

COVID-19

Back-to-school plan



Coordination and content

Ministère de l'Éducation

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English version

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PUBLIC HEALTH CONDITIONS allowing for the implementation of the plan:

- Optimal access to tests
- R0 equal to or lower than 1
- Limited exposure of vulnerable people to the virus
- Number of new cases stable or declining
- Number of hospitalizations stable or declining

GUIDING PRINCIPLES

- Kindness and caution
- Clear ministerial guidelines
- Flexibility in the choice of methods and subsidiarity during local implementation
- Equity
- Coordinated decision-making
- Planning for all possibilities

Reminder of the main guidelines issued by the public health authorities

- When a person shows symptoms of COVID-19:
 - Have a ready-to-use emergency kit containing gloves, medical masks, resealable bags, smocks and alcohol-based sanitizer
 - Isolate the person in a room designated for that purpose
 - Disinfect the isolation room as well as any objects and surfaces the person touched
 - Refer to the public health guidelines for case management and contact tracing (Elementary schools can refer to the following guide, available in French only: <https://www.inspq.qc.ca/publications/3014-gestion-cas-contacts-milieu-scolaire-covid19>.)
- Individuals transporting students should have limited access to the premises.
- Pay close attention to spaces that act as bottlenecks.
- During breaks, meals and snacks, ensure that a 2m physical distance is respected between students and staff.

1. PRESCHOOL, ELEMENTARY AND SECONDARY EDUCATION

| THEMES | PRESCHOOL, ELEMENTARY AND SECONDARY I, II, AND III (face coverings mandatory for all Elementary Cycle Three and Secondary students when circulating within the school) | SECONDARY IV AND V (face coverings mandatory for all students when circulating within the school) |
|----------------------------|--|---|
| <p>General information</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 100% of students present in schools full-time • Classroom organization that plans for students to remain in stable class groups in the same room, without requiring physical distancing between students in the same group • Physical distancing of 2m between students and adults. Physical distancing is not required between preschool teachers and their students. • Staff moving between rooms to teach different subjects • In elementary school, authorized access to common areas and specialized rooms (gymnasium, music room, cafeteria, library, etc.) so long as distancing and disinfection requirements are respected • In Elementary Cycle Three (Grades 5 and 6) and in secondary school, mandatory face coverings worn by students when outside of the classroom and when in the presence of students from a different class group; face covering may be removed once students have entered the specialized room (gymnasium, music room, cafeteria, library, etc.) • If necessary, re-organization of schedules and special projects to respect the principle of class groups: each student stays with their own group, regardless of their chosen courses | <p>Choice of two options based on the context – Option 1 is preferred when possible:</p> <p>Option 1: 100% of students present in school full-time</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Classroom organization that plans for students to remain in stable class groups in the same room, with staff moving between rooms to teach different subjects • Mandatory face coverings worn by students when outside of the classroom and when in the presence of students from a different class group; face covering may be removed once students have entered the specialized room (gymnasium, music room, cafeteria, library, etc.) • If necessary, re-organization of schedules, special projects and the choosing of optional courses to respect the principle of class groups: each student stays with their own group, regardless of their chosen courses |

1. PRESCHOOL, ELEMENTARY AND SECONDARY EDUCATION

| | | |
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Option 2: Possibility of modifying schedules and reducing time spent at school to continue to offer optional courses

- If attendance is necessary for one or more groups other than class groups
- For students taking optional courses or participating in specific group projects
- Student presence at school as often as possible, with a minimum of 50% of the time normally required, subject to locally defined modifications based on context
- Planned work at home
- Prioritization of online learning resources and pedagogical activities outside of the normal school premises

It is possible for both options 1 and 2 to be used in the same school. Plan to provide psychosocial support for more vulnerable students.

Calendar, schedule, breaks and recesses

- Standard school calendar
- Standard number of hours of educational services
- Schedule determined locally to take into account the school's situation and the students' needs
- Flexibility when managing schedules (several time slots, alternating groups) and permitted activities
- Adjustment of the schedule for breaks, recesses and the movement of each group to their classroom to limit contact with other groups

Option 1: Same as in Secondary I, II and III

Option 2

- Adapted schedule or calendar with a minimum of 50% of the time normally required for students to be present in person
- Alternating calendar: Day 1/Day 1, Day 2/Day 2, etc., where days spent learning at home are considered a day of school attendance through distance learning
- Adjustment of the schedule for breaks, recesses and the movement of each group to their classroom in order to limit contact with other groups

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Educational services and evaluation of learning

- All regular provisions are maintained:**
- All subjects are taught based on the official programs of study and complementary educational services, including compulsory content, the standard provincial report card, the administration of local and ministerial examinations and the application of the rules for the certification of studies.
 - For music classes, physical education and other specialized activities, the same rules regarding groups apply, with the possibility of using rooms dedicated to these activities (music room, gymnasium, laboratory, etc.), provided that the equipment is disinfected between groups. Access to sports facilities is permitted.

