### **Preschool and elementary**

Wearing a procedural mask may be required in certain other circumstances, such as while in laboratories or workshops, or during activities where physical distancing is more difficult.

#### **Secondary**

Wearing a procedural mask may be required in certain other circumstances, such as while in laboratories or workshops, or during activities where physical distancing is more difficult. See the [“Presence in class – Contingency measures”](#) section for more details.

#### **Adult general education and vocational training**

Wearing a procedural mask may be required in certain other circumstances, such as while in class or during activities where physical distancing is more difficult. See the [“Presence in class – Contingency measures”](#) section for more details.

## Extracurricular activities

### Guidelines for back-to-school

Educational activities may be organized in educational institutions based on the following guidelines:

#### **Preschool and elementary**

Extracurricular activities may be organized without restrictions.

#### **Secondary**

Extracurricular activities may be organized. However, the vaccination passport will be required for students aged 13 and over to participate in indoor sports and physical activities, as well as outdoor sports and physical activities involving frequent or prolonged contact.

#### **Adult general education and vocational training**

Extracurricular activities may be organized wherever an organization offers them. However, the vaccination passport will be required to participate in indoor sports and physical activities, as well as outdoor sports and physical activities involving frequent or prolonged contact.

### [Sports and physical activities requiring a vaccination passport](#)

### Potential contingency measures during the year

No additional measures are currently planned.

## Field trips<sup>1</sup>

### Guidelines for back-to-school

#### For everyone

Field trips are permitted, provided the requirements related to the [wearing of masks](#) in educational institutions and [public spaces](#) are respected.

**See the infographic:** [Guidelines regarding the wearing of masks](#) – Regions where the epidemiological situation is stable

**See the infographic:** [Guidelines regarding the wearing of masks](#) – Regions where the epidemiological situation is worsening

Although the guidelines that apply to the general public require a vaccination passport for access to certain locations, school staff and students are exempted from this requirement when on a field trip organized as part of educational services.

Note that field trips carried out in another contexts, such as extracurricular activities or pedagogical days, are not covered by this exception.

#### For field trips that require an overnight stay:

- **Elementary and secondary schools in regions where the epidemiological situation is worsening** (meaning schools located in regions and territories covered by the contingency measures)

Field trips with overnight stays are not recommended, unless the activities that take place and the locations visited are covered by the requirement to provide a vaccination passport.

- **Elementary and secondary schools in regions where the epidemiological situation is stable** (meaning schools located in regions and territories not covered by the contingency measures)

Field trips with overnight stays may take place. However, they are not recommended if these trips will lead to contact with students from schools located in regions where the epidemiological situation is worsening, unless the activities that take place and the locations visited are covered by the requirement to provide a vaccination passport.

---

<sup>1</sup> Field trip means any group outing of students that was organized by the school administration. Students are accompanied by teachers or other staff members, who are responsible for the students. These activities are included in the students' schedules and the school calendar. A year-end activity at an amusement park, a snow class and a trip to the theatre are all examples of field trips.



- **Field trips outside of Québec**

The same logic as above applies to field trips outside of Québec, but rather than taking into account the contingency measures applied in other schools, it is important to take into account the local spread of COVID-19 to evaluate the risks. In case of doubt, it is recommended that the school, school service centre or school board contact the local public health authorities to make the decision.

### Potential contingency measures during the year

No additional measures are currently planned.

## Complementary educational services

### Guidelines for back-to-school

Complementary educational services will be provided in person to everyone.

### Potential contingency measures during the year

The following contingency measures are in addition to the guidelines for back-to-school and will be implemented if the public health authorities so require.

#### **Preschool, elementary and secondary**

In case of an outbreak, the public health authorities may recommend that complementary educational services be provided remotely to a group or school for a given period.

#### **Adult general education and vocational training**

No additional measures are planned.

## Pedagogical support

### Guidelines for back-to-school

- Additional measures to support students who are vulnerable or who are experiencing pedagogical delays
- Implementation of a strategy to support students returning to school after dropping out: an investment of \$13 million
- Implementation of the *Strategy to provide academic assistance and support well-being at school* to provide the school network with tools to implement measures and actions to provide pedagogical support, including [tutoring](#), and the well-being of students and school staff
- Support for external resources provided by partners, such as [Alloprof](#) and [Tel-jeunes](#)

### Potential contingency measures during the year

The following contingency measures are in force.

#### **Preschool, elementary and secondary**

Directives have been issued by the Ministère to ensure that students can receive the educational services to which they are entitled as part of their right to education, should they be absent for reasons related to the pandemic or in case of an outbreak (see the “[Minimum number of hours of education services](#)” section).

#### **Adult general education and vocational training**

Not applicable

## Recess

### Guidelines for back-to-school

- Preschool and elementary: No restrictions are planned related to recess, whether it takes place outdoors or indoors. Everyone except preschool students is required to [wear a procedural mask](#) when circulating and when in common areas.
- Secondary: Not applicable
- Adult general education and vocational training: Not applicable

### Potential contingency measures during the year

The following contingency measures are in addition to the guidelines for back-to-school and will be implemented if the public health authorities so require.

#### **Preschool and elementary**

Some distancing measures and the requirement to wear a procedural mask may be added in order to keep students in separate class groups when more than one group is present at a time.

#### **Secondary**

Not applicable

#### **Adult general education and vocational training**

Not applicable

## Cafeterias

### Guidelines for back-to-school

- It is planned for cafeterias and eating areas to be organized as usual. Individuals must wear masks while circulating, but they may remove their masks when seated to eat.

### Potential contingency measures during the year

The following contingency measures are in addition to the guidelines for back-to-school and will be implemented if the public health authorities so require.

#### **Preschool and elementary**

If the epidemiological situation worsens, physical distance measures for students in different class groups may be added, such as a requirement to eat meals in classrooms.

#### **Secondary**

No additional measures are planned.

#### **Adult general education and vocational training**

No additional measures are planned.

## Food assistance

### Guidelines for back-to-school

Food assistance will continue to be provided to students.

It is recommended that handling of food be kept to a minimum and that items be thoroughly washed before they are distributed to students. Baskets can be made up using fresh, ready-to-eat food items. For example, choose fruits that are an appropriate size for a single serving and ensure that they have been properly washed and handled following strict hand hygiene rules.

If necessary, consult the standards that apply to the cafeterias and catering services working with your school:

- <https://www.cnesst.gouv.qc.ca/en/forms-and-publications/guide-covid-19-restaurants-bars>
- <https://publications.msss.gouv.qc.ca/msss/document-002618> (available in French only)

If the situation requires a class to be closed as a preventive measure, and regardless of the length of the closure, schools are to provide food assistance to students who were receiving it prior to the closure as well as to those who express a need for help. These actions are consistent with the elements set out in the emergency protocols created by educational institutions.

### Potential contingency measures during the year

No contingency measures are planned.

## School libraries

### Guidelines for back-to-school

- As the library is open, resources and services can be provided to students and teaching staff as usual. Libraries can provide book borrowing services, workshops and training.
- [Wearing a mask](#) is required, except for preschool students.

### Potential contingency measures during the year

The following contingency measures are in addition to the guidelines for back-to-school and will be implemented if the public health authorities so require.

#### **Preschool, elementary, secondary, adult general education and vocational training**

In case of an outbreak, some distancing measures may be applied.

## Auditoriums and amphitheatres

### Guidelines for back-to-school

#### **For everyone**

Auditoriums and amphitheatres can be used like any other room for providing educational services. When they are used by more than one group at a time, the health measures that apply to circulating in common areas must be respected.

When these spaces are rented, loaned or used for activities other than educational services, [the rules that apply to public auditoriums or theatres](#) must be respected.

Using these facilities to hold general assemblies, graduation ceremonies, open house events or meetings with parents is also permitted. See the "[Visitor access](#)" section.

### Potential contingency measures during the year

No contingency measures are currently planned.

## Sports facilities\*

### Guidelines for back-to-school

#### Indoor facilities

Indoor sports facilities may be used, provided the measures described in the previous sections are respected. If necessary, see the [“Extracurricular activities,”](#) [“Wearing of masks,”](#) [“Distancing measures,”](#) [“Organization of groups,”](#) [“Physical Education and Health,”](#) [“School daycare services \(elementary\),”](#) [“Visitor access”](#) and [“Hygiene and disinfection”](#) sections for more information. The vaccination passport will not be required for students accessing these facilities as part of planned educational services.

#### Outdoor facilities

Outdoor sports facilities may be used, provided the measures described in the previous sections are respected. If necessary, see the [“Extracurricular activities,”](#) [“Wearing of masks,”](#) [“Distancing measures,”](#) [“Organization of groups,”](#) [“Physical Education and Health,”](#) [“School daycare services \(elementary\),”](#) [“Visitor access”](#) and [“Hygiene and disinfection”](#) sections for more information. The [vaccination passport](#) will not be required for students accessing these facilities as part of planned educational services.

When facilities belonging to external partners are used, the strictest relevant health guidelines must be applied. The conditions and requirements related to the [vaccination passport](#) remain the same for students accessing these facilities to receive educational services.

\* Note: The general public may use indoor and outdoor sports facilities, provided that the guidelines regarding sports and recreation are respected, under the agreements previously made between school service centres, school boards, schools and partners.

### [Guidelines specific to recreation and sports](#)

#### [Fact sheet – Sports and recreation](#)

### Potential contingency measures during the year

#### Indoor facilities

No additional measures are currently planned. However, a [vaccination passport](#) will be required for participation in some activities that are not part of the planned educational services.

#### Outdoor facilities

No additional measures are currently planned. However, a [vaccination passport](#) will be required for participation in some activities that are not part of the planned educational services.



## School transportation

### Guidelines for back-to-school

#### For everyone

- In regions not covered by the contingency measures, wearing a procedural mask is required for all individuals using school transportation, with the exception of preschool students.
- Assigned seating in school transportation will be used to facilitate contact tracing in the case of an outbreak. Students may sit three to a seat, as is standard.
- School transportation may be used for [field trips](#) and outings for cultural, scientific or other purposes, provided that the health measures are respected.
- Cleaning and disinfection measures are maintained.

### Potential contingency measures during the year

These measures are in addition to the directives for back-to-school and are in force in some regions.

#### Preschool and elementary

Since October 4, preschool students must wear procedural masks while using school transportation that is shared by multiple levels only, meaning buses or sedans carrying students from different grade levels.

## School daycare services

### Guidelines for back-to-school

#### Preschool and elementary

Daycare services are organized as usual, without any restrictions related to stable class groups.

[Wearing a mask](#) is required for elementary students in common areas, when circulating within the school and while using school transportation, such as during field trips.