Remedial measures (catching up and educational support)

- Consolidation of learning should take place at the start of the year and throughout the year. Provide a significant amount of remedial instruction before introducing new learning (bridging any possible learning gaps) using locally determined methods (help with homework, tutoring, mentoring, etc.).
- Students who were enrolled in an a term-based program and who were not able to cover the material provided for in the Basic School Regulation must be provided with remedial instruction and consolidation activities.
- Recognize the importance of providing follow-up and support to students transitioning to new schools (Elementary 6).
- Build on essential knowledge for the consolidation of learning.

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| Vulnerable students, including students with disabilities, social maladjustments or learning difficulties | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Plan the implementation of a protocol for welcoming vulnerable students and their families in order to create a personal connection with these families. Pay close attention to the negative impacts of the break in schooling due to the pandemic (accumulated delay, anxiety, loneliness, etc.), especially on remedial education and psychosocial services, once 100% of students have returned to school. Plan educational and complementary services for students who cannot attend school (due to medical conditions or other factors) and ensure the continuation and follow-up of their learning. Updated IEPs will be required for students with disabilities, social maladjustments or learning difficulties to enable them to adjust to their new reality. Complementary educational services are to be provided to all students, including vulnerable students, students with disabilities, social maladjustments or learning difficulties, especially: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> remedial instruction, adapted to their needs remedial educational services and the prioritizing of needs, with the use of student teachers or other staff, if possible psychology and psychoeducation services to support, screen and evaluate students who need it updated IEPs for students identified as having disabilities, social maladjustments or learning difficulties, to enable them to adjust to their new reality; services from the health and social services network and the required collaboration between the two networks through the MEQ-MSSS complementarity agreement | |
| Special pedagogical projects and extracurricular activities | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Special pedagogical projects and extracurricular activities can resume with a modified organizational procedure. Consult the partners involved (e.g. sports federations). Access to sports facilities is permitted. Dividing the year into terms (e.g. for Anglais intensif) is to be avoided to ensure that students are not penalized should another lockdown be necessary. Apply the same guidelines for school sports as those for sports federations. Prioritize grouping students enrolled in the same special pedagogical projects in the same class group. | |

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| Organization of meals | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Meals are organized locally, in accordance with public health guidelines. • Cafeterias can open in compliance with health and safety measures. • It is possible to enter into contracts with catering companies or community organizations specialized in providing meal services. • Limit mixing of groups in the cafeteria as much as possible. • Students and staff are encouraged to use their personal reusable water bottle. | |
| Circulation in common areas and recreation areas | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Students in Elementary Cycle Three (Grades 5 and 6) and in secondary schools are required to wear a face covering when circulating in common areas, such as gymnasiums, cafeterias, libraries, hallways, entrance halls, auditoriums, etc. • Wearing a face covering is not mandatory, but it is allowed for students in preschool (Kindergarten for four- and five- year olds) and Elementary Cycles One and Two (Grades 1 to 4). • School staff in both elementary and secondary schools must wear medical masks when it is impossible for the 2-metre physical distance between staff and students to be maintained. School staff must also wear a face covering when moving around in the school. | |
| Daycare services | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Return to regular activities for educational childcare services with the standard fees and regulations in force (including the 1 to 20 educator-student ratio). • Application of the public health guidelines. • Prioritize, when possible, grouping students together in their class groups and ensure that childcare staffing is stable for each group in order to limit contact between various staff members and students. Common areas may be used if they are sanitized and disinfected before the room is used by other groups. • Prioritization of the use of outdoor spaces. • These guidelines must be adapted to the reality of each institution. • In preparation for a possible public health emergency, each institution must plan to rapidly resume emergency daycare services for staff in the health and education networks and potentially for staff providing essential services, if required. | |

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|---|---|--|
| Staff management | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assigning of teachers for the next year based on the ratios provided for in the Provincial Collective Agreement, taking into account the different exemption criteria for all staff issued by the public health authorities • Respect for the teacher’s professional duties • Flexibility in the use of teacher’s time (complementary tasks, personal tasks, pedagogical days) • A 2-metre distance between teachers and students as much as possible • Planning for staff dedicated to distance education to accommodate the needs of students who must learn from home because they cannot be present in person for medical reasons (with a doctor’s note) and of students who are temporarily absent for several days or weeks because they are showing symptoms | |
| Janitorial and health and safety measures | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Implementation of a health and safety routine for students and employees based on CNESST recommendations • Frequent cleaning of surfaces that are often touched by students, such as microwaves and vending machines • Regular disinfection of water fountains, which should be used only for refilling personal water bottles | |
| Wearing of medical masks by staff | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Staff are not required to wear medical masks, except for: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • preschool teachers and staff • vocational training teachers (depending on the nature of the task and the proximity required) • staff working with students with severe disabilities • adults who must briefly approach students • school bus drivers, if there is no physical barrier or if the driver is less than 2m away from students | |