### Potential contingency measures during the year

The following contingency measures are in force in certain regions.

#### Preschool

No additional measures are currently planned.

#### Elementary

Wearing a mask is required for elementary students while using daycare services.

The regions and territories covered by this requirement are listed in the [Appendix – List of regions and territories where contingency measures apply](#).

# Modifications made to the directives that apply in 2021-2022

---

## Learning to be prioritized

- Last June, the Ministère de l'Éducation published documents presenting the [learning to be prioritized](#) for the 2021-2022 school year in elementary and secondary school. These documents are a planning aid for teachers in an exceptional context stemming from the one experienced during the 2020-2021 school year. The subjects covered by these documents are language of instruction, second language, Mathematics, Science and Technology and Social Sciences.
- However, note that the other subjects listed in the *Basic school regulation for preschool, elementary and secondary education* (CQLR, c. I-13.3) must be taught to students even if they are not deemed by the Ministère to be learning to be prioritized. Teachers are responsible for prioritizing certain content, if necessary. The Québec Education Program is rich and diverse, and it ensures the development of overall essential competences for student's educational paths as well as their social life, through the pedagogical interventions of school teams. The required content must also be integrated into the educational services provided to elementary and secondary school students.

## Report cards and communication with parents

- Two written communications other than the report card will be provided to parents no later than November 19, 2021 and April 22, 2022. Educational institutions are responsible for determining the format of this communication.
- Two report cards will be sent to parents during the 2021-2022 school year: the first no later than January 28, 2022 and the second no later than July 10, 2022.
- In elementary and secondary school, each report card will show results for each subject and for each of the competencies in the language of instruction, the second language and Mathematics and, at the secondary level, science subjects.
- The final result will be calculated using the following weighting: 40% for the first term and 60% for the second term.
- The report card for each of these two terms will include comments on at least one of the four other competencies (*Exercises critical judgment, Organizes his/her work, Communicates effectively, Works in a team*).

## **Ministerial examinations**

- The compulsory examinations and the uniform examinations will be reintroduced this year. However, the weighting of these examinations will be reduced to 10% for compulsory examinations in elementary and Secondary II, and to 20% for the uniform examinations in Secondary IV and V.
- The information documents on the 2021-2022 examinations will provide details regarding the form and content of ministerial examinations.
- All ministerial examinations must take place in person. The educational institution must ensure that all students in a level requiring a ministerial examination are able to be present in person at school on the scheduled date, so that the examination conditions are standardized across the province.

## Governance

---

Assemblies and meetings of various groups (parents' committee, governing board, board of directors, Council of Commissioners, annual general assemblies) can take place in person, provided the relevant health guidelines are respected.

Order-in-Council 885-2021, from June 23, 2021, and the subsequent modifications to this order, cover the measures required to protect the health of the population during the COVID-19 pandemic and describe the general guidelines related to these types of gathering. Holding these gatherings remotely is still possible, but not required.

These directives will be updated should the health situation worsen.

## Memory aid – Emergency protocol / reconfinement plan

---

The Ministère will update the memory aid related to emergency protocols.

## Management of cases and outbreaks

---

Responsibility for managing cases and contacts following an outbreak lies solely on the public health authorities. Therefore, a school service centre, school board or private school cannot decide to close a class or an entire institution on the basis of one or more confirmed cases of COVID-19 following testing conducted at a testing centre.

When a case is detected or an outbreak is declared, the regional public health authorities are responsible for issuing recommendations and sending the appropriate instructions to the school concerned.

## Rapid testing

The deployment of [rapid tests](#) for detecting COVID-19 antigens for students in preschool and elementary school showing symptoms during the day has been complete in all regions as of October 11.

In preschools and elementary schools in some regions, rapid tests for detecting COVID-19 antigens will be administered to all students in a class (with the consent of their parents) if a student from the class has obtained a positive result on a nucleic acid amplification test (NAAT) taken in a testing centre, after obtaining a positive result on a rapid test administered at school.

For more information, see the [Rapid screening tests for COVID-19 in schools](#) web page.

Any questions related to rapid testing may be sent by email to [soutientestrapide@msss.gouv.qc.ca](mailto:soutientestrapide@msss.gouv.qc.ca).

## School staff

---

### Guides published by the MSSS, public health authorities, INSPQ and CNESST

Various guides have been created with the goal of supporting stakeholders in the network as they apply the various mechanisms and measures related to the COVID-19 public health emergency. The following list includes the guides that are most relevant to the network:

#### Guides from the MSSS / public health authorities

- [Self-care guide](#)
- [Self-care guide for parents](#)
- [COVID-19 symptom self-assessment tool](#)

#### Guides from the CNESST

- [Questions and answers – COVID-19](#)
- [Exemptions from the requirement to wear a mask at all times](#)
- [Adjustment measures - COVID-19](#)
- [Ajustements des mesures de prévention dans les milieux de travail en palier vert \(available in French only\)](#)
- [Toolkit for the school system](#)

## Guides from the INSPQ

- [Hiérarchie des mesures de contrôle en milieu de travail avec une modulation par palier \(available in French only\)](#)
- [COVID-19 \(SRAS-CoV-2\): tiré à part de l'avis scientifique intérimaire pour la protection des travailleurs avec des maladies chroniques \(available in French only\)](#)
- [Recommandations intérimaires pour la protection des travailleurs immunosupprimés \(available in French only\)](#)
- [COVID-19: Pregnant and Breastfeeding Workers – Preventive Measures in the Workplace](#)

### Vaccination of school staff

School staff are not required to be vaccinated against COVID-19. However, staff members are aware of the importance of vaccination to protect themselves, their students and their colleagues.

This situation also applies to school staff working in an institution in the health and social services network, such as teachers supervising practicums in the health network, teachers working in a youth centre, staff working in a rehabilitation centre for young people with adjustment problems. These staff members are not required to be vaccinated, even if they have direct physical contact with people who receive health and social services (patients) or have direct physical contact with the people who provide these services (people completing practicums, students), because they share common spaces, for example. These staff are also not subject to the requirement for mandatory testing.

## Applicable health measures

School staff must follow the measures implemented by the [CNESST](#) at all times.

Like students, school staff must wear procedural masks in common areas, when circulating indoors and while using school transportation. Measures for school bus, minibus and sedan drivers, as well as the other measures that apply to staff, can be found in the [Workplace Sanitary Standards Guide for the School System](#), published by the CNESST.

It is also important to recall that employees have the obligation, under section 49 of the *Act respecting occupational health and safety*, to take the necessary measures to protect the health, safety and physical well-being of other people who are in or near the workplace.

As during the previous waves of the COVID-19 pandemic, the rules that apply in classes within rehabilitation centres for young people with adjustment problems are the same as those that apply in other school environments. Considering that these rules may be different based on region, educational institutions must respect the guidelines issued for their region. The rules that apply regarding the wearing of personal protective equipment when circulating within the establishment are the same as those that already apply in the institution.

## Ministerial orders

Ministerial orders and orders-in-council adopted due to the public health emergency allow some of the provisions in collective agreements to be set aside, especially for allowing staff to be reassigned if, when and where they are needed due to a situation related to COVID-19. These remain in force and are renewed every 10 days based on the current context of the public health crisis. Therefore, these orders will end when the public health crisis ends.

As a consequence, when managing human resources, educational institutions must currently act in accordance with the provisions of provincial collective agreements and local agreements. The following measures cannot be maintained until the public health crisis ends (Ministerial Order 2020-008, Order-in-Council 964-2020, etc.).



## Remote work policy

Following the publication last June of the [Politique-cadre en matière de télétravail pour le personnel de la fonction publique](#), as found on the [Québec.ca](#) website (available in French only), various administrators in the school network have shared their desire for a comparable tool to provide guidance on selected remote working practices for their staff. In this context, the Ministère would like to specify that the policy mentioned above was created in the context of public service employees, which is very different from the realities of educational institutions, due to both the nature of employment in the school system and the types of services provided.

The Ministère has formulated the following recommendations for organizations that would like to create a remote work policy for school staff:

- Draw inspiration from the *Politique-cadre en matière de télétravail pour le personnel de la fonction publique* while making the necessary changes to ensure the policy responds to the realities of the school network.
- Coordinate the educational institutions that would apply this type of policy in order to avoid disparities in application.
- Be prudent when making decisions affecting teachers, as major work is planned to revise the teaching tasks and as union committees are in negotiations.

Additionally, given the current health situation, modifications must be made to limit the risk of COVID-19 transmission. In general, the organization of work could be reviewed to encourage the use of the available digital devices when the job tasks permit it.

For teaching staff, teaching must take place in person. However, some remote learning methods will be put into place to ensure that students who must learn remotely are provided with those services.

## Strategy to provide academic assistance and support well-being at school (Tutoring)

For more information, see the [Appendix](#).

## Distance education

Teaching takes place in person for general education in the youth sector, adult general education and vocational training. However, certain specific measures may be implemented by the public health authorities in case of outbreaks during the school year or a worsening epidemiological situation in a given region. These measures are based on the epidemiological situation of the region and the extent of the outbreak. In this case, it may be possible to implement the measures planned in the emergency protocol for situations involving individual groups transitioning to distance education services.

Vulnerable students and students who do not have access to the Internet or an Internet service that is appropriate for distance education may be permitted to access educational institutions in order to use the Internet for distance education, under the supervision of education staff. In these exceptional situations, distancing measures and health rules must be respected. Case by case evaluation is required.

In this context, the provisions set out in the provincial collective agreements apply (especially those regarding the creation of groups of students), taking into account the physical distancing measures recommended by the public health authorities. The articles of the provincial collective agreements that relate to averages determined at the school service centre or school board level also apply.

## Secure digital environment

Educational institutions are required to use a [secure digital learning environment](#) that respects the principles of personal information protection.

Note that when the public health emergency has ended, it will no longer be possible to continue with distance education, except as part of an authorized pilot project under section 459.3 of the *Education Act*.

## Vulnerable individuals, specific situations and applicable working conditions

### Chronic illnesses

To learn which groups have an increased risk of complications from COVID-19 and the chronic illnesses identified as risk factors for COVID-19, refer to pages 2 and 3 of the document [COVID-19 \(SRAS-CoV-2\): tiré à part de l'avis scientifique intérimaire pour la protection des travailleurs avec maladies chroniques](#) (available in French only).

Recommendations for immunocompromised people, including those with cancer, have been published in a [separate document](#) (available in French only).

### Pregnant women

As pregnant women are considered a vulnerable group, it is necessary to implement specific preventive measures in their workplaces. See the document entitled [COVID-19: Pregnant and Breastfeeding Workers – Preventive Measures in the Workplace](#) and the more recent French version [Recommandations intérimaires sur les mesures de prévention en milieux de travail pour les travailleuses enceintes ou qui allaitent](#).