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|---------------------------------------|--|--|
| Wearing of face coverings by students | <p>For students in preschool (kindergarten for four- and five-year-olds) and students in Elementary Cycles One and Two (Grades 1 to 4):</p> <p>For students in Elementary Cycles One and Two, wearing a face covering is not mandatory, but it is allowed in common areas and on school transportation. For students in preschool, wearing a face covering is not mandatory at school or on school transportation, but it is allowed.</p> <p>For students in Elementary Cycle Three (Grades 5 and 6) and secondary school:</p> <p>Wearing a face covering is mandatory when circulating in common areas (hallways, locker bays, staircases, etc.), when students from other class groups are present and on school transportation. The face covering may be removed when the student is in class or seated in a specialized room (library, cafeteria, etc.).</p> | |
| Wearing of face coverings by staff | <p>For all staff in preschool, elementary school and secondary school:</p> <p>Wearing a face covering is mandatory when circulating in the school because physical distancing is not possible.</p> | |
| Wearing of face coverings by visitors | <p>All visitors, including parents, must wear a face covering at all times, except when they are seated to eat or drink. Visitors are not required to wear a face covering when they are seated in a room designated for drama or arts performances (e.g. auditorium) and a physical distance of 1.5m between spectators is maintained.</p> <p>Anyone who accesses an educational institution in the evenings or on weekends (e.g. to participate in a physical activity), must wear a face covering, but may remove it for the duration of the activity if the activity so requires.</p> | |
| Management of school facilities | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Allow school facilities to be used for purposes other than educational services while respecting the current public health guidelines. • Rearrange the available rooms to increase the amount of available space to encourage distancing in compliance with public health guidelines. • Consider reorganizing lockers: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It may be possible for students in the same class group to share lockers. • Students in Secondary Cycle Two can have individual lockers (option 2). | |

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School transportation

- Updates to distancing and sanitation guidelines:
 - A maximum of two students can be seated on the same bench, with a maximum of 48 students in a regular vehicle.
 - Prioritize seating siblings on the same bench.
 - As much as possible, ensure consistency in seating arrangements.
 - Wearing a face covering is mandatory for students in Elementary Cycle Three (Grades 5 and 6) and secondary school.
 - Wearing a face covering is allowed for students in preschool and students in Elementary Cycles One and Two.
 - Students must be provided with hand sanitizer when boarding the vehicle.
- Vehicles must be fully cleaned on a daily basis. If a vehicle must be used for more than one consecutive route in the morning or afternoon, the areas most frequently touched by students must be disinfected (e.g. tops of seat backs, handrail).
- In order to reduce the risk of infection, promote alternate methods of transportation:
 - Ask that parents who can drive their children to school do so.
 - Encourage the use of alternate solutions for school transportation (e.g. Trottibus or school corridors).
 - School service centres and school boards can modify walk zones and plan school corridors or other solutions to help students get to school safely.
- The school service centre or school board must ensure that the transportation providers are implementing the CNESST recommendations on school transportation, such as the installation of protective measures for drivers.
 - These measures can include the installation of physical plastic barriers between drivers and students or providing drivers with the required personal protective equipment such as a medical mask and eye protection (safety glasses or visor).
 - Drivers must wear the appropriate personal protective equipment (medical masks and eye protection [safety glasses or visor]) if their tasks require them to be within 2m of students, without physical barriers, as stated in the CNESST guidelines.

Information technology

- Prioritize the acceleration of ongoing training development and of the availability of content, infrastructure and equipment..

1. PRESCHOOL, ELEMENTARY AND SECONDARY EDUCATION

THEMES

PRESCHOOL, ELEMENTARY AND SECONDARY I, II, AND III

(face coverings mandatory for all Elementary Cycle Three and Secondary students when circulating within the school)

SECONDARY IV AND V

(face coverings mandatory for all students when circulating within the school)