Since October 22, 2021, the INSPQ guidelines that apply to pregnant women take into account the vaccination coverage of workers throughout the workplace and in the general population, as well as new data regarding the effectiveness of the vaccine for pregnant women.

Therefore, a distinction based on vaccination status is now used to determine which preventive measures must be applied for pregnant women in the workplace:

- The recommendations that are specific to pregnant workers who are considered to be partially vaccinated or unvaccinated are to be applied at the start of the pregnancy and continued throughout the pregnancy, in order to ensure that the elements listed on page 3 of the French document provided above are respected. The main measures to implement are the following:
  - Ensure that a minimum 1-metre physical distance between the worker and her clients and colleagues can be maintained.
  - If work must be carried out within less than 2 metres of other people, an appropriate physical barrier, such as a glass or Plexiglas partition, must be installed, including in areas used for breaks and meals.
- Provided that they wear high-quality masks and comply with the conditions set out on pages 4 to 6 of the French document provided above, pregnant workers who are considered to be protected against COVID-19 can work within 1 metre of clients or colleagues.

## Request for an exemption

It is possible for individuals who are part of a group with a higher risk of COVID-19 complications as recognized by the INSPQ to request an exemption from the requirement to report to the workplace, for as long as the health emergency is ongoing. Each situation must be assessed on a case by case basis by the employer, based on recent advice from the attending physician, who will make a clinical judgment on the risks to the health of the worker, which will be provided to the employer to assist in their assessment.

## Right of refusal

The right of refusal and the associated conditions are defined in sections 12 to 30 of the [Act respecting occupational health and safety](#).

Section 12 states that “A worker has a right to refuse to perform particular work if he has reasonable grounds to believe that the performance of that work would expose him to danger to his health, safety or physical well-being, or would expose another person to a similar danger.” To exercise this right, the worker must call the general number of the CNESST at 1-844-838-0808 and ask to speak to the inspector on duty.

The danger must be real and objective and not founded on apprehension. A worry or fear is not sufficient to constitute a danger.

Although all the necessary measures to protect the health and ensure the safety and bodily integrity of workers may have been implemented under section 51 of the Act, a worker has the right to refuse work if the following conditions are met:

- The worker has reasonable grounds to believe that the performance of that work would expose them to danger to their health, safety or physical well-being, or would expose another person to similar danger.
- The worker’s refusal to perform the work does not put the life, health, safety or physical well-being of another person in immediate danger.

It is important to note, however, that the assessment of the right of refusal requires that the circumstances specific to each case be analyzed. The following elements are taken into account by the CNESST when analyzing the right of refusal:

- The refusal cannot be founded on conditions foreign to the workplace. For example, the worker’s personal condition cannot singlehandedly justify a right of refusal.
- The danger must come from the conditions in which the work is performed. Conditions related to work include the premises, the organization of the space, the equipment, the work methods, etc.

- The existence of a personal condition does not eliminate the possibility of exercising a right of refusal.
- The conditions in which the work is performed combined with a personal condition can justify a refusal to work.

For more details, see the following website: <https://www.cnesst.gouv.qc.ca/en/working-conditions/work-schedule-and-termination-employment/work-schedule/right-refuse-work/right-refuse-perform-task>

As soon as the immediate supervisor, employer or employer's representative is informed of the situation, they must contact the safety representative to have them examine the situation and determine the corrective measures to be taken. If the employer and the union do not agree on the measures to be taken and the worker continues to refuse the work, a CNESST inspector is required to be present on the premises. The inspector will determine, as soon as possible, if there is a danger or not, ensuring that the process described in the Act is followed.

For more information about CNESST intervention, see the compensation section of the CNESST FAQ: <https://www.cnesst.gouv.qc.ca/en/prevention-and-safety/covid-19/questions-and-answers-covid-19#compensation>.

### Relevant working conditions

The information is available in the [Appendix](#).

### Private educational institutions

Private educational institutions are the employers of their staff and are therefore able to make their own employment-related decisions, providing they are in compliance with collective and local agreements.

## Support measures for school staff

Educational institutions are responsible for implementing an employee assistance program (EAP) in order to support the members of their staff who are experiencing difficult situations.

Additionally, the CNESST has prepared a [memory aid discussing the work-related psychosocial risks](#) in order to help employers in all fields ensure that mental health issues are taken into account in the current context.

Furthermore, the government of Québec has released the [Getting Better My Way](#) digital tool to allow individuals to manage their own emotional health, as well as providing a variety of other advice for well-being in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic.

## Costs related to COVID-19

---

Currently, the applicable directives come from the Comptroller of Finance.

The Comptroller of Finance has provided instructions that all educational institutions must continue to record additional expenses related to the pandemic, lost revenue and savings, as was the case in the 2020-2021 school year, in order to report them at the appropriate time.

Educational institutions can record additional costs as part of the monthly accounting of additional costs related to COVID-19.

Under the current circumstances, the Ministère will pay close attention to the situation throughout the school year and will analyze the financial impact on the network. Based on this monitoring, it will inform educational institutions of the measures that will be implemented in response to the additional costs related to COVID-19.

Accredited subsidized private schools are asked to record the fees related to the health situation that might be reimbursed in the future. Each private school is responsible for determining, with parents, the methods used to respond to the current exceptional circumstances. Private schools may sign new service agreements with parents to cover the additional fees associated with these new methods, for example. However, the measures chosen must respect the public health regulations.

# Appendix

---

## List of regions and territories where contingency measures apply

**Wearing masks in class is required in the following regions:**

- Mauricie and Centre-du-Québec health region
- Estrie health region
- Montréal health region
- Outaouais health region
- Laval health region
- Lanaudière health region
- Laurentides health region
- Montérégie health region
- Beauce-Sartigan regional county municipality
- Appalaches regional county municipality
- Etchemins regional county municipality
- Robert-Cliche regional county municipality
- Bellechasse regional county municipality
- Nouveau-Beauce regional county municipality
- Matapédia regional county municipality
- City of Baie-Comeau



## Examples of potential organization for alternating attendance in Secondary III, IV and V

A school may decide that attendance will alternate for different grade levels on more than one day, which does not necessarily mean that students belong to stable class groups. The following is an example of what this organization method may look for a school using a 9-day cycle.

### First 9-day cycle:

	Day 1	Day 2	Day 3	Day 4	Day 5	Day 6	Day 7	Day 8	Day 9
Grade levels at school	Sec. IV.	Sec. IV. Sec. V	Sec. III Sec. V	Sec. III Sec. V	Sec. IV.	Sec. V	Sec. III Sec. V	Sec. IV	Sec. III
Grade levels learning remotely	Sec. III Sec. V	Sec. III	Sec. IV	Sec. IV	Sec. III Sec. V	Sec. III Sec. IV	Sec. IV	Sec. III Sec. V	Sec. IV Sec. V

During the first 9-day cycle, students in Secondary III and IV spend 4 days at school and 5 days at home, while Secondary V students spend 5 days at school and 4 at home.

### Second 9-day cycle:

	Day 1	Day 2	Day 3	Day 4	Day 5	Day 6	Day 7	Day 8	Day 9
Grade levels at school	Sec. III Sec. V	Sec. III	Sec. IV	Sec. IV	Sec. III Sec. V	Sec. III Sec. IV	Sec. IV	Sec. III Sec. V	Sec. IV Sec. V
Grade levels learning remotely	Sec. IV	Sec. IV Sec. V	Sec. III Sec. V	Sec. III Sec. V	Sec. IV	Sec. V	Sec. III Sec. V	Sec. IV	Sec. III

During the second 9-day cycle, students in Secondary III and IV spend 5 days at school and 4 days at home, while Secondary V students spend 4 days at school and 5 days at home.

Another school with only Secondary IV and V students might decide that on even-numbered days of the cycle, Secondary IV students attend school in person, and on odd-numbered days, Secondary V

students attend in person. Attendance can also be organized based on alternating weeks, as some schools did last year.

Students who are retaking courses from a lower grade level and are therefore in different grades at the same time must remain at the school for distance education on the days when some of their classes require them to be present in person.

## Summary table of the minimum number of hours of distance education services

These minimums are set for services provided to students with a medical exemption or when a group or school is placed in isolation.

	<b>Weekly</b> hours of teaching or learning and preparation activities	<b>Weekly</b> hours of independent work provided by the teacher for each student	<b>Weekly or daily</b> hours of teacher availability to respond to students' needs
Preschool	11.5 hours of group learning and preparation activities	2 hours	2.3 hours per day
Elementary Cycle One (Elementary 1 and 2)	10.5 hours of teaching	3 hours	2.5 hours per day
Elementary Cycle Two (Elementary 3 and 4)	13 hours of teaching	5 hours	2 hours per day
Elementary Cycle Three (Elementary 5 and 6)	13 hours of teaching	7.5 hours	2 hours per day
Secondary Cycle One (Secondary I, II and III)	15 hours of teaching	7.5 hours	5 hours per week
Secondary Cycle Two (Secondary IV and V)	15 hours of teaching	7.5 hours	5 hours per week

### General information

The minimum number of hours of educational services, which apply in preschool, elementary and secondary, are determined according to the different educational cycles and plans for:

- Time for distance education
- Time for students to work independently
- Time in which teachers are available to respond to the needs of students

Note that one of the benefits of interrelated competencies and a cross-curricular approach is that they allow teachers to optimize their teaching time.

The independent work that students must complete each week must be provided by their teachers.

The daily time dedicated to responding to student questions, may, among other things, allow teachers to provide feedback related to completed work.

### **Preschool**

The activities provided during the planned teaching time for preschools must involve the five areas of development (physical and motor, emotional, social, language, cognitive).

However, it is important to respect the goals of preschool education, the development of 4- and 5-year-olds and to consider their learning pace and interests. Play remains the best way to learn; it promotes development in different areas and helps build skills.

These activities can be divided into 20-minute segments to allow children to alternate between passive screen time and activities that require movement.

Time for learning through play can be interspersed with the periods of screen time to allow time for children to play instead of looking at the computer.

### **Elementary**

According to the subject-time allocation for the elementary level, all the subjects in each cycle must be taught. The time devoted to each subject is at the teacher's discretion, based on the needs of the students and in collaboration with subject specialists.

### **Secondary**

According to the subject-time allocation for the secondary level, all the subjects in each cycle and level must be taught. The time devoted to the different subjects is determined through cooperative planning within the school team and should ideally be in line with the existing schedule.