Emergency protocol

- Each school service centre, school board and private educational institution must prepare an emergency protocol that complies with the guidelines in the memory aid produced by MEQ that specifies what to plan for in case institutions are forced to close again.
- Even if educational institutions close, staff must continue to work and students must continue to receive all the necessary support for continuing classes.
- Plan activities that raise awareness among students and parents, including awareness of the symptoms to watch for in case of COVID-19 infection, and the measures planned to ensure communication in the event of an outbreak, based on recommendations from the public health authorities and the Institut national de santé publique
- Provincial guidelines will be added to specify the minimum number of hours of teaching each student must receive via video conference each week to ensure equity of services between students in different schools, while respecting the principle of subsidiarity.
- Students removed from the educational institution as a preventative measure due to the presence of symptoms will not be entitled to the minimum number of hours for remote educational services. However, they will remain in contact with their class and receive pedagogical services and assignments from the same teachers and other professionals as they would if they were attending school.
- Minimum number of hours of educational services:

| | Weekly hours of teaching or learning and preparation activities | Weekly hours of independent work provided by the teacher for each student | Weekly or daily hours of teacher availability to respond to students' needs |
|---|---|---|---|
| Preschool | 11.5 hours of group learning and preparation activities 11.5 hours of personalized learning and preparation activities | 2 hours | N/A |
| Elementary Cycle One (Grades 1 and 2) | 10.5 hours of teaching | 3 hours | 2.5 hours per day |
| Elementary Cycle Two (Grades 3 and 4) | 13 hours of teaching | 5 hours | 2 hours per day |
| Elementary Cycle Three (Grades 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 |

For vocational training and adult general education, please see the following page.

2. VOCATIONAL TRAINING AND ADULT GENERAL EDUCATION

| THEMES | VOCATIONAL TRAINING | ADULT GENERAL EDUCATION |
|----------------------------|--|---|
| <p>General information</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prioritize in-person teaching. • Distance learning is possible for some theoretical content based on the context (number of students, hot and cold zones). • Students must be present for practical learning and exams. • In classrooms, students must maintain a 1.5m physical distance. • In laboratories, cafeterias and libraries, students must maintain a 2m physical distance. • Protective equipment must be worn for certain programs in which physical distancing is not possible. • Implement additional health and safety measures for certain programs. • Students in vocational training must wear a face covering unless they are seated in a classroom and are maintaining a physical distance of 1.5m.¹ As in secondary schools, students, staff and visitors are required to wear face coverings when circulating in common areas such as an entrance hall, a reception area, a hallway or an elevator. <hr style="width: 10%; margin-left: 0;"/> <p>¹ Unless they live in the same household or one of the individuals is providing services or support to the other person.</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prioritize in-person teaching, especially for specific categories of students (e.g. social integration, francization). • Distance learning is possible for some theoretical content based on the context (number of students, hot and cold zones). • Students must be present for exams and science labs. • In classrooms, students must maintain a 1.5m physical distance. • In laboratories, cafeterias and libraries, students must maintain a 2m physical distance. • Protective equipment must be worn for certain programs in which physical distancing is not possible. • Implement different health and safety measures for certain programs. • Students in adult general education must wear a face covering unless they are seated in a classroom and are maintaining a 1.5m physical distance.¹ • As in secondary schools, students, staff and visitors are required to wear face coverings when circulating in common areas such as an entrance hall, a reception area, a hallway or an elevator. <hr style="width: 10%; margin-left: 0;"/> <p>¹ Unless they live in the same household or one of the individuals is providing services or support to the other person.</p> |

2. VOCATIONAL TRAINING AND ADULT GENERAL EDUCATION

| THEMES | VOCATIONAL TRAINING | ADULT GENERAL EDUCATION |
|---|--|-------------------------|
| International students | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• International students who received a study permit issued by Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada (IRCC) before March 18, 2020:<ul style="list-style-type: none">• are permitted to enter Canada, but must self-isolate for 14 days following their arrival• must be able to present a complete credible quarantine plan to representatives of the Canada Border Services Agency and the Public Health Agency of Canada when they arrive in the country in order to be permitted to enter• must have received the necessary information from the school network to gain awareness of the importance of ensuring their own safety and the safety of others; this information must be easily available so that students can refer to it at all times• For other international students, who are still waiting for their study permit or who received an answer after March 18, 2020:<ul style="list-style-type: none">• the Canadian border remains closed until August 21 for travellers from the United States and until August 31 for travellers from other countries, based on decisions made by the federal government• the normal procedures, particularly those of the IRCC and the Ministère de l'Immigration, de la Francisation et de l'Intégration, must still be followed, since these students must have valid authorization to enter Canada in order to continue their education in person, once the circumstances permit it• in some specific cases, distance learning may be an option in the interim <p>Educational institutions have the responsibility of applying all health and safety measures prescribed by Québec authorities in order to minimize the risk to and ensure the safety of all students, including international students.</p> | |
| Support with regard to mental health and well-being | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Ensure the support of community organizations who are willing to contribute to this effort (e.g. Alloprof, Tel-Jeune)• Ensure that food assistance programs in schools are maintained• Create resources for students, parents and teachers to support success, resilience and well-being• Contact community organizations• Raise awareness about the important role that parents play, the ability of students to contribute to their own progress, etc. | |

[QUÉBEC.CA/BACK-TO-SCHOOL](https://www.quebec.ca/back-to-school)