### **Additional information:**

If an entire group is removed or a school is closed: This is less likely to happen than it was last school year, but the emergency protocol will be used. Within 48 hours, distance education must be provided to students in preschool and elementary, meeting the minimum number of hours of instruction, and distance education must be provided to students from Secondary I to V based on their standard schedules.

If some students are removed from class and the rest remain: Instructions will be provided by the public health authorities regarding the measures that apply to students who have come into contact with a person with COVID-19 or students showing symptoms that may be related to COVID-19 and are waiting for test results. In these cases, some students will remain in class and some will be

removed for a period of time. Although the minimum number of hours of distance education services does not apply to these students, it is essential that a minimum level of services be provided to support their educational success. Therefore, each student who is absent for longer than two days must be provided with services on a daily basis, allowing them to continue their learning despite their absence from school.

Each school service centre, school board or private school is responsible for ensuring that a minimum level of services is provided based on the following two requirements:

- 1- First, they must be in daily and direct contact with the students in order to provide pedagogical support.
- 2- Second, they must ensure that students have access to pedagogical and instructional materials at home and to the technological tools that will enable them to carry out learning activities. If not, the school must send the parents the materials or technological tools that the students need to carry out these activities.

There are no requirements related to the method chosen by teachers and the school team to provide distance education to students. The goal is to provide this service, and various options are available to school teams so that they can do so. As a reminder, see the following examples of practices for providing distance education:

- Teachers can send work to the students who require it, using email, a digital platform or any other method.
- Teachers can plan phone or videoconference meetings, or suggest times to be available to answer questions, provide guidance and follow up with students who require it.
- Teachers who are willing to do so can use the available audiovisual equipment to allow students who are absent for reasons related to COVID-19 to follow along simultaneously with the activities taking place in class with their usual group.
- Teachers can record a short video in which they explain a new concept and potential applications, and present a project or assignments to be carried out, then make this video available to the students who need it.
- The teaching team for a grade can assemble an emergency pedagogical kit for these students.
- Teachers can plan regular telephone calls with the parents of students who are unable to participate in teacher-student communication on their own. Teachers can also prepare short videos presenting learning activities that the students can do at home with parental supervision and send these videos to the parents.

- Professionals at the school could organize an online meeting with some students who have been taken out of school in order to give them the opportunity to discuss their situation.

If necessary, these tasks could be assigned to supplementary staff (e.g. teachers who do not have a full workload or retired teachers).

These services must be implemented for all students concerned within 48 hours, and the parents of these students must be duly informed.

## Strategy to provide academic assistance and support well-being at school (Tutoring)

The tutoring program put into place last spring has been extended for the 2021-2022 school year, thanks to the funding announced by the government last May.

The goal of the tutoring program is to encourage the success of students who are experiencing difficulties in some school subjects, as identified by the school team.

If parents are interested in having tutoring services for their child, they can speak to the school. However, the school team is responsible for identifying the appropriate services to meet a student's needs.

Each educational institution is an employer and is responsible for hiring the necessary staff to provide tutoring based on the needs established by the school.

The compensation provided to tutors varies based on the conditions:

- School staff who are volunteering:
  - o Each employee of a school board or school service centre who agrees to provide services (full-time and part-time teaching staff, professional or support staff) will be remunerated based on their usual working conditions.
  - o Some examples:
    - A substitute teacher is entitled to the wages of a teacher hired by the lesson when providing tutoring services.
    - A part-time teacher is entitled to the wages of a teacher hired by the lesson.
    - Support staff will be remunerated for the increased workload, as a cumulative amount of independent assignments for the tutoring services they provide (beyond their work contract).
- College students in education: \$20 per hour
- University students in education: \$23 per hour
- Retired teaching staff:
  - o For as long as Order-in-Council 964-2020 is renewed, retired teachers who return to work to teach preschool, elementary school or secondary school will be fully compensated for their working day and, should they volunteer outside of that day to provide tutoring services, will be entitled to the wages of a teacher hired by the lesson for that additional period.

- If the retired person is returning to provide tutoring services only, the wages will be in line with the working conditions that apply to teaching staff.

The judicial records of tutors need to be verified. Whether support is provided remotely or in person, schools must fulfill their legal requirements as employers. These obligations are listed in the *Education Act* (see, for example, sections 261.0.1 and 261.0.2).

Priority must be given to offering tutoring services remotely, but schools may make exceptions, provided that the appropriate health measures are applied. Therefore, as employers, the school boards and school service centres are responsible for determining the best timing for offering tutoring services to their students, based on student needs and circumstances. For example, the administration may decide to provide tutoring during a period where one or more students are at the school and available, but not in class (e.g. during recess or lunch).

Tutoring services must be mainly provided remotely, or if necessary, at the school, in accordance with the health measures in force. Therefore, tutors are required to have the tools necessary for remote work at home (a dedicated space, a phone, a computer with appropriate performance and an Internet connection).

When tutoring takes place remotely and the student does not have an appropriate digital device at home, the school service centre, school board or private educational institution must provide the required equipment.

Educational institutions are responsible for ensuring that the staff they hire are properly trained and to take into consideration the nature and extent of student needs, as well as the expertise and availability of tutors.

Each school service centre, school board or accredited private school will be allocated funds to apply this measure.

Management of the tutoring program within a school is the responsibility of the school administration. As needed, tutors can occasionally communicate with the school team using the procedures established in each school.



## Secure digital environment

If remote learning becomes necessary, a secure digital learning environment is recommended, one that applies the principles of personal information protection (e.g. Teams, Moodle, Google Classroom). These environments offer various communication and information features and make it possible to provide feedback, encourage collaborative work and promote discussion between students and their teachers.

In order to guide the school system in making this choice, a fact sheet was sent to the individuals responsible for information security at educational institutions on October 15, which contains the following guidelines:

- The platform chosen for distance education must respect the best practices for information security and the protection of personal information. Specifically, the platform:
  - o must include reasonable security methods, taking into account the sensitive nature of personal information
  - o must not collect the personal information of students or their parents without a notification (if the selected platform allows the personal information of a minor student to be collected, teachers must ensure that they receive consent from a parent or guardian before using the platform)
  - o must not allow personal information to be transferred to or stored in a country that does not offer the same level of protection as the province of Québec
- Prefer solutions that are available without additional fees.
- Teaching staff at the same institution should limit the number of different platforms used for the same purpose in order to make it easier for students to master the platform and for parents to support their children.

In order to help teachers and students master the platforms and help parents support their children, school service centres and school boards are advised to avoid using multiple platforms for the same purpose.

Additionally, since distance education calls for a certain amount of adaptation, partners in the network are offering training for teaching staff. This training increases teachers' knowledge of digital learning environments, among other things. For more information, see the page on training related to the *Digital Action Plan for Education and Higher Education*: <http://www.education.gouv.qc.ca/en/current-initiatives/digital-action-plan/training-resources>.

## Applicable working conditions

Possible circumstances and applicable conditions for remuneration	
Situation	Remuneration
Part of a group recognized by the INSPQ as having a high risk of complications related to COVID-19	<p>Each situation must be analyzed on a case-by-case basis by the employer.</p> <p>The salary of an employee who provides recent supporting documentation stating that they are part of a group recognized by the INSPQ as having a high risk of complications related to COVID-19 is maintained in accordance with the known and agreed-upon schedule in the work contract.</p> <p>Analyze the possibility of the employee working remotely.</p>
<p>One of the following situations:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Able to work and residing with a child or loved one who has one or more health conditions that make them vulnerable to COVID-19</li> <li>• Able to work but whose presence is required by their child or a family member for health, safety or educational reasons</li> </ul>	<p>The health of a loved one residing under the same roof does not constitute an exemption criterion recognized by the public health authorities.</p> <p>The employee must demonstrate that they have taken all reasonable measures to ensure that another person can be with the vulnerable person, thereby minimizing the duration of their leave.</p> <p>Analyze the possibility of the employee working remotely.</p> <p>If the employee is unable to work full-time, for the time not worked, the employee must first use their leaves for parental and family responsibilities and then the other leaves permitted under their work conditions (e.g. vacations, unpaid leaves). However, sick days may not be used for this purpose and must be reserved for illness.</p> <p>Their salary is maintained for the time worked, if applicable.</p> <p><i>*Note that employees taking leave without pay may apply for the Canada Recovery Caregiving Benefit (CRCB) if they meet the eligibility criteria.</i></p>

## Possible circumstances and applicable conditions for remuneration

### Situation

Is not appropriately protected against COVID-19 and is in isolation

### Remuneration

If the employee is able to work:

- Whenever possible, encourage the employee to work remotely.
- If it is not possible for the employee to work remotely, for the time not worked, the employee must first use the other leaves permitted under their work conditions (e.g. vacations, unpaid leaves).
- If isolation is required because an employee's family member or child has contracted COVID-19, the employee must first use their leaves for parental and family responsibilities and then the other leaves permitted under their work conditions (e.g. vacations, unpaid leaves).

If the employee is not able to work:

- The employee may be compensated through the wage loss insurance provided for under their working conditions or the benefits provided under the *Act respecting industrial accidents and occupational diseases* (ARIAOD).

*\*Note that employees taking leave without pay may apply for the Canada Recovery Sickness Benefit (CRSB) if they meet the eligibility criteria.*

## Possible circumstances and applicable conditions for remuneration

### Situation

Is able to work, is **appropriately protected against COVID-19** and is waiting for test results or has tested positive

### Remuneration

Whenever possible, encourage the employee to work remotely.

The employee's salary is maintained based on the schedule known and agreed on in the work contract for the period recommended by the public health authorities.

---

Is unable to work due to symptoms or having contracted COVID-19 outside of the workplace, regardless of vaccination status

The employee may be compensated through the wage loss insurance provided for under their working conditions.

The waiting period (use of accumulated sick days for the waiting period for up to five consecutive days) begins as soon as the employee is no longer able to work, including time spent waiting for test results and in isolation, if applicable.

---

Is unable to work due to having contracted COVID-19 in the workplace, regardless of vaccination status

Provided that the eligibility criteria are met, the employee may be entitled to benefits provided under the *Act respecting industrial accidents and occupational diseases*.

---

## Other situations

### Situation

In isolation due to taking a personal trip, regardless of whether they are vaccinated

### Remuneration

Analyze the possibility of the employee working from home.

If the employee is unable to work full-time, for the time not worked, the employee must first use their leaves for parental and family responsibilities and then the other leaves permitted under their work conditions (e.g. vacations, unpaid leaves). However, if the employee is able to work, sick days may not be used for this purpose and must be reserved for illness.

Their salary is maintained for the time worked, if applicable.

---

Refusal without any valid reason

Each situation must be analyzed on a case-by-case basis by the employer.

Administrative or disciplinary measures may apply.

---

